SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL: EMPOWERMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOMENT IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ESCAZU, COSTA RICA

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Over the last half century, "world development" has become a major goal of humanity. This objective has been supported by numerous evolving theories and has been attempted by abundant practices. Development aid has gone from "developed" nations to serve "underdeveloped" nations in this quest, but the goal of development has remained elusive. Although much energy has been exerted by many to advance world development, the overall results still seem dismal. Poverty, hunger, and environmental destruction continue to loom before us. Conventional development, which sought to remedy these ills by stimulating economic growth, often wrought environmental destruction and human misery in its wake. Critiques and counter-theories emerged in search of alternate roads to development, but mostly to no avail. Thus, the last of the development perspectives of this century, under the vague rubric of "sustainable development", has stressed the need for reconciling all the previous contradictions of development, so that economic growth be reconciled with environmental protection, the objectives of the State with those of civil society, and the needs of present generations, with those of the future. Sustainable development appears to be our last hope for truly achieving improved life conditions for the vast majorities. At least it sets the groundwork for no longer making it acceptable to compromise vast sections of people's "lifeworld", such as their cultures and their environment, to satisfy a singular aspect such as national economic growth. The global consensus of sustainable development as the accepted development paradigm seems to be saying that "if sustainable development can't achieve what we are striving for, nothing will."

In this dissertation I will examine the intimate workings of civil society in its attempts at sustainable development. This study focuses on the efforts of a small community organization in Escazú, Costa Rica between 1989 and 1998 to protect and improve local life quality in a context where the ideology of sustainable development prevailed. I examine how strategies of sustainable development were forged, what resources, including economic, social and cultural, were mobilized, and finally, how the ideology of sustainable development with its emphasis on reconciliation actually helped or hindered reaching the goals of social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Entering the Field

In 1989 I received support from the University of New Mexico to carry out exploratory research on peasant environmentalists in Costa Rica. I only had two months during the university summer break to carry out my exploratory work. Fortunately, only a few days after arriving in Costa Rica, a round table-seminar on Environment and Community Action was announced in the newspaper. When I arrived in the evening, three of the six panelists were seated facing an almost empty auditorium except for two other people and myself. After waiting half an hour past the scheduled time, five other people arrived. After some brief murmurs the panelists offered to go ahead with the round-table despite the meager audience, out of respect for those of us who did have an interest in the subject. One member of the audience suggested that it was probably not a general lack of interest in the subject, but rather a greater interest of most people in attending a conference on world peace being held at the same time and where the Dalai Lama was guest speaker.

This was my first fieldwork encounter with efforts that began to appropriate and implement the concept of sustainable development. Despite the absence of half of the panelists (two government institutions and one private organization), the conference began to reveal some of the local undercurrents that informed the concept of sustainable development. Moreover, it opened an important door for me to continue investigating the subject well into the following decade as a full-fledged participant and observer. The three panelists were a representative of the government institution DINADECO (National Directorate for Community Development), a representative of the newly formed MEC (Costa Rican Environmentalist Movement), and a representative of the community organization CODECE (Committee for the Defense of

the Mountains of Escazú). This last was quite a surprise for me, on encountering an experience of this sort in my home town of Escazú.

I should clarify here that I am Costa Rican. However, after the first two years of my life, my father was hired by the United Nations, spending the next twenty years mostly outside of Costa Rica along with his family. Except for home visits every two summers, one year in high school in 1973, and three years of graduate school in tropical ecology at the University of Costa Rica between 1984 and 1987, I had not lived in my native country. By 1989, when I began exploratory fieldwork in anthropology, my parents had already been in Costa Rica for seven years, retired and dedicated to restoring adobe houses and growing coffee. Back in the house where I was born, in my home town of Escazú, I never stopped feeling somewhat of an outsider, despite the uncles and aunts and large number of cousins that lived close by, and the numerous people who recognized me at least through my family name.

Thus, I was anxious to hear of the experiences of environmental protection and community action in Escazú. The first panelist to speak was Luis Diego Ugarte of the MEC, who presented a summary view of the global situation in which responsibility for the current environmental degradation was placed on "the system" where 25 percent of the world's population used 70 percent of the world's resources. "Exploitation and environmental degradation are not errors of the system, but actual symptoms of it." He explained that the goals of MEC were to work not only for environmental protection, but for the construction of a "social ecology" that would encompass social, economic and cultural factors. MEC hoped to achieve this through the participation of the municipalities, the gathering of updated information, and finally by means of environmental education. But according to Ugarte, MEC had already met with partial defeat when they undertook a project of environmental education in the community of San Francisco de Tres Ríos, and encountered suspicion and lack of interest on the part of the local people. "This response," said Ugarte, "was the best illustration that what in fact was most needed was environmental education." (Field notes, June 28, 1989).

It occurred to me that the problem encountered by MEC lay in the fact that its members went into communities other than their own, with intentions to teach global perspectives that had no obvious relevance to the everyday lives of these people. MEC's well-intentioned efforts at informing and educating the people to improve local participation were threatened by a lack of a deeper understanding of what actually mobilized people. My impression at the time was that if MEC continued in this vein, it was destined to fizzle out, leaving its idealistic members disillusioned with the apparent indifference of the common people. Ten years later, not surprisingly, what remains of MEC is scarcely a memory.

The second to speak was Carmen Durán of the governmental institution DINADECO. According to Durán, current environmental problems were mainly because "our civilization has separated itself from Nature". Also to blame was the "avarice of a few people, the lack of conscience of a few industries, and ignorance on the part of the campesinos (small farmers)". Of the important achievements claimed by DINADECO in matters of environmental protection, was the installation of public garbage cans in numerous communities. Duran's discourse, as a government representative, defended "the system" that Ugarte attacked. If the system had deficiencies, it was intrinsic to "civilization" and thus irreversible. Otherwise, the problems were mostly due to the exceptions arising from the deviance of a few elite individuals and industries, and the ignorance of the productive masses. The practice of DINADECO was consequent with its discourse, patching up the irregularities of a system that supposedly worked. (Field notes, June 28, 1989).

My impression of Duran's presentation was that it was a simplistic pro-status quo response to Ugarte's attack on "the system". Although both positions still seemed to be imbued with a mostly environment-development dichotomy, already surpassed, at least rhetorically, by the concept of sustainable development, each revealed positions that I would later find distinguished contending perspectives of sustainable development.

The third case was offered by Romano Sancho in representation of CODECE. He presented the experience of a grassroots community organization, its inception and its near four-year struggle to protect the watershed and rivers that provided the community with most of its water. Because this case was in Escazú, I took special care to take complete notes on all Romano said. He explained how sometime in 1985, he and his wife Paulina, and many other residents of San Antonio de Escazú, began to hear loud bangs resounding in the mountains. They wondered what neighboring towns might be celebrating fiestas with such an abundance of fire-crackers. Soon enough, campesinos who went looking for their cows let out to pasture in the mountains reported that tractors were carving a road up to the summit of La Cruz. The bangs

were the sound of boulders crashing down the mountain. Great sections of the mountain were dumped into the streams below. The reservoir on Río Agres, the confluence of several of the affected streams, was filled with mud and the people of the surrounding villages no longer received any water.

In response to this, Romano, along with a group of concerned community members, created CODECE to fight for the defense of the Mountains of Escazú and the rights of the local people. Their first battle was against a Spanish priest, Father Revilla, who was responsible for the tractors in the mountain. Revilla's project was to build a monument in the Mountains of Escazú to celebrate the 500 years of Christianity's victory over heathen America, and a basilica for Christian pilgrimage. After winning this battle, many other struggles ensued where CODECE fought against numerous threats to the environment of the mountains and the welfare of the people.

Romano admitted that CODECE had created many enemies, mostly among those interested in destroying the mountains for private gain, and their accomplices in the government at the national and local level. Had it not been that CODECE was made up of a wide array of concerned community members, including farmers, home makers, students and professionals, CODECE would probably already have succumbed to the pressures of its adversaries. What resulted, however, was quite the contrary. CODECE had become a model community organization of Costa Rica, continuously engaged in struggles to defend the environment and well-being of the local people.

According to Romano, what CODECE had experienced in dealing with the legislators and the judicial system, as well as the indifference they encountered in the local municipal governments, highlighted the difference in interests between the communities and the political/governmental bodies.

"These operate under entirely different criteria," he explained, "one of which is a different time-frame. Governmental bodies, even though they are local municipal governments, operate under electoral criteria, and thus within a political time-frame. For them, the universe has an existence of four years. Communities, on the other hand, operate under social criteria and act within a cultural time-frame, that being of at least three human generations long. Obviously, mutual interests are hard to come by. Fortunately," Romano assured, "governmental organizations are not monolithic, and present cracks in their systems, cracks which can be exploited."

In addition to the legal battles taken up by CODECE, Romano mentioned the work the organization was carrying out in reforesting the Rio Agres watershed with the participation of farmers and students from the schools of San Antonio and Escazú. The other area that CODECE emphasized was that of education. "Our project is meaningless," Romano explained, "unless we simultaneously carry out an educative effort." This effort was aimed at the landowners in the Mountains of Escazú, at students, and at members of the community. "We have emphasized," said Romano, "that for the project to be successful, it cannot go against them [the local people] or even proceed without them, but that it requires their participation. And the reactions have been very positive." (Field notes, June 28, 1989).

Romano's presentation impressed me. CODECE seemed to be actively involved in complex issues that included environmental protection and community empowerment. Moreover, his analysis of this relationship offered insightful elements I had not yet encountered in the academic literature. Most of all, however, I was thrilled to learn about the existence of such an organization in my own home town. I arranged with Romano to attend their biweekly meetings, Tuesday nights at 7:00 at the Juan XXIII School of San Antonio de Escazú. Although he seemed somewhat suspicious of my intentions, not recognizing me as one of the residents of Escazú, he asked me my name and cordially invited me to the meetings.

I arrived a little before seven and sat on one of the concrete benches along the fence of the school, biding my time, gazing at the Great Metropolitan Area that spread out illuminated in the valley below, contrasting sharply with this town that was still eminently rural. San Antonio de Escazú is nestled among the peaks of the Mountains of Escazú. Adobe houses were still common there, as were other traditional traits more and more difficult to find in much of Costa Rica. San Antonio still had ox-powered mills or "trapiches" where locally grown sugar cane is pressed to make the raw sugar that traditionally has been a staple in the diet of Costa Ricans. Also in San Antonio one commonly saw men riding their horses to and from their work in vegetable fields and coffee plantations, these being the major crops grown in and around the town.

By 7:30 I was about to leave, when a Jeep stopped in front of the school with Romano and a few other people inside. A tall thin man, dressed in city clothes got out and unlocked the chain of the school. Some of the young men and women waiting around greeted him as "profe" (teacher). Romano went into the

school and opened up a room for the meeting. When I walked in, he seemed very glad to see me, unlike the first impression I got from him. He introduced me as the son of Francisco Montoya to the other members that were present. Apparently, he had found out more about me. One of the members, Rodolfo León, a large heavy-set man with a baritone voice and a thick mat of black hair, black mustache and calloused hands, could not place my father, but vividly recalled my grandfather. "Oh yes, don Pancho with the stiff leg who grew chayotes, of course I remember him." The man referred to as Profe also came to the CODECE meeting. He was Francisco Mejía, nicknamed Pito, and was the secretary of CODECE. A young woman, Maritza León, unrelated to Rodolfo, also attended the meeting. (Field notes, July 18, 1989).

Maritza briefly read the minutes of the last meeting. Then they discussed the jobs that were pending before the community reforestation project could be initiated. I tried to take notes inconspicuously.

"Goicoechea, who has 300 hectares," Maritza read, "has conceded five hectares to be reforested. On these five hectares that border the rivers, we can plant 2000 trees, that's 400 trees per hectare. Carlos Monge and Vin Calderón have also said we can reforest part of their land. We'll do the reforesting every Sunday in August, and in September we'll go back to clean up the weeds around them. The Forestry Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture has agreed to donate the trees. We have asked for Jaúl, Dama, Murta, Aguacatillo, Duraznillo, and María. We don't want Cedro as it is too tempting to cut down with the high prices it has on the market."

"The plan is to invite members of the local organizations to participate: the Red Cross, Tertulia, the Boy Scouts, the Association for Development of El Carmen, the Sports Committee of Escazú, as well as individuals. Padre Walter of the Church of Escazú has agreed to announce this project during mass. A letter explaining the program has to be written and delivered to these organizations."

"Felipe," Romano addressed me, jolting me out of my anonymity, "you can take the letter to the Red Cross in Escazú. Tomorrow I'll bring the letter by your house." (Field notes, July 18, 1989).

Delivering this letter was the first "duty" I undertook for CODECE. Little did I imagine that this simple act of collaboration would lead me to a decade-long involvement with the Association and its efforts at implementing sustainable development.

On Sunday, July 30th, we met in front of La Guardia Rural at about 7:30 am. The Boy Scouts had some 5 boys participating. The Red Cross also had 5 young men there. Five women came along, one of which was a Peace Corps volunteer. There were also another 8 boys and girls. Already gone ahead of us were 11 men, most of them farmers from the area. In total, there were about 40 people. The walk up to the site of reforestation took nearly two hours. On the way, some of the children and women recounted the legends told of Pico Blanco, of which there are many.

On the way up, private plantations of cypress (Cupressus lusitanica) abounded, under which there was little if any undergrowth. The species most promoted by the National Forestry Directorate were pine, cypress and eucalyptus, none of them appropriate for hillside reforestation in the tropics. Comments by the farmers as they passed these plantations revealed that they are aware of this. "Cypress," they said, "has a terrible shade. It burns the soil. Sure, it grows straight and fast, but it depletes the soil." At a point about half way we met up with the others who had started out earlier. One of the men was loading a horse with 50 trees to carry to the site. The trees donated by the Forestry Directorate were not the promised array of species, but only a single species, Jaúl (Alnus accuminata), all 300 of them. Fortunately, Jaúl is a fast-growing native to the area and appropriate for hillside reforestation as it permits a lush undergrowth that protects the soil from erosion. One of the minor peaks of the area was called El Jaular, and on one of the slopes of La Cruz a private plantation of Jaúl seemed to be thriving.

The reforestation site had slopes steeper than 45 degrees, very susceptible to erosion. The hope was that the Jaúl would quickly establish themselves and begin a process of forest succession. Some men with long narrow shovels dug the holes. The other men, women and children planted the trees. It took less than two hours to plant the 300 trees. By 11:30 am we were finished. Romano gave a short speech thanking the participants and reminding everyone of the importance to the endeavor. Then everyone ate their lunches. Candies were passed around to the children, and a little bit of rum for the adults. On the way down by another route we stopped at a relatively flat field nestled in the mountains, known as Llano San Miguel, where we played a mejenga, a soccer game among the men and boys.

A few days later, I met with Romano at his house in San Antonio to talk about the future plans of CODECE. "The ultimate goal," he said, "is to buy this land, so that the community owns it, and make it into a Community Forest for tourism and education. But for now, there are several things on the agenda.

First, there is the prospect of setting up a small legal office, the funds for which are about to be granted by the Inter American Foundation.

"Then, there is the inventory of the flora and fauna of the area that 10 biology students from the University of Costa Rica will begin this month and continue during the entire year. Their work will include field surveys, where each of them is a specialist in different areas. They will also conduct interviews with the people of the area, especially the older people who know of species that exist or have existed in the area. At the end of the project, we will put out a publication with all the information gathered, giving credit to all those who contributed their knowledge, to demonstrate that their knowledge is also important and worthy of publishing, even though it wasn't learned at a university."

"We also have plans to build our own green-house so as not to have to depend on the Forestry Directorate. In a green-house set up in the mountains we could grow native trees from native seeds. The transport of the trees for reforestation would be minimal, and they would already be acclimated to the area. We are seeking funding for this through the Canadian Embassy." (Field notes, August 5, 1989).

While I spoke with Romano in his house, humble in its construction, though spacious, located in the foothills between La Cruz and Pico Blanco and next to the Rio Agres, the group of biologists returned from their first monthly ten-day expedition. While Romano helped them unload, I stayed talking with his wife, Paulina while she prepared more coffee for the other guests. She showed me a video camera that they planned to take on the next Sunday of reforestation. Those shots, along with several others already made, would be edited, she said, into a program that would be shown nationally on TV. Paulina also offered to give me documentation on CODECE, but unfortunately was unable to find the folder among the many books and papers that weighed down a bookshelf on the wall.

After a third cup of coffee and several hours of talk, I left, making sure we exchanged addresses to keep in touch. I explained I had to return to New Mexico to resume my studies, but that I would be interested to continue participating in CODECE and possibly have it as a case study for my dissertation.

I spent the following summers in Costa Rica, becoming more and more involved in the activities of CODECE. In April of 1992, I returned to Costa Rica to begin my long-term fieldwork. By then CODECE was equipped with an office of its own, a secretary and a legal assistant on a part-time basis, financed by the Inter-American Foundation. Much of the work revolved around law suits against individuals whose actions threatened the integrity of the environment. Since my first encounter with CODECE, there had been great international ferment around the topic of sustainable development, preceding the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, known as the World Summit in June of 1992 to be held in Rio de Janeiro on the 500th anniversary of the European conquest of America. By this time, CODECE had changed its name to fit its revised mission. Instead of the Committee for the Defense of the Mountains of Escazú, it was now the Association for the Conservation and Development of the Mountains of Escazú. The following is a study of my long-term involvement with CODECE and the efforts of sustainable development it attempted in and around the Mountains of Escazú.

Outline of this Study

In Chapter 2, I present my research methods, beginning with that of participant observation. I describe the principle settings in which I was able to be a participant-observer, and point out its major advantages and disadvantages. I explain that it is through participant observation that I was able to gain an intimate understanding of the world of sustainable development. It was through the method of interviewing, however, that I obtained most of the tangible data that I employ in my analysis. I describe the nature and extent of the interviews I carried out, pointing out some of the difficulties I encountered. Much of the information I gathered was at meetings and through archival research of CODECE's documentation it kept on itself. I also mention several other research methods that complemented this study.

Because I carried out this study in my "home" town, I address the issue of being a "native anthropologist". I point out that the term is relative, and describe the different instances in which I was either an "insider" or an "outsider". Yet, in the end, I consider that being more of an insider was helpful for me to gain access to different areas of information. The fact of doing ethnology in my home town does not dispel the issue of power differentials recognized today in ethnographic work. I address this issue in some

detail. Finally, in this chapter I describe the process I underwent in going from data to theory, and point out the main areas of inquiry of the study.

In Chapter 3, I describe my theoretical framework. I begin briefly outlining the emergence and spread of the ideology of development. Here I point out some of the contradictions that appear with the ideology and practice of development and include critiques by writers who have tried to explain these contradictions. I present the ideology of sustainable development as an attempt not to explain, but rather, to erase these contradictions. Despite its general seductiveness, however, the concept has many problems. In bringing together previously irreconcilable differences, sustainable development has become a catch-all concept and is used to justify contradictory tendencies. For the case of Costa Rica, I point out a current schism in the ideology of sustainable development which I separate into "mainstream" and "critical" perspectives. However, I explain that there is a continual production and appropriation along this divide which blurs the differences. This, I suggest, makes mobilization of civil society more difficult. Nevertheless, I point out that mobilization is attempted by taking hold of various forms of economic, social and cultural capital, which I describe in some detail. Ultimately, I hypothesize that it is mainly through the appropriation and implementation of social and cultural capital that empowerment for sustainable development is achieved. I conclude this chapter by raising the question, and offering my opinion, on how to measure sustainability.

Chapter 4 is a brief description of the national context in which the events of this study occur. In chronological order, I present the most pertinent developments in legal, social, political and economic matters to affect local efforts of sustainable development.

In Chapter 5, I recount the birth of CODECE. Much like a "creation myth", I suggest that this tale not only presents the initial mobilization process, but itself is employed to mobilize the participation of civil society. This use of discourse to consolidate this collective social capital is only one of various strategies that the people of CODECE employ to create a "social movement". I describe the various forms of social capital and cultural capital that members of CODECE make use of as ways to exercise power in achieving their collective goals of environmental protection and well-being of the local communities.

In Chapter 6, I deal exclusively with CODECE's legal battles for sustainable development. Conditioned by an eminently legalist national context, CODECE directs much of its energy within this venue. I describe CODECE's attempts at appropriating the institutionalized cultural capital of the legal structure, including its early efforts at enforcing the laws that protect the Mountains of Escazú, and analyze the contradictions that result from these efforts. CODECE then attempts to generate more appropriable institutionalized cultural capital by introducing new legislation that would empower the local communities. I present other efforts by CODECE to make use of institutionalized cultural capital to obtain legal empowerment for the people, and describe the obstacles they encounter. These include the impermeability of legal structures, the opposition of powerful interests, and the difficulties of mobilizing the people.

Chapter 7 deals with CODECE's efforts of generating embodied cultural capital by transforming the local culture in favor of a critical perspective of sustainable development, and through this strengthening the community's social capital and its possibilities of local empowerment. Through efforts to create a Communal Forest in the Mountains of Escazú, CODECE seeks to instill in the local community a sense of ownership over their mountains and a sense of responsibility for their protection as elements of a common identity for social mobilization. The major challenges CODECE encounters are the appropriation of particular elements of this critical perspective by mainstream social actors, who seek to employ them for private gain. In this chapter I point out the dangers and opportunities that arise out of this "lending and borrowing" across the critical/mainstream divide in relation to implementing a critical perspective of sustainable development which places local empowerment at its core.

In Chapter 8, I follow CODECE's efforts to create a national social movement by making use of social capital at a national level with the aim of further empowering the local community. These efforts include participation in COPROALDE, a network of organizations with projects of "alternative" development, and the creation of CONAO, a National Council of NGOs and Grassroots organizations for Sustainable Development. In this chapter I especially emphasize the importance of social capital as a means of empowerment, and contrast it with the dangers of focusing exclusively on economic capital as the motor for sustainable development.

Chapter 9 is a confrontation of CODECE's efforts of sustainable development with the situation of the campesinos in San Antonio de Escazú, in an attempt to measure the extent to which sustainable

development has been achieved or approximated. It is also a confrontation of ideologies, where the concept of sustainable development has something to gain from the ideology and practice of campesinos. Here traditional expressions of social and cultural capital emerge not only as means of sustainable development, but as end in themselves to be sustained. In this chapter I seek to re-introduce crucial elements into the "critical" perspective of sustainable development.

In the concluding chapter, I discuss the potential of social and cultural capital as means to community empowerment and the implication this has for a revised understanding of sustainable development. I situate this study as one example of labor within the critical perspective of sustainable development and discuss the issue of the appropriation by the mainstream of this type of labor. Finally, I offer recommendations to others who may identify with a critical perspective for sustainable development. These recommendations derive from the contributions of this study to the theories of social capital, cultural capital and empowerment, and their implications on civil society, social movements, and community sustainable development.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODS

Participant Observation

The ethnographic enterprise of studying people while living among them and then writing about them with some pretense of authority has long been questioned and problematized within the field of anthropology (Hymes 1969; Rabinow 1977; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Clifford 1988; Said 1989; Burawoy et al 1991; Foley 1995; Limón 1997). With the research method of participant observation, one studies people in their everyday lives in their own space and time. Participant observation places the researcher face to face with the subjects of study, creating a lived relationship between them. Eventually, the researcher will represent the subjects in an ethnographic account from what he or she learns from this relationship. Participant observation is the principal research method employed in ethnographic studies, which are typically long term and in depth studies. The advantages of participant observation lie in this sustained intimate contact that allows researchers not only to understand the actions of subjects, but to understand how the subjects understand their own actions. One might think that this is no different than what occurs in everyday life, and so ask why this has been problematized. Are we not all participant observers in everyday life, constantly developing face-to-face long-term relationships with the people around us? And is it not so that from these sustained relationships we come to understand our fellow humans, and transmit our interpretations of them to others in our everyday conversations? The virtue of participant observation is that it is, indeed, very much like everyday life.

However, unlike everyday life, participant observation is a research method of a social science that purports to advance understanding and offer explanations of social realities to a wider community. Ethnographies, unlike everyday conversations, carry the seal of science, and the responsibility that this entails. Representations put forth in everyday conversation are not held up to the light of falsifiability, nor are these interpretations accepted to be none other than idiosyncratic opinions. Ethnographies, however, are interpretations and representations "under oath", so to speak, broadcast publicly, precisely to be scrutinized for their verifiability in the advancement of science.

The disadvantages of participant observation derive from the same source as its virtues. Burawoy (1991:2) warns that "too close contact with participants can lead to loss of objectivity or to contamination of the situation." Because participant observation as a paradigmatic research method of the social sciences is so akin to everyday life, and is infused with inevitable subjectivity from start to finish, its capacity for objectivity is questioned, as indeed is the capacity of social sciences to be scientific. This questioning became ever more poignant with the recognition of the subjective nature of even the hardest sciences (Capra 1975; Gleick 1987). At the interface between the natural sciences and the humanities, social scientists, and anthropologists in particular, have grappled with the objectives and methods of their field (Marcus and Fischer 1986; Geertz 1988; Rosaldo 1989). I concur with Burawoy (1991), that this intermediate positionality offers the possibility of gaining understanding and providing explanation. Understanding, or

the hermeneutic dimension, is achieved by direct participation in social situations through dialogue with social actors. Explanation, or the scientific dimension, is the achievement of the observer through a dialogue between theory and the data. Both dimensions are a product of the research method of participant observation.

My principle research method was that of participant observation. Starting with my first exploratory visit to the field in 1989, when I learned about CODECE, an environmentalist organization in my home town of Escazú, I became a participating member, less out of design, than by the initiative of the leadership of CODECE, who quickly incorporated me into the activities of the organization. During the following summers, I renewed my visits to Costa Rica and maintained my sporadic role of participant observer within the organization. When I began my extended field work in April of 1992 I easily fell into the role of participant observer in CODECE. Having financial assistance from a Fulbright scholarship and from the National Science Foundation for my research, I was able to collaborate fully with CODECE as an unpaid volunteer. To the obvious question as to how or why I volunteered so, I explained that my research involved environmentalist discourse and practice, and that working with CODECE provided me with important data I would use to write my dissertation. My disposition to work almost full time in CODECE at no cost, and my academic training in tropical plant ecology and cultural anthropology were assets that the leadership of CODECE was eager to make use of.

As a participant observer-cum-voluntary worker in CODECE I partook of the daily life in the office of the organization, discussing issues, writing proposals, programming events, participating in the activities we organized, attending events to which CODECE was invited, and representing CODECE at meetings. I also partook of the daily life that extended beyond the office of CODECE, visiting fellow members of CODECE as friends at their homes, hiking together in the mountains or swimming in rivers, harvesting corn and celebrating cook-outs, drinking beer, dancing, playing music, and talking about life.

I maintained this role of participant observer in CODECE during the two years of my field work until August of 1994 when I returned to New Mexico where my wife had remained, and where I hoped to write up my work. However, my long absence had irrevocably undermined our marriage, and so I found it best to return to Costa Rica, where I felt I had established important personal and professional relationships worth maintaining. By February of 1995 I again assumed the role of participant observer, this time however, in a paid position as coordinator of COPROALDE, a federation of NGOs involved in projects of "alternative development", of which CODECE was a member. During this time I remained an active member of CODECE and was elected into the Directive Junta in December of 1996 for a period of two years.

The question of "contamination" by too close or too prolonged a contact with the research subjects undoubtedly arises here. This is a danger that every participant observer must grapple with and attempt to avoid. I tried to step back from my role as a participant deeply involved in the discussions and work within the organization and take a more "detached" observer position. I was also aided, however, by the structural position I held within the social space of my research. In COPROALDE, as I had to coordinate the interests of ten different member organizations, I was forced to keep a self-evident objectivity regarding my links with CODECE in order not to bias my decisions in its favor. This helped me to maintain a detached perspective while continuing to be intimately involved in the work of CODECE. Moreover, as coordinator of COPROALDE, though I had to direct all the assemblies and meetings, I had a voice, but no vote. Furthermore, there was always a tension between requiring me to represent COPROALDE and allowing me to make "political" decisions on COPROALDE's behalf. This central, though liminal, position always kept me aware of my "outsider" status, favoring the observer over the participant during my time in that organization.

Interviews

While participant observation undoubtedly served as the main source of understanding of the social space and actors of my research, it was the extensive interviewing I carried out that provided me with the most tangible data for my theorizing. Starting in 1989 I used open-ended interviews as a means of collecting first-hand data. Once I began my extended field work in 1992, I also spent much of my time interviewing, mostly rural residents around the Mountains of Escazú. My sampling method was haphazard and biased by my own movements in seeking out potential interviewees. I would start out early in the

morning hiking up into the farming areas around the Mountains of Escazú, and when I came upon a farmer in his field, I would begin a conversation, and ask him about his crops, his land, his family, what he thought about the mountains, about the meaning of development and progress. I would briefly mention that I was a student doing research in these mountains, to which it was often more difficult for me to end the conversation, than it was to get them to start talking. I took notes in a 6" by 8" spiral notebook and taped most of these interviews, with the few exceptions that I saw it was more of a distraction than an aid. I obtained 38 taped interviews and 12 that I recorded in notebooks either during the interview or afterwards from memory. The majority of the taped interviews lasted more than the 90 minutes of my tapes. However, the tape usually ran out at approximately the same time my attention span did, and so, often the tail end of the interviews remained unrecorded.

Recognizing that this particular method of interviewing posed a serious bias, namely that those who worked the fields were almost exclusively men, I made an effort to gather the perspective of rural women as well. To this end I decided to visit rural women at their homes, choosing to concentrate my efforts in the town of San Antonio of Escazú, where being a native of Escazú myself, I felt this type of visit would be easier. Because I considered the presence of a woman interviewer would enhance the amount and quality of information I could gather from rural women, I hired a female research assistant to accompany me and help me with these interviews. These interviews were also taped, but contrary to those of men in the field, these were structured and usually lasted about an hour each. Of these I obtained 20 interviews.

Meetings and Archival Research

Another important source of data were the numerous meetings I attended as a member and representative of CODECE from 1992 to 1998 and as coordinator of COPROALDE from February of 1995 to December of 1997. The number of these were too numerous to count. Of the majority, however, I either kept minutes, took notes or taped. These meetings included internal work meetings of CODECE, ordinary and extraordinary Assemblies of the Association, biweekly meetings of the Directive Junta, meetings between CODECE and the Municipality, Ministers, ex-Presidents, Deputies of the Legislative Assembly, community organizations, other NGOs, and donor agencies. In COPROALDE the meetings included assemblies of all the member organizations, biweekly meetings of the Coordinating Council, meetings with other NGOs, with campesino organizations, with government institutions, and with donor agencies. I have drawn heavily on the notes of these meetings, although I collected much more material than I have actually used in this work.

Archival information was the other major source of the data I used in this study. This information was mostly in the form of CODECE's monthly reports and minutes of meetings that occurred prior to my arrival in the field. From its birth, members of CODECE kept ordered records of all the activities the Association engaged in, minutes of all the meetings, acts of all the assemblies, and notes on the different subjects they discussed. This voluminous written material aided me in reconstructing the historical aspects I had no first hand knowledge of. I also accessed this same type of material to some extent in the case of COPROALDE.

Rural Diagnostic Survey

At the end of 1996 while I was still the coordinator of COPROALDE, CODECE hired me as a consultant to carry out a rural diagnostic study of the farming community of San Antonio de Escazú to include social, cultural, productive and economic aspects, in order to guide CODECE's planning with this sector in the following years. I accepted with the proviso that I could use this research for my own dissertation, as well. By this time I had remarried, and my wife, Alejandra García, also an anthropologist, worked together with me on this diagnostic study. The method we employed was a detailed structured interview that lasted no less than two hours, and often more than four. We interviewed 58 farming families, approximately one third of the total number of farming families in San Antonio de Escazú. We decided on the sample based on two major sources. The first was a list of farmers affiliated to COOPASAE, the farmer's co-operative of San Antonio, and the second source that directed our sample choice was Jaime

González, a farmer affiliated to CODECE, who gave us a list of all the farmers he knew, many of which were not on the COOPASAE list, and provided us with directions for all the farming families we were able to contact. The results of this diagnostic study served to confront the outcome of much of the work CODECE had carried out in favor of this sector for over a decade, with what might be considered the actual sustainability of this sector.

"Native" Anthropologist

Much of the ease I experienced in being taken in as a participant observer, in interviewing people, and in having access to organizational documents derived, I believe, from my condition as an "insider". When the members of CODECE quickly included me in the duties of the organization, this, I felt, was in great part due to the fact that Rodolfo León, a farmer and member of the Directive Junta of CODECE recognized me as the grandson of Pancho Montoya, a local farmer he admired and respected. When Paulina Chaverri, also a member of the Directive Junta of CODECE, and university graduate in history, suggested that I write a proposal for one of the projects of CODECE, which then opened all of the organization's archival records for me to access, this depended in great part also on my "insider" condition as fellow university graduate. When I interviewed local farmers, mostly the older farmers, reference to my grandfather opened the way for more fluid conversation.

Despite this relative "insider" status, I squirm under the rubric of "native" anthropologist, which I consider is a reification of an identity that is multiple, strategic and never static. I believe that identity is context-specific and is constantly being negotiated. Kirin Narayan, herself an ethnographer who bears the label of "native anthropologist", deconstructs the concept, arguing instead for the "enactment of hybridity" in the construction of ethnographies. By this she means that even beyond the condition of "people who are mixed from birth", ethnographers are "minimally bicultural in terms of belonging simultaneously to the world of engaged scholarship and the world of everyday life" (Narayan 1997:24). To enact this hybridity, is to "take responsibility for how our personal locations feed not just into our fieldwork interactions but also into our scholarly texts" (Narayan 1997:35).

In contrast to my "insider" status, I was also clearly an outsider. The same Rodolfo León, who in 1989 welcomed me into CODECE's meeting, in 1992 was suspicious of the stranger who came to him as he farmed his land, when I arrived with notebook in hand, and questioned me brusquely if I was an agricultural engineer from the Ministry of Agriculture, or, in general, a professional, being wary of all of them. "Not long ago," he said, "an agricultural engineer came by to give me some professional advice, and all he left me were his foot prints all over the row I had just planted." With other farmers, too, the "distance" between "campesinos" and "professionals" had to be negotiated and bridged. Among rural women I was, in addition, a gendered outsider. So I hired a female research assistant to accompany me when visiting homes of other women. In communities not within the county of Escazú, I was just as much an outsider as any Escazuceño might be. I was even referred to as "el gringo" when I carried out fieldwork in the indigenous community of Quitirrisí in the Mountains of Escazú. Even within CODECE, an environmentalist community organization of my home town whose goals I shared, for some I was an outsider because of my political history. Several of the members of the CODECE leadership had played leading roles in the Leftist movement of Costa Rica during the 1970s and early 1980s. Although by my age and university background I would have either to have participated or, at least, have been familiar with the Leftist movement in Costa Rica, my presence in the country during that period was minimal, and hence my links to or familiarity with any national political activities was likewise limited. This outsider status, I speculate, was what made some people hold back their personal histories from me.

My point with these examples is that, despite carrying out fieldwork in my home town, my case supports Narayan's argument against the fixity of the distinction between "native' and "non-native" anthropologists. Instead of a paradigm emphasizing a dichotomy between outsider/insider or observer/observed, she proposes that at this historical moment anthropologists might more profitably be viewed "in terms of shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations" (Narayan 1997:23).

Power and Ethnographic Representation

The question of power relations in the ethnographic enterprise has been amply recognized (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Clifford 1988; Van Maanen 1988; Burawoy 1991; Lather 1991; Abu-Lughod 1993; Foley 1995; Zavella 1997). Most authors agree that the power differential in the ethnographic confrontation lies mainly in representation. Van Maanen (1988:1-4) states that "ethnographies are politically mediated, since the power of one group to represent another is always involved." Furthermore, he points out that an ethnography "carries quite serious intellectual and moral responsibilities, for the images of others inscribed in writing are most assuredly not neutral." Burawoy (1991:5) considers that "insofar as the relationship between participant and observer is that between power unequals, to that extent the dialogue is distorted." Douglas Foley, who wrote an ethnography in his home town, explains how in an attempt to "dialogue" about his ethnography with the people represented therein, he circulated the manuscript for them to review. However, when one reviewer challenged Foley saying "If I said, No don't publish this, would you stop?", Foley acknowledged that he would publish it "whether people liked it or not", arguing that "no amount of open "dialogue" over the text will completely abolish the power difference between the outside investigator and the community being studied." (Foley 1995:207).

Neither should fear over the inevitability of misrepresentations paralyze ethnographers, preventing them from writing anything but disembodied theory, nor should simply acknowledging power inequalities lead ethnographers to complacency in the belief that being sensitive to power magically erases its inequalities. Ethnographers have long agonized over this dilemma and have tried to disperse their authorial power through various narrative techniques and forms of collaboration with those being portrayed. Van Maanen (1988) describes four general categories of ethnographic narratives: realist tales, critical tales, impressionist tales, and confessional tales.

I admit that, as with the tag of "native" anthropologist, I am uncomfortable with labeling my ethnography under a particular narrative technique. To the extent that I am able, I have tried to represent the people in this ethnography and their words, as accurately and realistically as possible, recognizing, of course, the subjective nature of this enterprise. To this extent, this is a realist tale. I have also attempted to be critical, in the hopes that my critique might in a small way inform theory and practice regarding future efforts of common people to improve their lot in life. Thus, this is also a critical tale. Because the vast majority of the information I collected during the past ten years has been left out of this narrative, and because I have had to select only the briefest accounts to suggest the entire picture, this ethnography may also rightfully be regarded as an impressionistic tale. Finally, because this is a story of my home town, a story of an organization of which I became an active and committed member, and a story of efforts, including my own, to improve the quality of life of "my community" (because that is how I perceive it), to that extent, this is also a confessional tale.

Regarding forms of collaboration with those being portrayed, Foley (1995) presents one of many alternatives by having the actors he writes about review his ethnography. In my case, I have done the same, not with all the actors involved, but with the few who read English. Van Maanen (1988:25) points out that "to produce an ethnography requires decisions about what to tell and how to tell it. These decisions are influenced by whom the writer plans to tell it to." The fact that this ethnography is written in English, in part undercuts one of my purposes that it inform the future work of CODECE and similar organizations in Latin America, in general. The fact that it is written in English, in fact perpetuates a situation I have criticized in this ethnography: the unequal appropriation of labor by those with greater power from those with less. The English speaking world is in many respects -economic, political, technological, industrial, informational- more powerful than the Spanish speaking world. My decision to write in English instead of Spanish -both equally difficult for me- was based primarily on issues of convenience for the process of dissertation approval at the University of New Mexico in the United States. A second reason, however, also supports one of my theses in this ethnography: the availability of diverse forms of social and cultural capital to those with less "power" as means to transform the world. By writing in English, the language of international communication and the world of information, I appropriated this form of cultural capital as a way of reaching a wider audience or expanding my social capital, than I could have hoped for by writing in Spanish.

In general, this ethnography is directed at those people who are active in endeavors to improve the quality of life of local communities, whether it be in environmental, social or economic terms. It is directed

at development theorists who have been for or against "sustainable development". It is also directed at a literate public in general interested in means of community empowerment.

From Data to Theory

Research methods include how data are collected, but also how they are processed, how observations are turned into explanations, or data into theory. Burawoy (1991:26) points out that in the last fifty years, the social sciences have witnessed a proliferation of theories in the form of "deductive grand theory, middle range theory, or the empirical generalizations of grounded theory". While he considers that the generation of theory from the ground up was perhaps imperative at the beginning of the sociological enterprise, he urges us, instead to "reconstruct" existing theories in an attempt to consolidate and develop what we have already produced. I can think of at least two ways to enter the field in pursuit of theory reconstruction: one is to choose a body of theory to test in the field; alternatively, one can first decide what, where and whom one wants to study, immerse oneself in empirical work, and then search for relevant theories that address the issues, and "reconstruct" these theories where they present ambiguities or contradictions that are revealed by the data.

My research topic was driven principally by my desire to carry out fieldwork in my home country, by my interest in the relationship between rural communities and the environment, and by my hope of discovering strategies of harmonious coexistence between people and the land. To guide my research in the field, I prepared myself with theory on cultural ecology, political ecology, peasant studies, development theory, discourse and ideology. But as almost inevitably occurs in the field, the questions that arose summoned a somewhat different body of theory. Peasant studies remained relevant, however deconstructed the concept had become for me when confronted with the actual people who called themselves campesinos. My concentration on the activities of CODECE, a community organization-cum-NGO, summoned social movement theory and theory on civil society. The explosion on the world scene, and especially on the national scene, of sustainable development as the dominant paradigm of development, shifted my focus from a somewhat "black and white" perspective of conservation and development, to a more "shades of gray" vision of the complex interrelationships between these two tendencies. Finally, while discourse and ideology remained important aspects to analyze, I found that these formed only part of a constellation of tactics and forces that interpenetrated the field of action under my gaze. Instead, what seemed to infuse the entire field of action I studied were issues of empowerment and the uses of diverse forms of economic, social and cultural capital as sources of empowerment.

I had originally proposed to compare the environmentalist discourse and practice between mestizo and indigenous campesinos, hoping to detect where significant differences lay in their relationship to the land. This choice of research topic carried with it presuppositions as to the probable locus of environmental conservation and destruction. Ethnic identity, cultural and historical differences, and the degree of insertion into a market economy were the premises I planned to compare. But once in the field, the prevalence of power struggles shifted my interest away from this more horizontal comparison of mestizo and indigenous campesinos, both relatively disempowered sectors, and moved my attention instead to an analysis along a more vertical gradient of differential power to look at a wider array of actors that impinged on the efforts of a community organization to both conserve the environment and promote development to fit the needs of the local community. These actors, which included campesinos, the State and its institutions, NGOs, private enterprise, and international cooperation agencies, I found were more widely relevant than the two major actors my original research proposal hoped to study. Moreover, in terms of contributing to theory and policy, I believe my change in focus was for the best.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

When I began my extended fieldwork in 1992 the concept of sustainable development had begun to take precedence over a purely environmentalist discourse among sectors of society critical of the environmental, as well as economic and social ills conventional development had permitted. I found that diverse social actors employed a wide array of strategies to implement alternate, and often contending, conceptions of "sustainable development". What soon became most interesting to me were precisely these struggles and strategies of a particular "community" immersed in a context of allies and adversaries along a vertical continuum of differential power. Besides campesinos, which were the subjects of my original research proposal, there emerged other key social actors, such as community organizations and NGOs, who in turn were conditioned and confronted in their work by the State, private enterprise, and international cooperation agencies.

The reality in the field made me shift my research perspective from a horizontal comparison of the environmental discourse and practice between different sets of campesinos, to a more vertical study of the strategies of sustainable development of one community organization in a local and national context of differential power. This, in turn, summoned a more political, practical and theoretically interesting series of questions. It brought to the fore the issue of the hegemony of sustainable development as the dominant development paradigm. It problematized the role of civil society in creating social movements. It suggested the theoretical and practical importance of social and cultural capital as means of empowerment in achieving sustainable development. But in addition, it revealed contending strategies of community disempowerment. Ultimately, this shift in research perspective also permitted me to understand how a local campesino community measured its own version of sustainability and the means they employed in trying to achieve it.

The Hegemony of Development Ideology

Once I settled in Costa Rica in April of 1992 to engage in long-term fieldwork and became a participant observer among a group of "critical environmentalists", I found that the "environmentalist" impulse represented only half of the equation of their critical calculations. There was also an impulse towards "development", which represented the other half. In fact, shortly after my arrival, the concept of "sustainable development" was launched at the "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro as the dominant discourse that purported to reconcile both impulses of conservation and development. Much has since been written about sustainable development, both in favor and against, but the fact is that it has become the established guiding concept of both conservation and development not only in Costa Rica, but in most of the world. Sustainable development as the paradigm of conservation and development that has gained most adherents and has moved more people to action in the last decade, stands clearly on the shoulders of the previously established hegemony of development theory and practice.

After World War II, the desirability of world development, and its achievement through economic growth was born as a full fledged hegemonic ideology. By ideology I mean a perspective or explanation that naturalizes what is actually a human construct, and in so doing legitimizes action to maintain this view (Hamilton 1987; Schull 1992). An ideology becomes hegemonic when one out of many alternative perspectives or explanations of a particular aspect of reality becomes the only accepted, obvious or natural one. After World War II, the United States emerged as the dominant power in the world capitalist system. The need to expand its markets and investments made world development a necessity. Economic development was taken up as a primary goal of rich and poor countries alike. The United Nations was created to promote world development, and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund were created to finance this impulse. During the 1950s, the industrialized countries viewed their role in world development, essentially as one of "enlightened charity" (Brandt 1980:18). The goal of development aid was to pull "underdeveloped" nations up to the level of "developed" nations by promoting industrialization and urbanization, the penetration of modern technology in agriculture, rapid growth of material production, and

the transformation of archaic rural structures by the widespread adoption of modern education and cultural values (Escobar 1995:4).

Contradictions to this ideology and its policies soon emerged. During the decade of the sixties social and political upheavals swept the Western world. Old models of authority, order, and progress were questioned. In 1964 the Non-Aligned countries from Latin America, Africa and Asia, brought together by sentiments of anti-colonialism, formed the Group of 77 to bargain for the interests of "developing" nations. The problems of underdevelopment, they argued, came not from psychological or cultural deficiencies as was commonly suggested (McClelland 1964), but from unequal terms of trade and lack of distributive justice (Cardoso and Faletto 1979). Other critiques of the ideology of development also emerged. Instead of seeing underdevelopment as a prior stage of development, determined by a lack of appropriate values, and a prevalence of traditional structures that impeded modernization, Dependency Theory explained underdevelopment as the necessary structural counterpart of development (Frank 1969). The desirability of development, however, was not questioned in these critiques. In this decade, United States development aid, in part took heed of Third World critiques, but mostly responded to historic events such as the Cuban Revolution. In order to prevent -the "domino effect" of the spread of revolution by a dispossessed peasantry, the United States promoted policies of agrarian reform in the Third World. This included primarily the distribution of land, while maintaining an emphasis on technical assistance and the introduction of modern technologies.

In the early 1970s, various emergent factors affected rural conditions in the Third World. Metropolitanization, the growth of financial markets, and the expansion of a consumer society continued to impoverish the rural family whose sons and daughters were abandoning the family farm. On the other hand, industrialized agricultural production expanded, causing large-scale environmental destruction, creating a rural proletariat, and flagrant rural inequality. Despite the outflow of development aid for large scale economic projects, conditions of underdevelopment prevailed. At the end of the decade, rural poverty was understood as being more than merely economic. Rather, it included social, political, cultural and institutional aspects, as well. The World Bank, under Robert McNamara, adopted a "reformist" approach concerned with unemployment, income distribution, appropriate technology, integrated rural development, and basic needs. Policies of Integrated Rural Development (IRD), which stressed growth with equity, were included in national development policies. The driving impulse was to target the poor with specific projects. These projects, however, were mostly "top-down, site-specific and time-bound", resulting in many cases being irrelevant to local communities, or at best, having a limited area of impact, and offering only short term gains (Lewis 1988:6).

In the 1980s, the foreign debt crisis exploded in Latin America, resulting in a precipitous fall of external financing. Moreover, Reaganomics and "trickle down theory" were on the rise. Under the direction of the IMF, Third World States had to undergo severe processes of Structural Adjustment, downsize State governments, and give economic and financial balances precedence over questions of equity. These aspects contributed to deteriorating social conditions in developing countries. In the South the decade of the eighties was called "the lost decade" for development. During this period all the traditional indicators, economic as well as social, worsened. Per capita incomes fell, unemployment increased, de-industrialization occurred, demand for Third World products fell, the South faced declining terms of trade, and interest rates and debt service payments increased (South Commission 1990).

Besides the worsening of traditional indicators, many other shortcomings of conventional development became evident. "Top-down" development gave way to "bottom-up" approaches (Chambers 1983; Hirschman 1984; Morss and Morss 1986; Uphoff 1988). A mostly male-focused development practice began to turn toward the participation of women in development (Buvinic and Lycette 1988, Deere and Leon 1987). The destruction of native cultures, the evident degradation of the environment, and depletion of natural resources around the world, provoked theories of "Ethnodevelopment" (Bonfil et al 1982), "Ecodevelopment" (Sánchez and Sejenovich 1983), and brought forth the concept of "Sustainable Development" (UICN 1980; WCED 1987).

Sustainable Development: Erasing Contradictions

During the last half century, the ideology of development took hold of practically the entire world. The critiques that resulted from the emergent contradictions, were directed not against development as such, but against the short reach of development, its lack of coverage, its excessively slow arrival, or even its apparent retreat. Even those critiques that exposed the cultural and environmentally destructive aspects of development, went not against development, but against its reduced scope and unsophisticated methods. Undoubtedly, there were radical critiques against development, per se, appearing mostly in the industrialized First World, as was evidenced by the Hippie movement, and later on by such groups as Earth First! But the most significant critiques attempted to refine the rougher edges of conventional development theory and practice.

In the 1960s, along with other critiques of the status quo, there emerged a new environmental awareness. By mid-decade, such words as "ecology" began entering the public discourse. Recognition of the scarcity of natural resources began making inroads in the very sectors that were co-participants of the ideology of development exclusively as economic growth. The United States, still the world's major industrial power at the time, celebrated its first Earth Day in May of 1970. In 1972, two events marked the beginning of a generalized concern for the environment: the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, and the publication of the report of the Club of Rome, The Limits to Growth. The Stockholm Conference emitted an international call concerning the mismanagement of natural resources, and placed the environment within the sphere of the development debate. The U.N. General Assembly recognized the need for a "permanent institutional arrangement within the United Nations system for the protection and improvement of the environment" (United Nations 1973).

Despite the contributions of the U.N. Conference in Stockholm, it was the publication of The Limits to Growth by The Club of Rome (Meadows et al 1972) and its subsequent translation into 30 languages within four years (Mires 1990:16), that unleashed the environment-development "debate" into the midst of an international public. This report presented the problems of overpopulation and the growing scarcity of natural resources, and called for these issues to be discussed in the major centers of political debate. To some analysts, this report was the "official and authorized declaration of the bankruptcy of the ideology of progress and of its most divulged version, the `economy of growth'" (Mires 1990:149). The reactions to the report were not unanimously favorable. In the South, where an emerging ideology of opposition to the North expressed itself in terms of "neocolonialism", "dependency", and "economic imperialism", reflecting a reaction to continued poverty despite twenty years of post-war development aid, the response to The Limits to Growth was definitively critical. The Modelo Bariloche (Herrera and Scolnik 1977) elaborated in Argentina, proposed that the limits to growth were not determined by the finite nature of natural resources, nor to the demographic explosion, as stated in the report by The Club of Rome, but rather that they were determined exclusively by political and sociological factors.

The South, and Latin America in particular, maintained a yearning for "development" Northern-style. They viewed the call to hold back on exploiting their natural resources as an attempt against their hopes for development, and an expression of the North's continued attempt to undermine national sovereignty in the South. In the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the Latin American delegates insisted on the possibility that their countries follow the model of the industrialized nations, and, indeed, on the existence of all the necessary resources to do so (Mansilla 1987:118). Ultimately, the result of this position was that if development could no longer disregard the environment, the "right" to development also had to be taken into consideration when discussing issues of environmental protection.

To begin the new decade, the Union International pour la Conservation de la Nature (UICN) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), two of the largest First World NGOs concerned with environmental issues, along with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), coined the term "sustainable development" in their document World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development (UICN 1980). By identifying sustainable development as the basic goal of society, this document made reconciling the demands of development with the need to conserve the environment, the only obvious and natural solution to the previous contradictions between the two impulses. The World Conservation Strategy, however, focused primarily on living resources and ecological processes, leaving out issues regarding the international economic and political order (Lélé 1991). Essentially, what was meant by sustainable development in its first rendition was economic development that did not undermine the living resources that sustained it.

In 1983 the United Nations set up an independent World Commission on Environment and Development, with the assignment to reexamine the planet's critical environmental and developmental strategies for achieving sustainable development by the year 2000 and beyond. Finally, in 1987, one year after the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster, the Commission issued its landmark report, Our Common Future (WCED 1987), also known as the Brundtland Report, for its coordinator, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway. This report rapidly became the most important document in shaping the concept of sustainable development. A single sentence of the Brundtland Report subsequently became the central, all-encompassing definition of sustainable development, hailed by everyone, and upon which further embellishments or refinements, or even critiques, were simply attached.

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (WCED 1987:43)

The Brundtland Report not only reconciled environment and development, but also reconciled development and participation. The needs of present and future generations had to be met, regardless of culture, gender, class or age. Our Common Future recognized the importance of new social actors as participants in the processes of development and conservation. The report's open call on NGOs to participate in a transition to sustainable development acknowledged the potential of these emergent social actors.

"In many countries, governments need to recognize and extend NGOs' right to know and have access to information on the environment and natural resources; their right to be consulted and to participate in decision making on activities likely to have a significant effect on their environment....

"NGOs and private and community groups can often provide an efficient alternative to public agencies in the delivery of programmes and projects. Moreover, they can sometimes reach target groups that public agencies cannot. Bilateral and multilateral development assistance agencies, especially UNDP and the World Bank, should draw upon NGOs in executing programmes and projects." (WCED 1987:328).

Although Our Common Future was presented as a major challenge to conventional thinking on development, and regarded as a breakthrough in integrating environmental concerns with the social and economic needs of development, many of the report's conclusions reaffirmed the fundamental premises of the conventional perspectives on development, especially those stressing the importance of economic growth, above all else.

"If large parts of the developing world are to avert economic, social, and environmental catastrophes, it is essential that global economic growth be revitalized. In practical terms, this means more rapid economic growth in both industrial and developing countries, freer market access for the products of developing countries, lower interest rates, greater technology transfer, and significantly larger capital flows, both concessionary and commercial." (WCED 1987:89)

In 1989, in response to the Brundtland Report, the United Nations set up a Preparatory Commission to organize a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the "Earth Summit", to be held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The Commission began its work immediately, incorporating perspectives from hearings held on five continents, that would hopefully bring on significant changes in the global patterns of development and in the protection of the planet's ecological integrity. After three years of testimony, the Commission presented one central conclusion:

"We came to see that a new development path was required, one that sustained human progress not just in a few places for a few years, but for the entire planet into the distant future. Sustainable development becomes a goal not just for the `developing' nations, but for industrial ones as well." (UN Chronicle 1992:42).

The Earth Summit gathered some 120 heads of State and other official representatives from 172 national governments, 8000 representatives of the media from around the globe, as well as 1400 NGO representatives (Guimarâes 1992:86). International agreements were signed by most, if not all the nations represented at the Summit. These included the "Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development", the "Agreement on Biological Diversity", the "United Nations Agreement on Climate Change", and the "Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of the World's Forests". But foremost of all the documents was the "Agenda 21", agreed on by consensus of the 172 participating nations. The Agenda 21 represented a global action plan extending into the twenty-first century, that provided a blueprint for integrating economic growth, environmental protection, and the participation of civil society. This document became the point of reference of virtually all subsequent efforts, plans and projects of sustainable development.

The ideology of sustainable development, backed by the Bible-sized international agreement of Agenda 21, reconciled all previous contradictions. Economic growth went hand in hand with the protection of the environmental, "top-down" development led by the State went hand in hand with "bottom-up" development promoted by NGOs and community organizations. Feminist critiques of male-biased development were reconciled with the incorporation of the "perspective of gender". Science and technology was reconciled with traditional knowledge in a marriage of mutual benefit. The present was reconciled with the future generations. If there were critiques against the global affirmation of sustainable development, these were against the financial commitments and institutional mechanisms available for the operationalization of this type of development (PAE 1993; Redclift 1993). For the most part, however, as Escobar (1995:210) accurately pointed out, "Development", in general, "continue[d] to reverberate in the social imaginary of states, institutions, and communities, perhaps more so after the inclusion of women, peasants, and nature into its repertoire and imaginative geographies." In this way, sustainable development became the unopposable ideology, spreading its hegemony of reconciliation across the globe.

Cracks in the Hegemony of Reconciliation

Most greeted sustainable development as "an idea whose time has come" (Murdoch 1993:225), as "a window of opportunity" (Singh 1992:164), as "a concept with the potential to build a bridge between environmentalism and development" (Murdoch 1993:226), and as a model "that mediates between the models [of] traditional local ethnoecology, environmentalism, and developmentalism" (Costa et al 1995:79). Few could be against an ideology that reconciled virtually all previous contradictions. However, despite this appeal, it was precisely the absence of antagonisms, this threat of "an end of history", that also generated apprehension that sustainable development could serve as a cover allowing business as usual to continue unhindered (Guimarâes 1992; O'Connor 1993; Pierce 1992). More recently, Escobar (1995:197) warned that the "epistemological and political reconciliation of economy and ecology proposed by sustainable development is intended to create the impression that only minor adjustments to the market system are needed", where, in fact "the economic framework itself cannot hope to accommodate environmental considerations without substantial reform."

However desirable sustainable development has been presented to be, there have been critical reactions to it from the start, stemming from a diversity of concerns.

"Brundtland seeks a co-optation of the very groups that are creating a new dance of politics, where democracy is not merely order and discipline, where earth is a magic cosmos, where life is still a mystery to be celebrated.... It is this that we seek to resist by creating an explosion of imaginations.... The world of official science and the nation-state is not only destroying soils and silting up lakes, it is freezing the imagination..." (Visvanathan 1991:384).

However widespread its acceptance and seductive its appeal, the growing hegemony of sustainable development has from the start had its detractors. As some critical scholars have pointed out (Mouffe 1988:91), however appealing an ideology, "hegemony is never established conclusively."

Mainstream-Critical Divide in Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, as elsewhere, the ideology of sustainable development has sought to erase contradictions and antagonisms between social actors. Indeed, the goals of sustainable development appear to have been embraced in Costa Rica by mainstream and critical sectors, alike. Nonetheless, the hegemony of a monolithic perspective has not been "established conclusively". The generic notion of sustainable development considers the "needs" of present and future generations in terms of economic, environmental and social sustainability. These three areas, however, can still be said to constitute conceptual battlefields of continuously disputed meaning. Economist Herman Daly (1996:7) proposed a distinction between contending perspectives based on views favoring "quantitative growth", versus those favoring "qualitative development". In Costa Rica, the differences between contending camps fall less on a quantity-quality divide, than on what I have termed as mainstream and critical perspectives.

Putting aside temporarily, for the sake of argument, the fact that there occurs a continuous production, appropriation and co-optation of the discourses around the concept of sustainable development, we can roughly distinguish the two perspectives in the following way. The mainstream view, from the "Brundtland Report" (WCED 1987), to the Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992), sees sustainable development as a desired refinement and improvement of current development practices. This perspective equates economic sustainability with economic growth, environmental sustainability with the rational management of natural resources, and social sustainability with the "participation of civil society", placing economic growth at the top of its list in importance. In Costa Rica this perspective was held mainly by the State and the business sector. In contrast, what I have identified as the "critical perspective", views sustainable development, as a fundamental transformation of the unsustainable trends of current development ideologies and practices. The critical perspective equates economic sustainability with economic equity, environmental sustainability with respect for all life forms and the processes that sustain them, and social sustainability with "empowerment" of local actors in all their diversity. This perspective places empowerment at the center of its thesis. In Costa Rica this perspective was held by such organizations of civil society as CODECE, COPROALDE and CONAO, to mention only a few.

Here, however, I would like to bring back into the argument the issue of continuous production, appropriation and co-optation of the discourses and practices around the concept of sustainable development. While production and appropriation occurs on both sides of the critical-mainstream divide, I posit that this is an asymmetric process, with greater production of material and symbolic value on the critical side, and a greater appropriation of this labor by the mainstream. This leads to a continuous blurring of the differences and boundaries between the mainstream and the critical perspectives, or as Kearney (1996:107) recently expressed, "contemporary ideas and politics about sustainable development reflect a dissolution of the modern dual structuring of the opposition not only between modern and romantic but also between left and right." This blurring tends to favor the hegemony of reconciliation, which also dampens the participation of civil society.

Civil Society and Social Movements

One major thrust in development aid during the decade that gave birth to the concept of sustainable development was to seek less government intervention and greater local participation, often referred to as the participation of civil society. Historically, civil society meant a domain of interaction distinct from the state (Kumar 1993), but Weiner (1991:311) points out that today the concept follows what Habermas has referred to as "the domain out of which the reflective, creative and institutionalizing potential of group needs and interests are embodied in autonomous public spheres". This domain includes NGOs, community organizations, and the "new social movements", in general.

The expectations placed on sustainable development by all sectors have been equaled, if not surpassed by those placed on civil society. Some find that neo-liberal policies have promoted civil society as the appropriator of the space relinquished by government downsizing (Bebbington and Farrington 1993; De Janvry and Sadoulet 1993; Meyer 1993; Nugent 1993; Uphoff 1993). But critical thought has also considered civil society to be "an important new terrain of democratization, of democratic institution building" (Cohen and Arato 1992:16). Habermas (1981:33) defines the new social movements as

"fragmentary pieces of existing civil society working to retain independent identities and autonomy on the periphery of institutionalized state/corporate structures."

Civil society is equally seen as filling the void left by the State, or as the source of social movements functioning as "resistance and liberation movements, fighting the 'state' and its colonizing of the everyday lifeworld and its bureaucratic instrumental rationality" (Luke 1989:215). At whatever end of the spectrum, however, civil society and its active expression in social movements have been the subject of voluminous research. Cohen (1985) distills two paradigms that dominate the studies of new social movements: on the one hand there is a "resource mobilization approach", stressing strategic considerations of organization, collective action, and interest mobilization, and in contrast, there is an "identity-orientation approach" which emphasizes issues of consciousness, ideology, and solidarity.

While I find this dichotomy separating rational-materialist explanations from identity-ideological ones, useful as a heuristic device, I consider that this categorization actually hides important elements and processes of the actions of civil society. I concur with several authors (Buechler 1993; Marx Ferree and Miller 1985), who opt for an integration of both stances, and with Epstein (1990), who suggests drawing on an even wider range of perspectives. I find that a more revealing approach is to look at the constant manipulation and reproduction of diverse forms of capital, including economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) as diverse means to empowerment. This conceptualization brings together the resource mobilization approach with the identity-orientation approach in a way that is less schematic and more explicative of how social mobilization and community empowerment is advanced or impeded.

Among the means employed in the reproduction of social capital for local empowerment is the creation of a common identity. This point is shared by Escobar and Alvarez (1992a:5) who find that the question of strategy is intimately linked to how social actors construct a collective identity for themselves, often out of conflictual roles and positions. However, the confounding aspect I mentioned above is that there is a continual production and appropriation of material and symbolic resources, including elements of ideology and identity, which blur contending positions and roles. Rosaldo (1989:217) points out the importance of paying special attention to the "borrowing and lending across porous... boundaries that are saturated with inequality, power and domination." It is in this context of the blurring of difference between critical and mainstream actors, or what Luke (1989:220) has distinguished as "core and periphery, technocratically empowered planners/producers/providers and disempowered citizens/consumers/clients, ...lifeworld colonizers and the lifeworld colonized," that I look at the mobilization of economic, social and cultural capital, and how their reproduction and differential appropriation affect local community empowerment and sustainable development.

Social and Cultural Capital

The mainstream perspective values economic growth as the ultimate goal and as the primary catalyst of sustainable development, and economic capital is viewed as the necessary requisite with which to launch the process of sustained economic growth (Durning 1989b; Meyer 1993). This is the operative framework of most international development institutions and cooperation agencies. Economic capital is valued as the missing ingredient of sustainable development which international development aid provides. Although I do not deny the powerful role of economic capital as a resource for mobilization, there are two major dangers in concentrating solely on this form of capital. The first, is that the use of an "economic calculus" (Amin 1992) to describe and to prescribe, reduces our possibilities of transcending a system dominated by the logic of capitalism. In this regard, there has already been widespread agreement regarding the dangers of economistic policies in the context of conventional development (Davis 1977; DeWalt 1986; Bodley 1988; Bodley 1990, Lewis 1992).

The second and most important reason, is that economic calculations have only limited applicability in an increasingly complex world, where economic capital is only one of many recognized forms of capital. With sustainable development, for example, mainstream perspectives have already moved economic accounting to begin to include previously ignored "natural capital" and the costs of contamination (Pearce 1988; Lutz and Munasinghe 1991; Daly 1996). Besides economic capital and natural capital, which for the most part are relatively tangible material forms of capital, there are also other less tangible forms of capital

which in this study assume great significance. Of these less tangible forms of capital, there are two major categories which stand out in importance: social capital and cultural capital.

I base my use of these concepts on the exposition by Bourdieu (1986), whose analysis Portes (1998:3) has recently hailed as "arguably the most theoretically refined among those that introduced the term in contemporary sociological discourse." Bourdieu (1986:248) defines social capital as:

"the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition -or in other words, to membership in a group- which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word."

Bourdieu (1986:249) points out that social capital, or the network of connections, is not a natural given, or even a social given, but rather "the product of an endless effort at institution... investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships." These, he further explains (Bourdieu 1986:250), are "endlessly reproduced in and through the exchange of gifts, words, women, etc... Exchange transforms the things exchanged into signs of recognition and, through the mutual recognition and the recognition of group membership which it implies, re-produces the group... [and] reaffirms the limits of the group."

The other major form of capital described by Bourdieu is cultural capital, which he also refers to as "informational capital" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:119). "Cultural capital," he points out (Bourdieu 1986:243), can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the forms of cultural goods...; and in the institutionalized state..." Embodied forms of cultural capital can include upbringing, education, training, skills, knowledge, values, etc. Material objects, such as books, art, tools, crafts, libraries, and museums, for example, can be considered as objectified forms of cultural capital. Institutionalized forms of cultural capital can include academic titles, or titles of nobility, which can confer authority. I also include under the rubric of institutionalized cultural capital social institutions, such as the legal system and its laws, which provide a backing of authority to those who embrace them.

The concept of social capital has recently received a lot of attention in sociological studies of the United States (Putnam 1995; Portes 1998; Schneider 1998). Of particular interest for my investigation, is Putnam's emphasis on the elements of "trust" (Putnam 1993a:35) and "horizontal ties" (Putnam 1993b:ch.6; Putnam 1995:77) as important elements in the reproduction of social capital. I find that these conditions of social capital reproduction contrast significantly with the workings of economic capital and how it affects local empowerment.

Unfortunately, there is much literature which follows the lead of Coleman (1988), who claims to introduce the concept of social capital, but whose conceptualization of the term "obscures" Bourdieu's clarity, to whom he makes no reference (Portes 1998:5). On the positive side, the concept has transcended academic journals and has become a consideration in United States domestic social policy (Putnam 1995). The concept has also made an impact in development theory (Woolcock 1998; Sampson 1999), and has also been employed in theoretical analyses of sustainable development (Evans 1996; Weaver et al 1997; Ritchey-Vance 1997).

The concept of cultural capital, on the other hand has received much less attention both in the sociological literature, as well as in policy circles. This is unfortunate when one of the most important aspects of social capital lies precisely in its ability to provide a pool of cultural capital to the "members" of the social networks. In this regard, Coleman (1988) does make a point of analyzing the effect social capital has on the creation of "human capital", which in this dissertation is practically synonymous with embodied cultural capital. There are, however, some anthropological studies that do deal with the important issue of cultural capital in social development and reproduction (Hirabayashi 1993; Wikan 1995). In my research I put the concept of social and cultural capital to test to reveal the micro-workings of creating and reproducing these forms of capital as important sources of local empowerment.

Among the means employed in the "endless reproduction" of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986:250), two processes stand out: the uses of discourse and the creation of collective identities. As Bourdieu points out (1986:250), one of the primary means in which social capital is reproduced, is through the exchange of words, or through discourse. As a system of storing and distributing large amounts of

information, or cultural capital, discourse is probably the most ubiquitous means of manipulating and reproducing this "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1986:255). One of the prime uses of discourse is to transform identifications of social actors, mobilize political subjectivity, and move to action. It is this use of discourse which I focus on in the reproduction of social and cultural capital.

As a form of informational capital, discourse can be made to reproduce and expand itself. It is mainly through discourse, that ideologies are established, which "naturalize" (Barrett 1991:167) and legitimate" (Schull 1992:736) particular forms of thought and action. Ideology, as an institutionalized form of cultural capital, in the sense that it legitimates, or confers authority, can further be employed as an instrument to transform reality. While ideologies legitimate particular discourses, these discourses are the very means by which ideologies are constantly reconstituted. Discourses are also the means by which ideologies are pitted against each other in the battle for hegemony, where hegemony is the spread and stability of an ideology. Thompson (1987:519) states that "to study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination." I prefer to view ideology as an institutionalized form of cultural capital which tends to maintain and reproduce itself, as well as the social capital through which it exchanged.

The other important process in the reproduction of social and cultural capital is the creation of collective identities. Cohen (1985) describes diverse currents that find that collective identity can be generated by appealing to collective interests, to shared beliefs, and to group differences. The creation of a collective identity defines the boundaries in which dense social networks can be generated and then be employed to transform the lived context through collective action. Social capital lies in the network of human relationships from which cultural capital, or economic capital, may be obtained, and it lies in membership in a group which provides each member with the backing of the collectively-owned capital. Parting from the premise that collective action is founded on a shared identity (Escobar and Alvarez 1992b), I consider that the creation of a collective identity (as a particular set of information, or cultural capital, shared among a particular social network, or social capital) is an important means of social and cultural reproduction.

Although Bourdieu, himself, presents social and cultural capital as subtle means that are employed by elite classes to maintain and reproduce the overall class structure (1986:248-249), I claim that social capital and cultural capital are amenable to the appropriation of other classes besides the elite to draw from collective resources for purposes of social reproduction. These diverse forms of capital, which Bourdieu refers to as "accumulated labor" (or invested time and energy) enable social actors, individual and collective, to "appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor" (Bourdieu 1986:241). Capital, then, as accumulated labor, whether material or symbolic, has the capacity to reproduce and expand itself by appropriating more labor. As products of accumulated labor, these diverse forms of capital can be wielded to transform the lived context. I posit that their appropriation is what lies at the heart of "empowerment".

This is not to deny, however, that there may be negative aspects to the use of social and cultural capital, as some authors have already pointed out, including "facilitating the reproduction of the overall class structure" (Bourdieu 1986:248), the "inequalities that may be embedded in social capital" (Putnam 1993:42), or "restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward leveling norms" of social capital (Portes 1998:15). In this dissertation, for example, I show how social and cultural capital may be appropriated by contending groups and used to advance or subvert opposed class interests. It is with consideration of these contradictory aspects of social and cultural capital, that I have studied the efforts of segments of civil society to implement a critical current of sustainable development that places empowerment at its core.

Power and Empowerment

The concept of power has been widely analyzed in the social sciences. The most commonly employed version of power is that of Max Weber who treats power as "the capacity of an actor to achieve desired ends or goals" (Giddens 1981:49). This view has informed Liberal thought which places power in the individual. Critical of this position, a wide range of currents, derived mostly from Marxist thought, view power as the property of collectivities, and particularly as "the property or right that one class exercises over another in order to keep it subjugated" (Grosz 1990:87). In this vein, power is viewed as inherently coercive, and that its use inevitably implies the existence of conflict. For Foucault, the notion of repression

and coercion only capture power's frustrated form, instead of its typical functioning. "If power were never anything but repressive", he asks, "if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression." (Foucault 1980:119).

For Foucault, power "produces reality" (Rabinow 1984:205). It is the identification of this creative aspect of power that permits us to expand an analysis of empowerment from a narrow framework of a "struggle for power", to a wider field of action where power is wielded, not to wrest it from other individual or collective social actors, but to transform the lived context. One of the characteristics of the new social movements is that their struggles are not to "take over power", but rather to become empowered. To analyze strategies of empowerment, only a creative notion of power, as expressed by Foucault, will do.

However, in its entirety, I find Foucault's notion of power inadequate, or too slippery, to serve as an analytical tool for the study of empowerment. He describes power as "something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or a piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power." (Foucault 1980:98). This conceptualization of power as "never localized here or there" and as "never appropriated" renders it untenable in practice. I am not alone in this appreciation. Cohen and Arato (1992:294) find that "Foucault's analysis has deprived the modern rebel of any institutional, normative, or personal resources for constituting herself in terms other than those made available by the forces that already control her."

A more committed assertion as to the identity of power, and the concept which I employ in this study, is alluded to, almost in passing, by Bourdieu.

"A general science of the economy of practices, capable of reappropriating the totality of the practices which, although objectively economic, are not and cannot be socially recognized as economic, and which can be performed only at the cost of a whole labor of dissimulation or, more precisely, euphemization, must endeavor to grasp capital and profit in all their forms and to establish the laws whereby the different types of capital (or power, which amounts to the same thing) change into one another." (Bourdieu 1986:242-243).

For Bourdieu, the different types of capital -economic, social and cultural- are equivalent to power. Just as capital is "accumulated labor" that enables social actors to appropriate more labor and the products of labor, so too, power, as the capacity to do work, enables social actors to transform the lived context through labor. Empowerment, as I employ the term in this study, is achieved, inasmuch as it is exercised, by appropriating these diverse forms of capital and applying them to transform reality. Power is derived from putting capital to work. Capital, then, is potential power.

This conceptualization of power, opens the door not only for a theory, but for a praxis of empowerment. This is not limited to only offering subalterns the "arts" and "weapons" of resistance (Scott 1985; Scott 1990), where any larger aspiration would be "quixotic" (Stokes 1991:268), but rather, provides them with a creative potential to transform reality. It is clear that major forms of economic, cultural and social capital are unevenly distributed throughout the social landscape, and have the capacity to accumulate and to reproduce themselves, tending to deepen existing inequities. There is, however, a particular aspect of social and cultural capital which make them especially important in terms of empowerment. These less tangible forms of capital, unlike economic capital, are not as subject to the effects of "subtractability", that is, to their diminution when used. Putnam (1993:37) has expressed that "Social capital is... a resource whose supply increases rather than decreases through use and which (unlike physical capital) becomes depleted if not used." The same principle applies to cultural capital. Whereas economic and natural capital are objectively finite, social and cultural capital can expand indefinitely. It is this freedom from the "zero-sum" game, that makes me focus on the use of social and cultural capital as a vehicle for empowerment.

With this view of power and the possibilities it offers of empowerment, I hope to advance in a small way an exhortation made by fellow Latin American social scientist Orlando Fals Borda (1992:315)

"...we must continue to reinvent power in our own terms, in more humane, less cruel, and less violent forms that are more accountable to the people. This is a theoretical and practical challenge that must be taken up if the independent social and political movements of today are not to waste away or to become absorbed by parties, as has been happening, but are, instead, to continue their vigorous, fruitful existence as leading actors in historical developments in the future."

This exhortation also cautions us to take heed of the dangers of co-optation. As I mentioned before, while there is a continual reproduction of diverse forms of capital that may lead to empowerment, there is also, concurrently, a continual appropriation of this labor. It is this area of continual production and appropriation, or of "borrowing and lending", as Rosaldo (1989:217) softly puts it, that requires particular attention, both in theory and in practice. Special attention is required, not only to detect processes of unequal appropriation, or co-optation, but also evidence of "synergistic relationships" (Evans 1996:1119) that may emerge along this nebulous divide between critical and mainstream perspectives of sustainable development which may be mutually reinforcing.

Measuring Sustainability

The proposition developed so far that I will study the use of social and cultural capital as sources of empowerment to maintain or create a lived context of social, environmental and economic sustainability, calls for a final discussion on how to measure sustainable development. My focus is the Third World where 70 percent of the people live in rural areas and work in agriculture (Weaver et al 1997:135). In other words, most of the population is comprised of peasants, or what in Latin America are called "campesinos." By their sheer numbers the question of the peasantry's transformation and reproduction is central to the project of sustainable development. The measurement of sustainability cannot proceed without considering the fate of campesinos. Indeed, a great portion of projects of sustainable development have been directed at small-scale rural producers, albeit mostly through the mediation of NGOs (Williams 1990; Bray 1991; Thomas-Slayter 1992; Bebbington and Farrington 1993; De Janvry and Sadoulet 1993; Kaimowitz 1993; Uphoff 1993). The intentions behind these projects and the agendas of the mediating NGOs can be said to fall into the aforementioned mainstream and critical camps. I have suggested elsewhere (Montoya 1993) that this concern for campesinos in sustainable development, apart from the weight of their numbers, was sparked mainly by two reasons: first, they were seen as the direct destroyers of the environment, and second, they were seen as its possible saviors.

As destroyers of the environment, it was often understood that campesinos represented a last link in a chain of destruction, where their limited options forced them to compromise long-term environmental sustainability in lieu of their own short-term needs of subsistence. While mainstream and critical perspectives coincided roughly in this regard, the first tended to view the people and their cultural practices as the prime locus of environmental degradation (Leonard 1989), while the second placed the blame on policies and politics (Collins 1986; Clay and Lewis 1990; Millikan 1992; Winterbottom 1995). The view of campesinos as the hope for environmental protection stemmed from their proximity as rural communities to areas of environmental importance. This made them key potential actors in the conservation and management of these natural resources. For both their destructive and their redemptive roles, mainstream and critical efforts of sustainable development placed their sights on small-scale rural producers. Under either perspective the measurement of sustainability, in environmental, social, and economic terms, tends to differ.

In mainstream terms, the priority of sustainable rural development is "to increase food production in a sustainable manner" and to "conserve and rehabilitate the natural resources with the aim of maintaining a sustainable man/earth relationship", where "the success of agriculture and sustainable rural development will depend in great part on the support and participation of the rural population, the governments, the private sector and international cooperation, including technical and scientific cooperation" (UNCED 1992:179). In other words, sustainability of the rural sector is defined as increased productivity and the management of natural resources, where the means of achieving this is in part, the participation of campesinos, among others. This view contrasts strongly with what I pointed out earlier as the critical

perspective that gives priority to local empowerment, from which derive the other two main axes of sustainable development, that is, a respect for nature and economic equity.

One might say that as "beneficiaries" of projects of sustainable development, the considerations of campesinos and the effects of projects on their lifeworlds constitute parameters for the measurement of sustainability. However, this perspective perpetuates what Kearney (1996) has sought to deconstruct, namely the construction of the image of "the peasant" as an "object of study", or in this case, as an object of development. At once doing away with the concept that sustainable development is something that is done to people through projects, but rather is something done (or not done) by the people, and experienced (or not experienced) by them in their everyday lives, it is campesinos, not as beneficiaries of projects, but as social actors in their own right, who can express whether sustainable development is being achieved or not. This is not a sly attempt to toss the "hot potato" of indicators of sustainability over to campesinos as a last ditch effort to relinquish responsibility. True, this is a difficult aspect to grasp firmly, because it is derived from such imponderables as "the satisfaction of needs" -present and future. But acknowledging that the valorization of sustainability must reside largely in the hands of campesinos is based, instead, on epistemological and political reasons.

From a mainstream perspective, sustainability has been measured more specifically in terms of economic growth, productivity, rates of replenishment of natural resources, and number of "beneficiaries" participating in projects. Some of these categories have been further operationalized (Altieri 1987; De Camino and Muller 1993; FAO 1997; Schomaker 1997). From a critical point of view, the measurement of sustainability rests on a subset of imponderables that derive from present and future "needs", namely, empowerment, consciousness and equity, whose definitions reside closer to the subjectivities of the people in their lifeworld. Ultimately, I believe that the definitions that count most -both epistemologically and politically- are those that are lived in the flesh by the people in their lifeworlds.

Conclusion

In this study I address the diverse theoretical issues brought up in this broad literature review. In chapter 5 the birth of the community organization, CODECE, around the defense of the local environment reveals the importance of the social capital of the founding members, along with the cultural capital embedded in these networks of relations, in achieving early victories. The organization itself represented a dense network of social relations, or social capital which the members of CODECE attempted to reproduce as a source of continued empowerment. They did this through the use of discourse and participatory practices attempting to establish an identity and a sense of belonging among a wider membership.

CODECE's legal struggles in chapter 6 demonstrate how institutionalized cultural capital serves elite class interests despite arduous efforts of new social movements at democratizing the contents and boundaries of these institutions. CODECE's mostly failed attempts at transforming established manifestations of social and cultural capital reveal some of the workings of class reproduction and raise the question of where sources of local community empowerment might reside.

Environmental education as a means of generating "embodied" cultural capital within the community, and efforts to create a communal forest, as an "objectified" form of cultural capital around which to create a collective identity, are ways CODECE seeks to empower the local community. I examine these efforts in chapter 7, where successful local empowerment is confounded, however, by acts of appropriation of these cultural capitals by contending groups with different class interests.

CODECE's efforts of joining and creating national networks of like-minded organizations gathering a wider source of social capital as a means of empowerment is the subject of chapter 8. Here I contrast the multiplication of social capital by social movements on the one hand, and their focus on "subtractable" economic capital, on the other, revealing clear differences regarding their effects on local empowerment.

Ultimately, sustainable development depends on a subjective interpretation of present and future "needs". For this reason, a critical perspective considers that only through local empowerment can a community define its needs and take action to satisfy them. In chapter 9 the local rural community defines these needs, giving a particular meaning to sustainable development where local social and cultural capital play an important part not only in sustaining the local lifeworld, but are important elements of what the local

lifeworld seeks to sustain. The ability to express local social and cultural capital are among the important means, but also among the important ends, of sustainable development.

In the chapter that follows, I review Costa Rica's particular history of development, colored by early tendencies toward the reconciliation of diverse social and political internal differences. This tendency, along with Costa Rica's marked interest in environmental matters, makes it fertile ground for the early and widespread adoption of sustainable development as the leading national development paradigm. This sets the context for the main body of this dissertation, which is a case study of the diverse efforts of a community organization to implement local sustainable development.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Introduction

Costa Rica is a small country of 51,100 km2 located in the culturally and ecologically diverse, but poverty-stricken, and often war-torn Central American isthmus. Although Costa Rica in many aspects has been the exception in Central America, enjoying a relatively high standard of living, a large middle class, and a stable democratic system in the last 50 years, it is nevertheless subject to worsening social and economic conditions (Barry 1989). Costa Rica concentrates almost five percent of the world's entire biodiversity (Vaughan 1988), and it has an internationally recognized national park system that covers over 25 percent of the national territory. Yet the country has also been subject to continual environmental degradation (Ramírez and Maldonado 1988).

With a population of over 3.5 million, growing at a rate of 2.25 percent per year, a low infant mortality and a life expectancy of over 74 years, coupled with the socioeconomic and environmental trends, Costa Rica faces a questionable future in terms of life quality for the majority of its people. The concept of sustainable development was appropriated early on in Costa Rica as a paradigm that could address the country's uncertain future (Quesada and Solís 1988). However, this study shows how the concept has been employed in contradictory ways. A brief overview of Costa Rica's history can better situate the context in which this paradigm of development and conservation was widely adopted.

The concept of sustainable development had scarcely been formulated in the mid 1980s, when it was adopted in Costa Rica as the dominant development paradigm. The transformation of Costa Rica's landscape from mostly forest, to various forms of agricultural exploitation demanded by global markets, made reconciling economic growth with environmental protection a necessity. Costa Rica's political history during the last fifty years dominated by co-optive strategies of inclusion over coercive strategies of domination was also an ideal context for the adoption of sustainable development's tendencies of reconciliation. Subject to the same general problems of other Third World countries, Costa Rica's plantation economy did not bring it the "development" it sought, nor did post-World War II development aid defray the social, economic and environmental costs brought on by World Bank and IMF impositions. The 1980s were also a "lost decade" for Costa Rica, during which time NGOs and new social movements emerged as important actors seeking social transformation. Sustainable development offered these new social actors a conceptual "space" in which to maneuver and try to improve the life conditions of the people. In this chapter I review in some detail the history that allowed sustainable development to become the hegemonic development paradigm in Costa Rica, providing the context for my case study of an NGO seeking sustainable development for a local community.

Early Period: Transforming the Landscape

Before the European invasion of this land, what today is Costa Rican territory had a population of approximately 27,000 people and forests covered all but scarcely one percent of the land. The primary means of subsistence was slash and burn agriculture, supplemented by fishing, hunting, and the gathering of wild fruits (Sánchez Pereira 1992:23). When the Spanish colonizers introduced cattle, goats and pigs, as well as wheat and sugar cane cultivation, they not only transformed the native systems of production, but the native landscape as well.

Subsistence crops and pastures for grazing predominated. Attempts at monocrop production of cacao and tobacco as exports during the 18th century failed to have any major impact on the economy and society, or on the land. It was not until the introduction of coffee and its quick expansion hardly a decade after the country's independence from Spain in 1821, that export monocrops began dramatically to transform the country. Subsistence crops fell by the wayside, giving precedence to coffee plantations, large and small, that expanded, replacing "nonproductive" forest lands. What had been the most backward country of

Central America at the moment of Independence, became the first nation to link its capital city to both oceans by railroad and the first to illuminate its cities with electricity (Hall 1991).

During the 19th century coffee production expanded in the Central Valley, totally eliminating the original forests of the area. Land prices in the Central Valley began to rise quickly, increasing twenty-fold in less than fifty years (Cardoso and Pérez Brignoli 1986:214). During this period, the commons belonging to towns and cities, as well as to Indian communities were also dissolved, distributed into private hands. Due in part to the relatively large land base for the meager population of approximately 243,000 by 1890, land concentration was maintained at a minimum. However, the larger coffee traders and producers began extending credit under conditions of usury to the smaller coffee farmers, who often unable to pay their debts, mortgaged their farms which often went to increase the landholdings of the coffee exporting elite (Acuña and Molina 1991:83).

A second crop that became a major force in the national economy and which also transfigured the land was the banana plantation. An expanding North American consumer market encouraged the development of plantations in the tropical regions closest to "home". This meant Central America and the Caribbean. By 1890 banana plantations were firmly established in all of the region, which by the turn of the century were acquired by the United Fruit Company, and greatly expanded hence forward becoming the absolute monarch of banana production (Rodríguez and Vargas 1988).

1900-1949: The Politics of Reconciliation

By the beginning of the 20th century Costa Rica was immersed in a global economy, subject to the instability of world market prices. In order to mitigate this vulnerability, the country continued to expand production of world market commodities. Food crops became relegated to capital-poor subsistence farmers forced to search out cheaper marginal lands and to clear forests on the agricultural frontier. By 1906 the rate of deforestation was such that it caused concern among members of the Congress, who passed a bill requiring the Executive Branch to create a Forest Law. This bill, however was summarily filed, left to collect dust. Nevertheless, the first 25 years of this century revealed a preoccupation for environmental issues among members of the State leadership. This was reflected in the proclamation of numerous laws and decrees in this area. But like the Forest Law of 1906, most of these endeavors went no further than merely good intentions. Social, financial and political problems such as low coffee prices, the First World War, coups d'état, dictatorships, the Great Depression, labor mobilizations and general strikes relegated action on environmental concerns to the filing cabinet (Fournier 1991).

The same conditions which provoked an acceleration of the devastation of the land, also elicited disquiet among the campesino sectors, the rural proletariat, and the small mercantile producers. Small coffee farmers struggled against the pricing practices by the owners of the coffee processing plants. They called for the intervention of the State in fixing the price of coffee beans, the extension of credit to small farmers, and the formation of cooperatives to process the coffee themselves (Carcanholo 1981). Other sectors responded in less reformist ways. In 1931 the Communist Party was founded in Costa Rica. Workers created Labor Unions and the general strike became a means of pressuring the government. In this context of greater participation and popular mobilization, the Communist Party played a decisive role in inscribing the Social Guarantees into the Constitution, in declaring the Work Code and establishing Social Security (Acuña y Molina 1991:162).

The Costa Rican Civil War of 1948, sparked by an attempted electoral fraud, resulted in the victory of reformist social democrats led by insurgent José Figueres Ferrer against the unlikely coalition of then president Calderón Guardia's Social Christian Party with the Communist Party and the coffee elite. The victory of the National Liberation insurgents marked the beginning of a new era in the nation. The Communist Party and labor unions, as defeated sectors in the Civil War, and as posterior targets of repression, saw their influence decline after 1948. However, at the same time, the National Liberation Party (PLN) enacted a number of progressive reforms including a major tax levy on the wealthy, abolishing the army, giving full political rights to women and blacks, as well as many reforms previously promoted by the Communist Party. The PLN also began a process for greatly increased governmental participation in the economy, nationalizing all of the banks, insurance companies, the railroads, and utilities companies, among others.

The PLN openly praised political plurality and guaranteed the space for oppositional views to be aired, promoting, however, compromise and consensus as the ideal end point of these encounters. This laid the tracks for the subsequent evolution of the political culture in Costa Rica. The discourse of plurality, democracy and participation, often resulted in a practice that maintained the status quo. Also, after 1948 the State became legitimized as the mediator among classes, allowing the airing of critical discourse, as long as it was channeled through the State to find its resolution. Thus, the different social sectors began to seek political favors and State clout as a means to achieve group interests. In turn, the State sought the co-optation of disgruntled sectors into the system over their defeat and exclusion from it, maintaining in this way the status quo. While some conflicts exploded in strikes, land invasions and police repression, usually these differences were addressed in the pronouncement of new legislation, in the establishment of official branches to deal with the problems, and in the creation of public commissions to resolve the contradictions.

1950s-1970s: The Contradictions of Becoming "Modern"

By 1950 only 66.5 percent of the country remained under forest cover (Fournier 1993:98). One year earlier, the Forestry Council, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) was created, to care for the rational use of forestry resources. The Council, however, never was able to get off the ground. In 1953 the Law of Soil and Water Conservation was established, for a more rational use of the natural resources. In 1956 the first Law for the Conservation of Wild Fauna was decreed, making the conservation of wildlife a matter of public interest. In 1969, a badly needed Forestry Law was finally established as Law No. 4465. Among other things, this law called for the establishment of Protection Zones, Biological and Forest Reserves, and National Parks. This system of protected areas was soon to grow into Costa Rica's prime jewel of its worldwide environmental reputation.

This period, marked by a growing awareness of the need to protect our natural resources, coincided with the expansion of livestock farming, which began the most accelerated process of deforestation experienced by the country. Between 1950 and 1970 land dedicated to cattle in Costa Rica increased dramatically from 18% to 41% of the national territory. This "pasturization" of Costa Rica was carried out in detriment to the nation's forests, whose cover went from 67% to 41% during the same period (Fournier 1993:98). Despite the Forestry Law of 1969, deforestation continued to mount at an accelerated rate, resulting from its non-enforceability, as well as an ill-conceived land reform that required small farmers to establish their possession by carrying out "improvements" such as clearing the forest on the marginal lands that the Institute of Agrarian Development (IDA) distributed.

As the rate of environmental degradation in Costa Rica climbed precipitously in the 1970s, it was accompanied by an expansion of environmentalist institutional development. The National University and the Technological Institute of Costa Rica both opened Departments in Forestry Science. The newly created General Forestry Directorate, under Forestry Law No. 4465, was given an administrative structure, one of whose administrative entities was the Department of National Parks in charge of dealing with all the issues regarding National Parks, Biological Reserves and Protection Zones. The areas under protection in the National Park System grew from under 2 percent to over 12 percent of the national territory in just ten years, creating a growing mystique beyond the national borders, of Costa Rica as a model protector of its environment.

Interest in environmental issues during this decade emerged not only in State institutions, but among informed sectors of the general public, as well. While Costa Rica's international reputation as an environmentalist State was on the rise, internally the most intense protests against environmental degradation took place. The greatest student struggle during this period was against the environmental threats of the concessions for bauxite exploitation in the Valley of El General that the State Congress gave to the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA). During these protests, there were serious confrontations between students and State police forces. The outcome of this confrontation was a denial of these concessions to ALCOA, representing a victory for the environmental concerns of the student sector of civil society, against the capitalist interests of a foreign corporation, as well as against the economic interests of an apparently schizophrenic State unable to reconcile its concern over the environment with its desire to maximize its income.

The dilemma of reconciling protection with production, or conservation with development, began to emerge during this decade in the face of ever greater contradictions between the two under the prevalent modes of production. The endless horizons of inexhaustible God-given natural resources, were in effect coming to an end. Between 1963 and 1973 the number of small farms less than a hectare in size went from 50,211 to 10,505, representing the disappearance of 80 percent of subsistence landholdings in just 10 years (Rodríguez 1993:31). During this same period large landholdings greater than 100 hectares, representing 6.5 percent of the farms, controlled 82.4 percent of all farm land (Cartín y Román 1991:13). By 1973, the end of the agricultural frontier had been reached, beyond which any land taken for agriculture, being unsuited for this purpose, suffered rapid degradation. This process of land concentration, together with a growing population resulted in a landless peasantry swelling the ranks of an itinerant rural proletariat, and increased demands for land. With the dominant model of development favoring large scale production of export crops, both the environment and the quality of life among the more modest social sectors suffered.

1980s: The "Lost Decade"

The decade of the 1980s was denominated "the lost decade" for Latin America because of the inability of most of these nations to emerge from conditions of "underdevelopment". Costa Rica was no exception, suffering a severe crisis during this time. In the late 1970s world market prices of coffee and bananas fell, resulting in a catastrophic decline in export revenues. Foreign purchases of ever more expensive oil and mass consumer goods became unpayable, so the government borrowed heavily to finance imports, but onerous interest payments and capital flight due to regional turmoil caused dollar reserves to run out in 1980. This provoked a precipitous devaluation of the national currency the Colón, causing the government to default on numerous loans, and impeding the private sector from importing raw materials and replacement parts. This caused a severe recession with ensuing layoffs and growing unemployment. In the early eighties living standards of the majority of Costa Ricans plummeted. Along with the deterioration of economic and social factors, environmental destruction continued full force. By 1985 forests declined to only one third of the country (Fournier 1993:98).

Like the majority of Third World States, during the "lost decade" the Costa Rican government found itself caught in the straitjacket of unpayable foreign debt, severe austerity programs imposed by the IMF, the World Bank and the United States government, and the clamor of its citizenry against deteriorating economic, social and environmental conditions. Dissatisfaction with the government mounted. Social unrest manifested itself in numerous demonstrations, protests, strikes, threats of strikes, and land invasions. Bloody civil wars in the Central American isthmus, further created tensions in Costa Rica. Human rights abuses by an increasingly militarized police force began to surface after 1980. However, the government generally responded to mobilization of demands by accommodating pressure group initiatives, offering study and compromise to defuse conflict. Compromise and co-optation of organized civil society continued to characterize government practice.

During the 1980s NGOs proliferated in Costa Rica mostly in response to the government's failure to address the deteriorating social and economic conditions, as well as its inability to respond to the nation's growing environmental deterioration. The proliferation of NGOs was further aided by the new attention paid to the NGO sector by foreign cooperation agencies. This new found attention was in great measure prompted by an international change in development theory, fueled by the neoliberal policies of the First World of reducing the size and reach of government, and strengthening the private sector. Additionally, Costa Rica's international reputation as a nation dedicated to protecting its natural environment, along with its political stability, attracted international NGOs such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (UICN) and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), to locate their regional headquarters in the country.

By 1985 Costa Rica had 55 areas under protection covering 17.4 percent of the national territory (Fournier 1993:151). The expansion of its protected lands and the international reputation of its parks, contributed to converting Costa Rica into a "Mecca" for researchers of tropical biology, naturalists and ecotourists. This trend quickly converted Costa Rica's natural areas into a commodity from which to extract profits. There was a virulent privatization of Nature, acquired mostly by foreigners who catered to the growing business of ecotourism. Entrance fees to numerous private parks, as well as the cost of eco-

adventures such as white water rafting were out of reach for most Costa Ricans. The country's beaches, constitutionally protected as inalienable, in many places were fenced off by foreign private ownership. The privatization of Nature was only one of the many environmental issues of concern during the 1980s which fostered in Costa Rica the birth of many local NGOs with environmental agendas. Other NGOs, whose principal efforts were directed at addressing the problems of social sectors such as small farmers, native communities, and the urban poor, also incorporated environmental issues in their agendas. However, despite avid organizing by civil society, environmental degradation persisted in the country.

While international pressures were for the downsizing of government, the problems of environmental degradation could not be ignored by the Costa Rican State. In 1983 the Tropical Science Center, one of Costa Rica's earliest research NGOs, produced an Environmental Profile of Costa Rica, in which it recommended the creation of constitutional or legal measures to advance the nation's efforts of conservation. It also recommended the establishment of an Agency for the Protection of the Environment to protect the environment "for the future generations" (Hartshorn et al 1983:126). Three years later, in 1986 the Arias administration expanded State involvement, creating the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines (MIRENEM). Its tasks were first, "to foment the development of natural resources", and second, "to promote and administer legislation regarding conservation and the rational use of natural resources in order to achieve a sustainable development of these resources" (MIRENEM 1986-87).

By the late-eighties the term of "sustainable development" was solidly in use in Costa Rica. Early in his term, President Arias had the MIRENEM direct a great deal of effort in developing a National Conservation Strategy for Sustainable Development (ECODES), which came to be known by its acronym. In the inaugural address of the presentation of ECODES, President Arias expressed the official perspective on the meaning of this new type of development.

"We are intent on searching for new models of development which will allow us to satisfy the needs of the population. As a principal condition, the new model of development must not impede future generations the opportunity to resolve their own problems and satisfy their own needs... Our goal is for the model of development of Costa Rica to be compatible with the conservation of life in all its forms, a model of true peace with Nature. This desire is compatible with our values and our pacifist tradition" (Arias 1988:22).

In the same document, the Minister of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines, Alvaro Umaña called for a coming together of previously opposed interests.

"Obsolete visions of the conservation of natural resources predominated in the past, where only the absolute preservation of areas unaltered by human hands was sought. Others saw economic development as a process unrelated to society's physical resources, determined fundamentally by economic and monetary variables. With this effort we intend to overcome both positions and focus our sights on a profound social and economic development, based on the sustainable utilization of our basic natural resources....

"It is clear that an effort of this nature cannot be the government's alone, but rather, is truly a national crusade... All sectors of society are called upon to contribute their part in this great national dialogue. The most valuable possible outcome of this effort is a process of democratic strengthening with the active participation of the communities, of the private sector, and of each and every one of us Costa Ricans" (Umaña 1988:30).

During the 1980s the number of areas placed under protection went from 38 to 65, covering 20.31% of the national territory by 1990 (Fournier 1993:151), further adding to Costa Rica's international reputation for its conservation efforts. Internally, however, the creation of these protected areas met with strong pressures from a landless rural population who invaded some of these areas, and from capitalist interests, as well, strongly opposed to the conservationist actions taken by the State, arguing that they imposed unfair limits on the possibility of obtaining profits from the natural resources under State jurisdiction (Rodríguez y Vargas 1988:166). On the other hand, local NGOs criticized the State for the ongoing environmental degradation, and for the blind eye it lent business interests at the expense of the environment (Jiménez 1989:24-25).

1990s: The Hegemony of Sustainable Development

In the early nineties, ecotourism was hailed as the great hope in Costa Rica for sustainable development. Official statistics revealed that in 1992 tourism became the main source of employment in the country, and that in 1993 the tourism industry became the largest earner of foreign currency (Chacón 1994:5). In the National Development Plan of 1990-94, among the salient aspects expressed there was that "Ecotourism should be given high priority due to its proved capability to generate foreign currency and employment, based on natural resources" (cited in MIRENEM 1991:20). In the words of the Minister of Tourism:

"In spite of the multiple economic challenges we are faced with, the country is assuming the responsibility of protecting the natural resources for the future generations.

"Conscious of our responsibilities, in 1990 the Administration of President Rafael Angel Calderón proclaimed a New International Ecological Order... We have opted for a sustainable development of tourism, emphasizing ecological tourism... This decision requires the development of a responsible form of tourism. For this reason the Government and private enterprise have joined forces to promote joint projects for the benefit of the tourist industry and the country.

"The development of a sustainable tourism can only be realized with the support and help of local governments and communities, together with the leadership and planning of the Central Government and the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT)." (Chacón 1994:4)

In 1992, a short novel by Costa Rican author Ana Cristina Rossi became a national best-seller. In "La Loca de Gandoca", Rossi documented the story of her struggle to protect the Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge from its irrational exploitation for supposed "ecotourism" by foreign private enterprise, along with the compliance of the State, its corruption and indifference. Also during this time, numerous other ecological fiascoes were promoted in the name of ecotourism, many of which were variously fought by different NGOs. Moreover, social and economic conditions continued to worsen. Even the Minister of Natural Resources at the time acknowledged the lack of sustainability in the State policies.

"Today we clearly understand that our scheme of development is unsustainable... If indeed we can pride ourselves for the very important achievements we have had in matters of conservation and of a growing education of our people regarding this issue, the truth is that the factors which generate the destruction of the natural environment, are still in place. (Bravo 1992:252).

At the Earth Summit in Rio, however, President Calderón did not diverge from the rhetoric of reconciliation or the practice of institution-building, typical of Costa Rica's political history, to resolve contradictions.

"I come from Costa Rica: the land where ideals become reality. Where the ideal of a more than century old democracy becomes a reality. As does the ideal of peace as the fruit of social justice. The ideal of a democracy without armed forces. A land where the ideal of development in harmony with Nature has begun... Today is the beginning of history. History begins today with development and environmental protection. This Earth Summit marks the beginning of a new environmental era. From this moment on, humanity takes hold of new levels of environmental conscience and begins the long march of reconciliation with Nature.

"We hope that all the principles, ideas and plans of action of this Summit become realities. For this we propose the creation of the Earth Council, an international organization dedicated to making the agreements of this historical Summit a reality." (Calderón 1992).

Apart from this rhetoric which reaffirmed the Costa Rican government's intention of further consolidating an ideology of reconciliation, now to include the contradictions with the environment, Costa Rica also signed at the Earth Summit a Bilateral Agreement for Sustainable Development (BASD) with Holland, which promised substantial participation of civil society in the realization of the accord. The

BASD was taken up enthusiastically by Costa Rican NGOs from the moment the Foreign Ministers of both countries signed the letter of intent. Because of this participation, the project was not filed away and forgotten, when the next Administration came to power. By the time the actual Agreement was signed on March 21st of 1994, the new President, José María Figueres of the PLN, was heavily committed, at least by word, to carry out policies in accord with the major principles of sustainable development, as he expressed in his first public speech as President on May 9th of 1994.

"Today we know that not only must we transform our economy in order to produce more and be more competitive in the international markets, but that we must achieve these objectives on the basis of a harmonious relationship with Nature. This is necessary in order to guarantee the survival of our society and to obtain growing and sustainable levels of well-being for the long term...

"We Costa Ricans are coming upon a new period of great changes. Today it is our duty to take on a process of successive modifications of our current style of development, in order to come ever closer to a form of sustainable development.

"The government that I head is determined to take on this challenge in a profound way... I wish to express our hope of converting Costa Rica -this small tropical country- into a pilot project of sustainable development. We are determined to propitiate the transition to a first stage on the road towards sustainability, and to generate the initial impulse that will power the succeeding advances...

"A relatively educated and healthy population, in a consolidated democracy, has permitted the blossoming of popular organizations in our country... We intend to integrate all these organizations in our project. We hope that their relationship with the government will be transparent and that we will be able to keep them informed and involved in the realization of these common goals...

"This is our own definition of sustainable development: to seek a greater general well-being in the present while we care for the grand equilibriums that make possible our long term development, combining a strong social investment with a macroeconomic balance and an alliance with Nature." (Figueres 1994)

Even more so than ex-president Calderón before him, Figueres made sustainable development the banner of his administration. In his most visible initiative in foreign policy during his first year in office, Figueres spearheaded the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Central America. Ultimately, however, by passing late in 1994 the third structural adjustment package (PAE III) conditioned by the IMF, Figueres reduced his own meaning of sustainable development to only the third element of a three-pronged definition which included an alliance with Nature, a policy of strong social investment, and a commitment to maintaining a macroeconomic balance. The PAE III, like the other two before it, continued to demand a lowering of investments in the social sector, a reduction in public spending, and more exports to generate dollars in order to pay the long standing foreign debt. The result was a poorly conceived means of achieving a macroeconomic balance by undermining social investments and abandoning any alliance with Nature. Moreover, the participation of civil society was reduced to simply being informed of State decisions.

Nonetheless, there appeared some hopeful signs for greater participation of civil society in demanding respect for the principles of sustainable development. In June of 1994 the Legislative Assembly passed a Bill to amend Article 50 of the Constitution, to read:

"Every person has the right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment, favoring an adequate and integral development and a better quality of life, and is given the right to denounce actions which violate this right."

Ex-President Rodrigo Carazo, during this same year, at a public gathering expressed his optimism regarding Costa Rica's sustainable future.

"Permit me to be optimistic. That a book like "La Loca de Gandoca" became a best-seller in our country, is an indication that a generalized awareness about the importance of our natural resources has taken root in our people. Allow me to be optimistic. That the road to Pérez Zeledón, once full of oaks, and now denuded, yesterday was declared a protected zone, is a step forward from where we were only a short time ago. Allow me then to be optimistic. That because a group of interested people clamored to protect Cabo Blanco, now that is an area of absolute protection. Allow me then to be optimistic. With education and political will,

Costa Rica will be able to enjoy its real wealth. For what we have is indeed real wealth, not the volatile richness of money." (Carazo 1994).

While Carazo pointed out some elements that were indeed cause for optimism, the overall situation regarding social, environmental and economic sustainability was far from optimistic, and still called for change.

Conclusion

We find in the history of Costa Rica a tendency by the State and the wealthier classes to opt for reforms that do not upset the status quo, including the adoption of significant reforms that are promoted by more critical sectors. The widespread adoption of the concept of sustainable development by these sectors follows this pattern. Critical sectors, often informed by Marxist thought, though hopeful of revolution, have nonetheless also directed their efforts at promoting reforms to the dominant system. This conciliatory pattern in Costa Rica was fertile ground for the adoption of an ideology of reconciliation promoted by the concept of sustainable development. This was the national context in which I investigated efforts of a segment of civil society to implement sustainable development. But in addition, the objective conditions of increasing poverty, an expanding population, and continual environmental degradation also conditioned the results of these efforts for sustainable development in the country.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BIRTH OF CODECE:
COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE MOUNTAINS OF ESCAZU

Introduction

Along with the adoption of the concept of sustainable development in the 1980s, there was a burgeoning of non-government organizations (NGOs) in Costa Rica. These were equally held by the international official sectors (WCED 1987; UNCED 1992), as well as by those sectors critical of the "establishment" (PAE 1993), to be among the most important actors in the implementation of sustainable development. Because of their privileged position as intermediaries between local communities and international development aid, NGOs were considered to be an efficient alternative to public agencies in the delivery of programs and projects. Moreover, NGOs and community organizations were not only seen as entities to be consulted by the State and by development assistance agencies, but were also considered to have the right to participate in decision making activities aimed at sustainable development.

This chapter begins a case study with the birth of CODECE, Committee for the Defense of the Mountains of Escazú (today Association for the Conservation and Development of the Mountains of Escazú), a community organization and later an NGO that emerged in the county of Escazú in the 1980s in response to the vulnerability of a large sector of the local rural community when faced by an environmental threat. While originally not concerned with sustainable development as such, CODECE eventually appropriated the concept, chiseling it to a critical perspective, where local empowerment stood at the center of its efforts. This perspective implicitly assumed a concept of "value" that was not determined solely by economic terms, but rather acknowledged the value of diverse forms of "capital" (Bourdieu 1986), which were differentially available to social actors, to be appropriated and manipulated by them in exercising power. I point out that the empowerment of local social actors, as the centerpiece of CODECE's praxis towards sustainable development, involved taking hold of and manipulating available economic capital, such as international development aid, as well as less tangible forms of capital, such as social capital and cultural capital, as the means of exercising power to transform the lived context, in order for it to become more sustainable in social, environmental and economic terms.

This chapter traces the creation of CODECE which represented an initial process of local actor empowerment, leading the organization to embark on a prolonged struggle for what soon came to be conceived of as sustainable development. The empowerment of local actors, as the driving concept of social sustainability within the critical perspective, was achieved in the case of CODECE when some able individuals took on a situation threatening to the local environment and transformed it into an opportunity to ignite a sense of collective identity and solidarity among local residents. This strengthening of social capital became a means of empowerment in combating this and other environmental threats. Romano Sancho, a campesino-raised political activist and charismatic leader, Paulina Chaverri, a city-bred member of the academic intelligentsia, Francisco Mejía, a local teacher and son of an immigrant shoe-mender, Rodolfo León, a local farmer proud of his rough campesino heritage, were some of the individuals who played an important role in the creation of CODECE as a means of local empowerment.

Access to economic resources played a relatively minor part in this process. In contrast, these actors made strategic use of social and cultural capital collectively accessible to them as a means of empowerment. Discourse, as one of the primary means of exchange used to "endlessly reproduce" social capital (Bourdieu 1986:250), was employed not only to transmit pertinent information, but to generate a collective sense of outrage, to highlight collective interests, and to create a collective identity as means to collective action. In the process that lead to the creation of CODECE there was a clearly defined antagonist against which a collective identity was erected. Social capital then, in the form of networks of family, friends and acquaintances, as much among local farmers, as among academics and professionals, was made use of not only as an efficient means of gathering and distributing information, but also as a source of the constituents of a new collective social actor, CODECE, which then concentrated a greater density of social capital as a means of exercising power. Cultural capital, "embodied" as capacities and "dispositions of the

mind and body" (Bourdieu 1986:243) of the individuals in these social networks, provided a reservoir of accumulated years of education, technical know-how, and academic prestige that crossed class lines, which was also accessed and wielded strategically as a means to further empowerment.

The Setting

In the 1970s conservationist thought began to take root in various sectors of the nation. Students fought mining concessions that implied large scale destruction of natural resources, and the State firmly established the National Park System. The higher elevations of the Mountains of Escazú, which still had patches of forest and which served as micro-watersheds for the aqueducts of the surrounding counties, were declared a Protection Zone in 1976.

During this period Escazú began to achieve a certain international renown, not for its Protection Zone, but rather for being the destination for retirement, or a "resting place", as its original name signified, for figures of international notoriety, such as fugitive financier Robert Vesco during the late seventies, and Sandinista Comandante Cero, Eden Pastora of the Nicaraguan Revolution during the early eighties.

The turn of the decade was a time of high expectations among the Left in Costa Rica, impelled mostly by the Nicaraguan Revolution and the victory of the Sandinistas. Not by chance, this was also a period of heavy United States intervention in the country. The United States support for the Nicaraguan Contras concentrated its military structure in Honduras. However, in Costa Rica it also imposed strong controls of the mass media, generating a Cold War fear of the "red threat". This, in turn, justified the United States to militarize the Costa Rican national police forces, as well as set up semi-clandestine military camps and air strips in the northern border regions of the country (Berry 1989). These pressures, along with State persecutory measures and a relatively weak base of support contributed to the eventual demise of the organized Left in Costa Rica.

Among the leadership of the dying Left, some continued working for causes of social justice creating organizations that worked for human rights, the rights of indigenous groups, the rights of women, and the rights of small farmers. Others did an about face and joined the ranks of the political establishment. Some left the country to resume their university studies, while others returned to their roots to till the soil.

The organized political Left died in Costa Rica before the Berlin Wall fell, but many of the ideals that had earlier prompted these people to organize for social justice remained, although assuming less ambitious proportions. The political project went from taking power at the State level, to carrying out concrete activities among the grass roots at the non-governmental level. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) began to have an ever greater role on the periphery of State power. At the same time worldwide, coming from a diametrically opposite current, the neoliberal hegemonic powers proclaimed and imposed a reduction in government and at the same time promoted a greater support for activities carried out by NGOs. These factors coincided, encouraging the growth of NGOs and an increase in the numbers of projects aimed at strengthening the private sector, at protecting the environment, and at filling the gaps left by the State in matters of health, rural development, and education.

It is in this national context that a number of individuals played an important role in the emergence of the community organization, CODECE, in the town of San Antonio de Escazú. During my close involvement with CODECE, which spanned a decade from 1989 to 1999, both as anthropologist doing fieldwork and as committed member, I was able to piece together part of the lives of some of the actors whose personal histories were integral to the birth of CODECE. In this sense, three persons stand out: Romano Sancho, Paulina Chaverri and Rodolfo León.

Romano Sancho

When I first met Romano at the Seminar on Environment and Community action in 1989, I found him to be an engaging speaker. A few days later at one of CODECE's meetings, Romano quickly involved me in the work of the organization making me feel a welcome participant. These were some of the traits that I felt made him a charismatic leader. Romano Sancho was born of campesino parents in 1948 in the rural town of Buenos Aires de Palmares about 40 miles north of San José. The second to last son of a family

of 19 children, of whom 11 were women, Romano was designated by his father to be the one son who should study and become a professional. Romano entered the University of Costa Rica in 1968, a year marked by heated student protests worldwide. As a student of Political Science, Romano joined the Palmareño University Student Association where he was quickly elected president. This opened the way in Romano's life for a prolonged period of intense social and political involvement, to the extent that he abandoned his university studies in favor of his activism.

In 1971 Romano helped form the Costa Rican Socialist Party. From his leadership position in the Party, Romano organized banana plantation workers unions and campesino syndicates to fight for their rights. During his work with the campesino grassroots, Romano eventually started to become concerned with the vanguard and elitist tendency within the Party, and critical of signs of corruption and abuse of power among some of the leadership. In 1978 Romano was expelled from the Party, along with half of the membership. Subsequently, Romano and some fellow comrades created the Movimiento de Trabajadores 11 de Abril (MT), in honor of the spirit of the national hero Juan Santamaría, who gave his life the 11th of April of 1856 to fight against the subjugation of Costa Rica by the invading American fortune seeker William Walker.

Believing in the power of the proletarian working class to initiate a class struggle, after soaking up literature by Rosa Luxembourg and Gramsci, Romano and other members of the MT in 1980 opted to find work in factories in order to be shoulder to shoulder with the proletarian workers and start the revolution from the grassroots. But only one year later, disillusioned by the lack of class consciousness and revolutionary spirit among the factory workers, the MT was dissolved by its members, all of whom went their own way as each saw fit to best serve their revolutionary ideals.

During one of our walks together in the Mountains of Escazú in November of 1992, some twenty years after Romano helped create the Costa Rican Socialist Party, when I asked him about that period of his life, Romano recalled how in the early 1970s members of the Party had "grandiose ideals of sparking a proletarian revolution to transform Costa Rica into a socialist nation where the ideals of solidarity, justice and equal opportunity for all would reign, overthrowing a Capitalist system that spawned greed, exploitation, poverty, dependence, injustice and a throng of other social ills." He explained that the revolutionary movements in the sister countries of Central America further inflamed the Left in Costa Rica. The victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1979 raised the hopes of idealists and activists fighting for social change. Romano recalled smiling, that "in the closed circles of the leftist vanguard, the possibility of taking State power seemed to be just around the corner". But in his estimation, the virtual nonexistence of a popular Leftist base in Costa Rica, along with the overwhelming anti-Communist propaganda machinery deployed by the United States, and internal repression against the Left, made the Leftist movements of Costa Rica falter. Moreover, internal strife and corruption disillusioned many who became cynical.

"I worked a total of two years" Romano recalled, "in a factory that produced agricultural pesticides. I spent my days mixing chemicals in vats, inhaling poisonous fumes and temporarily losing my fingernails in the process due to the toxicity of the substances I handled. I learned about the processes involved in the production of agrochemicals used in the countryside where I grew up. I learned about the working conditions for factory workers. And I learned about class consciousness, or rather, the lack of it, in the very setting Karl Marx suggested would inflame it."

Romano's experience in the factory was "as disillusioning" he told me, "as his experience in the Party." He discovered that his fellow workers were uninterested in their condition as a class, or were unable to assess critically their interests as such, or see clearly who their class enemies were. "They were aware of being exploited, but accepted their condition as natural and inevitable. They were more concerned with football, than with the politics and economics that affected their daily wages." (Field notes, November 10, 1992).

In 1982, after two years of swallowing poisonous fumes, and finding himself disconnected from what he had envisioned would be a conscious proletariat, Romano moved to the Mountains of Escazú in the foot hills of San Antonio, where one of his sisters had inherited a piece of land from her late husband. He returned to the roots of his upbringing, to the productive activities he knew as a child and youth. In his own words, he was "like the goat that inevitably seeks the hills". Romano returned to farm the land, to eke out a living in the countryside, and where he could take time to reassess his views on society, as well as reflect on the direction of his own life.

As any other campesino might do, Romano bought a calf and fattened it for market. He also planted beans, corn, and squash for home consumption, as well as other vegetables, such as tomatoes, to sell at the local Feria, or farmer's market. Romano's affability and charm along with his spirit of cooperation and solidarity made him well liked in the community. He also came to know and befriend many of the local farmers. Soon, his organizational capabilities got the best of him, moving Romano to organize and help found the Farmer's Cooperative of San Antonio de Escazú, COOPASAE in 1983. The Cooperative, which benefited the farmers by selling tools, fertilizers and pesticides at more accessible prices, and benefited members by generating an income from the sales, would become instrumental, some years later, in the birth of CODECE.

Paulina Chaverri

I met Paulina in early August of 1989 during my first summer fieldwork in Costa Rica. Romano had invited me to visit him and his wife before I returned to New Mexico. A few days before my departure I went to their house hoping to interview Romano about the future plans of CODECE. Soon after I arrived, he became engaged in hearty conversation with a team of biologists who were carrying out a biological inventory of the Mountains of Escazú and had just returned from a week's hike in the mountains. Paulina was busy preparing coffee for the returning team, so trying not to be a bother, I offered to help her in the kitchen. Quickly she asked me the nature of my research, and I explained that it involved analyzing experiences of community environmental protection. Between sandwiches, empanadas and cups of coffee, Paulina told me much of what CODECE had done and was planning to do. She also looked among bookshelves that sagged under the weight of papers and books for several documents about CODECE that she thought would interest me. Although I learned little about Paulina's personal history during this brief visit, it became evident that she managed all the information regarding CODECE and that she played an important role in the organization.

Indeed, in the years that followed, I benefited from Paulina's written records of CODECE's history which became a key source of information for much of my research. We also ended up working side by side on many matters concerning CODECE and sustainable development, in general. During the hundreds of accumulated hours we spent working together and discussing philosophical, social, political and strategic issues, we also exchanged information on our personal lives. Paulina, born in 1961, was the second to youngest of eight children of very strict and conservative parents. While her father was a nationally respected scientist, it was her mother with only a sixth grade education, who demanded that all the children, and especially the daughters, receive a university education. All of Paulina's brothers and sisters became professionals, some of whom were professors at the university. Paulina began her university studies in history in 1978 and it was here that she and Romano met. To the chagrin and disapproval of her parents, Paulina became active in the Movimiento de Trabajadores 11 de Abril, becoming the black sheep of the family. Unheard of for girls her age and class, Paulina moved away from home to live on her own. Often Romano came and stayed with her, and at times her apartment became the temporary headquarters of the MT. Paulina graduated in 1982 and entered the Master's program the following year. When Romano moved to San Antonio de Escazú, Paulina soon joined him, giving up her graduate studies with the birth of their first son. It was Paulina's links with the university, however, that later became instrumental in the birth of CODECE.

Rodolfo León

The first time we met at a CODECE Board meeting in one of the classrooms of the public primary school in San Antonio, Rodolfo León was friendly towards me, in contrast to what I later discovered to be his generally adversarial attitude, especially towards professionals. The moment he learned that my grandfather was a local farmer whom he had known and admired, Rodolfo León granted me the benefit of any initial doubt he might harbor against a virtual outsider. But in due time Rodolfo was to continually question my integrity, as he openly did of everyone else, visibly relishing his challenges that seemed to be founded on what he considered were simple "maicero" (peasant) principles, such as hard work, willingness

to dirty one's hands, frugality, shrewdness, and solidarity. During the numerous encounters I had with Rodolfo, these were virtues he would bring up as a measure of the person or issue being discussed.

One of the first times I went to interview Rodolfo in April 1992, I found him working the field around his house, along with three other workers, preparing it to plant coriander. He had forgotten me from when we met some years earlier. Before even answering my greeting, he confronted me.

"Are you an agricultural engineer?" he asked rhetorically, noticing a professional-looking spiral notebook I carried. "Because just not long ago an agricultural engineer came by to give me some professional advice, and all he left me were his foot prints all over the row I had just planted. I had to chase him away before he ruined my whole day's work!"

I reintroduced myself and Rodolfo recalled who I was. But it was only when I picked up a shovel to help out while we spoke, that his attitude changed, and he opened up, sharing his ideas with me about politics, economics and the environment.

"People talk a lot about the fall of the Soviet Union," he said, "and that it had to happen, that it had to fall because of its own weight. I don't know much about these things because I haven't studied politics, but if you ask me, I prefer Socialism. I agree with private enterprise because it's what pushes things forward, but there also have to be benefits for the poor. As long as the laws don't change, we are not going to achieve anything. If it were up to me, this whole mountain should belong to the Municipality. When the Fennis family [from The Netherlands] bought 35 hectares for 52 million colones, the Municipality should have said "We'll buy this!", and distribute it among 35 campesino families. There should be a law that only permits foreigners to buy one hectare of land, and no more. I don't have anything against foreigners, but that's a law that should exist. It would be great to organize a land invasion with some thirty squatters on the Fennis land, don't you think?"

"Do you know what's wrong," Rodolfo continued, "with those of us who are concerned about ecological matters? There's too much talk and too little action. Maybe I'm too much of a "maicero de campo" (country bumpkin) and really backwards, but for me, deeds are more important than words. Actions speak louder." (Field notes, April 1992).

This early conversation with Rodolfo was revealing about the man who despite his sixth grade education was a respected figure among local campesinos. Dedicated exclusively to farming, Rodolfo was able to provide his wife and three sons with a relatively comfortable living. At age 55 in 1992, Rodolfo León had some six hectares in San Antonio, two of which he dedicated to vegetable farming and the rest to coffee, he had a spacious house, and a pick-up truck he used to transport his vegetables to the wholesale market and the Ferias. He was active in several local and national organizations, with leadership positions in some. When I met Rodolfo León in 1989, he was vice-president of CODECE.

It was Rodolfo's confronting attitude, as well as his willingness to propose unconventional solutions to problems, and his commitment to action, as revealed in this early conversation with him, that made Rodolfo a leader among the local farmers and a key figure in the early history of CODECE.

The Birth of CODECE

As I recounted in Chapter One, I first learned about CODECE when I attended a Round Table-Seminar on Environment and Community Action in June of 1989, while I carried out preliminary field work in Costa Rica for my dissertation proposal. With notebook in hand, I tried to capture the presentations of the three panelists, the last of whom was Romano, where he recounted the story of the birth of CODECE and its work to date. Romano's presentation revealed some of the elements that made the emergence of this community organization possible. This story, which later I often heard retold, was like CODECE's "creation myth" where its ideals of community awareness and community mobilization were achieved, and successfully wielded against a threat to the local environment and well-being of the community. The story's simplicity and optimism contrasted with later experiences of CODECE which revealed an increasingly complicated context and a waning capacity for social mobilization. I quote directly from my notes on the Seminar, where Romano's presentation was also significant in that it was what initially pulled me into the bosom of CODECE.

"The creation of CODECE came about as a response to a threat to the community's well-being. For sometime late in 1984, the residents of San Antonio had been hearing the sound of loud bangs resounding in the mountains. We wondered what neighboring town might be celebrating the festivities of its patron saint with what sounded like fire-works. Finally, farmers who returned from grazing their cattle in the high mountain pastures, reported that they saw tractors on the ridge of Cerro San Miguel, and were in the process of carving a road up to the summit.

"Cerro San Miguel, also known as La Cruz (The Cross) is one of the prominent peaks of the Mountains of Escazú. On its summit, many of you have seen, is a monumental steel cross, visible from San José and across the entire Central Valley. This mountain, it turned out, had caught the fancy of a Spanish priest, Padre Revilla, who had ordered the construction of the road. Revilla's dream was to build a religious center on the summit of La Cruz, with a monument depicting Christ dominating an Aztec pyramid, as part of a larger project to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity to the Americas. We later learned that Revilla had requested a construction permit from the Municipality of Escazú, but was denied it on the grounds that the geologic fragility of the mountains, posed ecological dangers from any large scale construction there. Disregarding this, Revilla went ahead with his project.

"The disastrous results of the construction ordered by Revilla in name of the firm Hispanos Unidos were not surprising. Great sections of the mountain broke away and fell into gorges and creeks, clogging up the streams that fed the Rio Agres. The reservoir on the river became useless because of the silt, leaving some 70 percent of the people of San Antonio without water, but for a trickle of mud.

"Several townspeople complained individually to the Municipality, but received no response. Finally, members of the local farmers' cooperative formed a commission to investigate the matter and write up a formal complaint to present to the Municipality. The letter presented the known facts and requested a tripartite meeting with the Minister of Agriculture. When a commission arrived with a written petition, the Municipal Council quickly agreed to set up the meeting with the Minister several weeks later.

"At the meeting with the Minister the commission, along with several other townspeople, arrived to lay out the problem before him. The construction activities in the mountains were causing severe health problems. The people could not wash or bathe. Mothers with babies had no way of washing the dirty diapers that piled up. Cases of hepatitis had already been reported. Farmers had no water for irrigation. The people pointed out all the negative effects of erosion and contamination caused by the construction activities, and asked that the Minister interfere to stop this construction in the mountains.

"The Minister explained that he had insufficient information with which to proceed and suggested that the Municipality investigate the matter further. The Municipality claimed lack of jurisdiction over the issue, as Cerro San Miguel belonged to the neighboring county of Alajuelita. It became clear that the matter had to be taken up by the community. The commission of the farmers' cooperative recognized that it could not assume full responsibility in resolving this problem. A broader organization of community people had to be formed.

"The commission called a town meeting for the purpose of creating a permanent committee. Thirty five people attended and seven were elected to represent them, among them several farmers, a teacher, a historian, and an artist.( ) We called ourselves the Comité para la Defenza de los Cerros de Escazú (Committee for the Defense of the Mountains of Escazú), or CODECE, and set ourselves three objectives: 1) to stop the construction of the Hispanos Unidos monument, 2) to get reparations for the damages to the mountain, and 3) to promote the adoption of a law declaring the Cerros de Escazú a protected area.

"Soon the rainy season set in and Hispanos Unidos set aside its construction work temporarily, giving CODECE time to gather information about Father Revilla's project, study up on environmental legal aspects, and work to mobilize the forces of the community in its support.

"When in 1986 Hispanos Unidos again sent in heavy machinery to the mountains to continue its project, CODECE was quick to respond. As soon as the now familiar rumbling sounds of falling boulders resumed, we informed the Municipality of Escazú and set up a meeting for the following day to include Padre Revilla, representatives of the Municipalities of Escazú and Alajuelita, and CODECE.

"The next day Revilla spoke glowingly about his "Spanish Heritage Park", pointing out the economic and spiritual benefits it would bring the deteriorated county of Alajuelita. When he finished, CODECE backed by a professional geologist, pointed out the environmental and social dangers the monument posed to the community of Escazú. The members of CODECE and the people of Escazú would

not condone this project. Moreover, CODECE demanded that reparations be made for the damage already done, otherwise, it would file suit against Hispanos Unidos.

"Although a tripartite commission between Hispanos Unidos, the Municipality of Escazú and CODECE was finally agreed upon to assess the damages, Father Revilla never showed up, instead he took the battle to the mass media, where CODECE prevailed, with sound technical arguments. Eventually, with the professional backing obtained by CODECE and irrefutable social and environmental arguments, even the Bishop of San José withdrew his support of Father Revilla, and the project was discontinued.

"CODECE had won its first major victory, but with all it had discovered during its investigations, including projects promoted by the State to build mega-tourist complexes in the mountains, if CODECE was really to protect the Mountains of Escazú, its struggle was just beginning." (Field notes, June 28, 1989)

After this first rendition, I heard CODECE's "creation myth" many times over, where other details slowly emerged in piecemeal fashion. However, I also found more information regarding CODECE's initial years in the many documents it kept on itself. Although I returned to Escazú in June of 1990 for a second three month period of field work, and found that CODECE then had its own office, which I visited often, it was not until I began my extended fieldwork in 1992 that I began to carry out systematic archival research among CODECE's voluminous documentation, much of which Paulina, as a trained historian, wrote up or collected from newspaper articles.

In a folder entitled "Proyectos Turísticos-1986" I found notes she had written that made reference to several projects. One was "Las Orquideas Inn" a hotel with 100 rooms, several high-rises, swimming pools, parking lots, tennis courts and saunas, to be constructed on El Cedral, the highest peak of the Mountains of Escazú. Another was a project promoted by the Costa Rican Institute of Tourism (ICT), a State institution, to build a lookout with a cafeteria and bungalows in the mountains. There were also notes referring to a tramway project to link the mountains to the city, and a British businessman's project, already approved, to build a touristic complex "Hotel la Montaña" on Cerro Rabo de Mico, another of the peaks in the Mountains of Escazú. I wondered about these projects, having only heard of Revilla's, which seemed to pale in comparison.

When we sat together in the office to have coffee (Field notes, July 10, 1992), I asked Romano and Paulina about these projects. They explained that during the respite offered by the rains between the first and second time they became aware of Revilla's incursion into the mountains, they took it upon themselves to investigate Revilla's project more deeply. Julio Jiménez, who worked in the Engineering Department of the Municipality of Escazú, and who was also one of the first seven founding members of CODECE, told them that Revilla's request had come to his office, but that it had been rejected because it lacked an environmental impact study, nor did it have the ICT seal of approval, which according to Julio, was required of all large scale tourist projects before reaching the Municipality. So Paulina and Romano started out by looking through the projects processed by the ICT, where they came across the projects mentioned in the folder I held, including Revilla's, whose environmental impact study recommended against its construction.

Among the environmental impact studies for tourist projects in the Mountains of Escazú, they found two that recommended against constructing there. One was authored by engineering professors at the National University who turned out to be friends of Paulina's sister who was also a professor there, and the other was authored by a geology professor at the University of Costa Rica, who was a friend and ex-comrade of Romano during their early militant years in the Left.

Through Paulina's sister, she and Romano met with the engineers who explained that even though their environmental impact statements concluded that those constructions were not recommended, there were no regulations that required abiding by these studies in the Mountains of Escazú, despite their category of Protection Zone. This was the first time Romano and Paulina learned that the Mountains of Escazú were already declared a Protection Zone. Here began another battle CODECE engaged in to change the status of the mountains -but that is another story I will take up later. Romano's geologist friend, William Zúñiga, offered to help CODECE in any way he could. It was he who later joined Romano and Rodolfo at the meeting with Revilla and gave the irrefutable technical reasons for why Revilla's project was unacceptable.

This conversation with Romano and Paulina was revealing in many ways. Until then Romano had not mentioned his political past to me. Though I had surmised a leftist leaning from Romano's conversations, his political past began to explain much of the direction of CODECE's goals and activities, hitherto not all that clear to me. I also began to recognize how important both Romano and Paulina's

personal connections and abilities were for CODECE's victory over Revilla, indeed, how important social capital and cultural capital, in general, were for all of CODECE's work.

In the battle against Revilla CODECE made use of its collective social networks, or social capital, as well as accumulated personal capacities and information, or cultural capital, as means of exercising power. The first important source of social capital was COOPASAE, the Farmers Co-op of San Antonio. This collectivity was the product of much time and energy expended by Romano and Rodolfo, as well as by many other farmers, crystallized into a working institution, where information flowed, collective preoccupations were discussed, and collective decisions and commitments were made. This exchange of information, as well as shared time and labor served to consolidate the institutional "space" of the Farmers Co-op. In turn, COOPASAE gathered individual social networks and personal abilities into a collective pool of social and cultural capital accessible to its members. Because of their high density in this collective space, both social capital and cultural capital were later easily accessed to create the commission that would become CODECE.

Social and cultural capital were also instrumental in obtaining information about Revilla's project by way of Julio Jimenéz in the Municipality, information about the Protection Zone in the Mountains of Escazú from the engineers at the National University, and technical arguments against Revilla's project through William Zúñiga's close collaboration. Social capital also proved indispensable when CODECE confronted Revilla in the national media. According to Paulina, if it had not been for a friend of hers at the newspaper La Prensa Libre, CODECE would have had no access to the press. When Revilla accused CODECE of "...attempting against the Catholic traditions of the people who see in the Monte de la Cruz faith, hope and universal understanding" (La Prensa Libre, May 2, 1986), for opposing his project to build a basilica on the mountain top, CODECE was able to respond with arguments backed by technical geological data which exposed Revilla's project as environmentally and socially disastrous. CODECE's victory against Revilla was founded not only on hard work expended during the organization's response to the threat, but on previous labor, stretching back years, expended by members and collaborators in accumulating social and cultural capital, by creating and maintaining social networks, and by developing skills and expertise, as well as acquiring information, in different areas.

But CODECE's success did not end with its victory against Revilla. In fact, despite CODECE's "creation myth", its triumph over Revilla was less conclusive than what I considered was the triumph of CODECE over its own likely demise. In many cases, grassroots organizations that emerge in response to external threats dissolved once the threat was overcome (Durning 1989a:38). Revilla as a threat was overcome, yet CODECE persisted. It was this continuity of CODECE after defeating Revilla that I contend marked one of its most significant early achievements. This became clearer some time later when I discovered that CODECE's "creation myth" hid some important details.

One Saturday August morning in 1992, I decided to climb Monte La Cruz to supplement the research I was carrying out in helping CODECE to develop a Protection Zone management plan. I had already made this climb several times before, though many years back as a boy on holiday in Escazú. With CODECE's triumph over Revilla to prevent construction in the mountains, I expected to find the climb pretty much unchanged. At first the trail up from San Antonio was as I remembered it. But when curving around the mountain I came to the side that faced the town of Alajuelita, the trail met a wide dirt road that climbed practically to the summit. This was the road opened by Revilla with the approval of the Municipality of Alajuelita. Tire marks revealed that vehicles used the road to go up the mountain, though evidence of landslides off the road into canyons below made the climb extremely dangerous. Some 800 meters before reaching the metallic cross that had been erected on the summit in the 1950s, in a dip in the mountain I came upon a strangely familiar monument, though I had never seen it before. It was a hundred foot figure of Christ with arms outstretched, standing on top of an Aztec-like pyramid. This was the figure so often described as the monument CODECE was able to prevent Revilla from constructing. I wondered how it was that CODECE persisted despite this obvious failure.

When I went to CODECE's office the following week, I told Romano what I had seen. He explained that much of the damage caused by Revilla was done before CODECE even existed. But, that it was what I did not see in Monte la Cruz that was CODECE's important accomplishment. CODECE had prevented Revilla from continuing constructing his religious center which consisted of a Basilica, a cafeteria, and a parking lot for the crowds of motorized pilgrims it was expected to attract. It then dawned on me how

difficult it must have been to keep CODECE alive based on negative achievements of prevention, that though they were important, they were also invisible.

"It was not our achievements we had to make visible," Romano corrected me, "but rather the threats, which were also invisible. Once we finished with Revilla, we all agreed in CODECE that we couldn't stop there. We had discovered too much. CODECE couldn't continue being just the seven of us. It had to become a community-wide organization. That's when we began to organize activities to attract people to CODECE. We organized an ecological painting contest, where the theme was "Our Mountains are Wounded". We still have the banner Luis Fernando painted for the event. We organized an ecological music festival, a river cleaning marathon. And in all these events we talked about the ecological threats to the mountains, and the need to protect them. During this period CODECE began to grow and we became a force in the community." (Field notes, Wednesday, August 19, 1992).

The emergence of CODECE as a recognized institution in Escazú was a significant achievement. CODECE became a new collective social actor which concentrated the social and cultural capital of its members and collaborators. This "space" endowed with a high density of cultural capital in the form of information, and social capital in the form of social networks, willingness of people to dedicate time and energy to its causes, and representation of a larger collectivity, among other things, made CODECE a source of empowerment for its supporters. It was during this period that CODECE began to file law suits against people who infringed the regulations set forth in the Decree that made the Mountains of Escazú a Protection Zone.

In CODECE's monthly reports of 1986 and 1987 I found numerous references to the law suits it filed during that time. There were several law suits against local farmers for cutting trees along the river's edge. Because CODECE did not yet figure as a legal "person", these were filed by Rodolfo León, as were other suits against more powerful residents of San Antonio, such as the lawyer Beto Ruiz for cutting some secondary forest, and a large land owner for burning some fields in the mountains. According to Rodolfo León "these were the first law suits against ecological crimes ever presented in Escazú." During a conversation I had with him before one of CODECE's monthly meetings, Rodolfo expressed that it was during that period that "we were really doing something to protect the mountains. We weren't scared to apply the law where we had to. We went at it evenly, against rich and poor. I filed a suit against my own neighbor. I saw him cutting down trees by the stream that runs through our fields and so I told him, 'I have to accuse you to the law' and he couldn't believe it, but that's what I did. He got angry. But then one day he came to me and said, 'You know, Rodolfo, you were right.' In fact, he also later came to CODECE to tell us about someone who was also cutting trees in the mountains." (Field notes, Monday, April 5, 1993).

Whether or not these were actually the first law suits filed in Escazú for environmental infractions, it was significant that CODECE not only gave its members the courage to invoke the law, but also offered people in the community a means of directing their environmental concerns. In this way, CODECE's mere existence as a space of common interests, or shared identity, became a means of local empowerment.

Conclusion

The birth of CODECE, in part depended on the previous formation of the farmers co-op, COOPASAE, by Romano and other local farmers. The formation of COOPASAE around farmers' productive interests provided a space of intersection for other concerns and information, which in turn facilitated the emergence of CODECE. This was one example of how social capital reproduces itself.

It is important to note that economic capital, as such, did not come into play as a key resource accessed by members of the community to fight this battle. Undeniably, economic considerations were present in farmers' concerns about the lack of water for irrigation affecting their incomes, but it was rather, the health implications of water scarcity, and the threat of future contamination by massive visitors to the mountains that moved the people to action. Moreover, it was mostly the mobilization of social and cultural capital, that made this new space of empowerment possible.

CODECE's "creation myth" reveals some of the elements that induced people to identify with and become part of CODECE. Above all there was a clear adversary and a clear threat. The lines were neatly drawn between the interests of the local rural community and those of an outsider with urbanizing tendencies. In fact, CODECE made use of Revilla's own monument of Christ dominating a Native

American pyramid, to draw a parallel with the priest's attempt to dominate the natives of Escazú. When Revilla tried to confound this dichotomy by tracing the line between Catholics and those opposed to Catholic values, CODECE's rendition prevailed. CODECE made use of the differences not only between Revilla's aims and CODECE's aims, but between itself and the dominant ideology of development that disregarded the environment, in order to maintain a collective identity for collective action even after the rains returned and restored the water to the residents of San Antonio. The persistence of CODECE beyond the "triumph" over Revilla responded in part to CODECE's ability to employ discourse and disseminate information, making visible the threats that still loomed over Escazú.

A clear threat to the well-being of the community (as made evident by Revilla's project) revealed a gaping hole in the community's ability to determine its own destiny. This threat to existing life quality of the community, such as clean water, was effective to move people to action, only to the extent that the threat was made evident, and that the only option to transform this situation was the community's own mobilization.

The transformed context, with the emergence of CODECE as a local community organization, the acquisition and diffusion of information regarding the legal status of the Mountains of Escazú, the awareness of threats of other construction projects in the mountains, and the victory of CODECE against Revilla, generated correspondent changes among other social actors sharing the same context. Among the community there was mostly a synergistic response, as exemplified by those who brought to CODECE information regarding threats to the environment, and thus provided the organization with a greater density of cultural capital in the form of information and institutional authority. This was an important result that eventually brought a growing membership to CODECE.

There were, however, some subtractive responses within the community from sectors who delimited their identities with other markers. One such response was that of the Municipality of Escazú, who saw its own dominion diminished by CODECE's effectiveness. CODECE's battle was in all likelihood perceived by the Municipality as a threat to its own income. CODECE's success in preventing Revilla from further construction, despite his support by the Municipality of Alajuelita, generated apprehension within the Municipality of Escazú, whose income was generated mainly from construction permit taxes and real estate taxes. CODECE's victory against large scale construction resulted in antagonism by the Municipality of Escazú against CODECE.

The focus of the Municipality on economic capital, instead of on the many non-monetary resources that contributed to quality of life of the local community, forced its reaction towards CODECE into a logic of competition over "subtractable" economic resources. This turned the Municipality against CODECE, instead of assuming it as an additional space of densely concentrated resources available for the county. What could have become a synergistic relationship became one of confrontation, instead.

The Municipality became one adversary, but CODECE had to continue drawing the line between itself and a greater constellation of "enemies" as a way of maintaining its distinction and collective action. One of the means by which CODECE attempted to draw this line and reproduce its own social and cultural capital as means of empowerment, was through actions directed at, and by making use of, the legal system and its laws. Inevitably conditioned by the legalist national context, CODECE struggled to use the institutionalized cultural capital of the legal system and its laws as a tool of empowerment. CODECE attempted this not only by appropriating for its membership the application of the law, but by transforming it to reflect a more democratic and critical perspective. These efforts are the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

CODECE'S LEGAL STRUGGLES

Introduction

CODECE emerged as an active response to a visible threat to the well-being of the local community of San Antonio de Escazú. Large-scale construction in the Mountains of Escazú had direct negative effects on the health and economy of local residents. CODECE became the social space where collective action against these threats was organized and mobilized. Once CODECE was able to stop Revilla and his concrete threat (pun intended), the organization's challenge then became to maintain and expand its membership in order to continue to confront a host of other potential threats, invisible though they were at the moment. One of the major ways CODECE attempted to achieve community empowerment to protect the environment, and later to implement sustainable development, was through the appropriation and also the transformation of the legal system, a form of institutionalized cultural capital. This is the process I deal with in this chapter.

I already noted that CODECE was born out of the previously created farmers' co-op, forming a new institutional arrangement and a new collective identity which was mobilized to confront a particular set of threats. As Cohen and Arato (1992:562) have observed, "newly achieved collective identities... constitute the condition of possibility of the emergence of new institutional arrangements, associations, assemblies and movements." Once CODECE was established, its challenge became to achieve some level of permanence, to reproduce itself in order to confront a newly discovered array of threats to the local environment and community. It did so in part by resorting to the formal institution of the law and addressing the legal aspect of the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú. CODECE sought to make this cultural capital more widely accessible first by democratizing the application the law, and then by seeking to transform the laws themselves in radical ways that would make the contents of the law more democratic, allowing for the empowerment of the local community in defining its environmental destiny.

Cohen (1985:670) has described this type of action, common among new social movements, as "self-limiting radicalism". As I will explain in this chapter, CODECE sought more democracy, but within the constraints of the established institution of the legal framework. CODECE sought to expand spaces for social autonomy by attempting to create a law for communal management of the Protection Zone, instead of attempting to abolish private property as a structure of domination. It sought to redraw the boundaries between the public and the private spheres, but did so within the formal structures which were culturally and politically available to it as a collective social actor. I maintain, however, that CODECE's radicalism was not only self-limiting, but in great measure was also limited by the cultural, economic and political context, as well as by the social actors that dominated this context. The relative immutability of the institutionalized cultural capital of the legal system in this case confirmed what several authors have pointed out (Bourdieu 1986; Hirabayashi 1993:127), namely, that cultural capital may become "an important, if subtle, resource that facilitates the reproduction of the overall class structure".

As I explained in chapter four, Costa Rica is an eminently "legalist" country. Its independence from Spain was not waged in the battlefield, but was granted in a legal document. The Political Constitution is a legal document that holds the highest authority to condition all actions in the nation. In contrast to its sister countries in Central America, Costa Rica's political stability is founded on its legalist tradition and culture. It was this context that conditioned CODECE's exercise of power as a new collective social actor. Once empowered as a collective social actor, CODECE sought radical change within the legal framework.

In spite of these self-induced and externally-imposed constraints, I still consider CODECE's efforts as revolutionary, concurring with Epstein (1990:37), who views direct action movements as revolutionary, where "their understanding of revolution does not revolve around seizing state power, [but] gives as much emphasis to changing culture as it does to transforming political and economic structures." CODECE engaged in both endeavors. On the one hand, CODECE attempted to change the environmental culture of its members and of the local community, and on the other hand, it also attempted to transform the environmental legal structures and practices that conditioned the local community's relationship to the

environment. CODECE tried to change the environmental culture by promoting the concept of a Communal Forest in the Protection Zone, where common interests and common responsibilities were emphasized. It also attempted to change the existing environmental legal structures and practices, first by fomenting a democratic application of the law, second by pushing for a transformation of the law, and finally, by attempting to synthesize these efforts in a Regulation Plan for Escazú.

As I explain here, CODECE's efforts in the legal domain are ongoing. Yet, I attempt to make an evaluation of its achievements in this area. Cohen and Arato (1992:562) suggest that "the success of social movements... should be conceived... in terms of the democratization of values, norms and institutions...which stabilize the boundaries between lifeworld, state and economy." I argue to the contrary, that the measure of CODECE's success lies in its ability to de-stabilize the fixed boundaries between the "lifeworld" it envisions and the hegemonic legal institutions that constrain CODECE's utopia.

Appropriating the Application of the Law

When CODECE was still only a Committee for the Defense of the Mountains of Escazú, its initial members discovered, not only numerous threats to the mountains, but also learned of the existence of a decree protecting these mountains. In 1976 a large part of the Mountains of Escazú, which included the higher regions of six counties (Santa Ana, Mora, Acosta, Aserrí, Alajuelita and Escazú), was declared a Protection Zone. It was then expanded in 1983 to cover an area of over 7000 hectares. The legal description of a Protection Zone was that it served primarily "to protect the soil, regulate the hydrologic cycles, conserve the environment and significant watersheds" (Salazar 1991:159). To achieve this, certain norms were established within Protection Zones, including regulations against cutting trees 50 meters on either side of rivers. However, unlike National Parks, which by law had to be acquired by the State to become public lands, the status of Protection Zone included the presence of private lands. The Mountains of Escazú were virtually all held privately by many small and some large landowners, making enforcement of land use regulations enter the domain of private property for public benefit.

Having discovered that the Mountains of Escazú were protected under the status of Protection Zone, the members of CODECE attempted to become a visible force in the community, committed to enforcing the legal statutes of the decree that protected the mountains. In order to reaffirm the law that heretofore had been ignored, CODECE sought to detect any irregularity that threatened the environment of the Mountains of Escazú. CODECE formed a vigilance committee that periodically hiked in the mountains in search of anyone who might commit an infraction against Protection Zone regulations. The enthusiasm that this acquired moral authority generated in some members of CODECE made them carry out actions that quickly caused resentment among other local residents.

"We organized vigilance committees," Romano explained one day at his house when I asked him about this early period of CODECE. "When they found bird-catchers, the vigilance committee confiscated their cages and freed the birds. When they came upon cattle grazing in fields within the Protection Zone, the vigilance committee chased the cattle down the mountain. When they found a land owner cutting trees next to a stream, the vigilance committee sent word to the Rural Guard of Escazú to come and fine the man. Rodolfo would take me in his pick up truck and we would ride around the mountains keeping our eyes peeled. The others, about a dozen people that formed CODECE at the time, would take turns on the vigilance committees in the Protection Zone. We were so enthusiastic that the mountains had a protected status, that we denounced people as a way of making the law known to everybody and respected by everyone. The local farmers began to realize there was a special Protection Zone law in the mountains where hunting, as well as cutting trees, or burning brush, or grazing cattle, was prohibited. The result was that the number of large-scale burnings and tree cuttings dropped, but many small farmers also began to resent CODECE when we denounced them. But we also denounced large landowners and powerful people. We denounced Beto Ruiz, a wealthy lawyer who cut down secondary forest on his land to plant Jaúl for commercial extraction. Another was Gerardo Busowsky, who leveled the mountainside along the Hoja Blanca road to build a residential complex, causing mud slides downhill, threatening smaller homes. But the legal denunciations against powerful people were all lost. In some, because of technicalities, in others because of judges who were their friends. We were quite ingenuous then, and we denounced small and large alike, but we discovered that the Protection Zone laws did not really touch the rich people. They were able to avoid

the denunciations, or else pay fines that for them were insignificant. The biggest problem, though, was that we were creating antibodies ( ) among the community, with our denunciations of small farmers." (Field notes, Saturday, February 5, 1994).

During the interviews I carried out in 1992 and 1993 among farmers in the Mountains of Escazú, I discovered the presence of some of these "antibodies" Romano referred to. They appeared in multiple versions. Among the statements I recorded were that CODECE was a branch of the National Forestry Directorate with "authority to arrest" (Antonio Solís, Interview, June 16, 1992); that "CODECE only picked on the humble folk and left the rich alone" (Aquilino Arias, Interview, April 14, 1992); that CODECE had "released venomous snakes" in the mountains "to kill off the cattle" (Rafael Hidalgo, Interview, February 11, 1993); that CODECE was "myopic" in that while it was against bird hunting, it did nothing against the use of pesticides that were the "prime cause of the extinction of birds" (Guido Madrigal, Interview, October 29, 1992); that CODECE was out to "expropriate homes and farms" of those people who lived within the Protection Zone (Manuel Corrales, Interview, June 16, 1992); and that CODECE was remiss in its work because "there was still deforestation, contamination, and hunting" in the Mountains of Escazú (Nino Fernández, Interview, May 23, 1992). Because CODECE was the only visible environmental organization in the county at the time, it was the target of all discontent, whether in favor or against matters regarding environmental protection. Some resented CODECE for what it did, while others resented it for not doing enough.

Alexis León, a 40 year old campesino and part time construction worker for the Municipality of Escazú expressed his opinion when I asked him what he thought about the work of CODECE.

"I want to be frank and speak clearly. A man like Rodolfo León, who is a good man and all, may be part of CODECE, either for political interests, or for a salary, or to occupy a position, and he may talk much about protecting the mountains, but when he gets a piece of land, he is the first to cut down all the trees and leave that land bald like a billiard ball. So what! What is a group like CODECE doing? Taking up space, that's all. They talk about protecting the mountains, but here there is a man who every year spends his time burning the land. And say, someone like me who is interested in protecting the land, what can I do? Go to him and tell him what? Stop burning? No way. And denounce him? How? Without any witnesses!" (Field notes, April 24, 1992).

CODECE as a space that brought together people, generating a collective identity, was not initially constituted as a "legal person". It was not a registered organization, and so the law suits it filed were signed by individuals. In fact, what CODECE actually did went no further than what any individual could do: file suits, call on the authorities, denounce infractions. What CODECE achieved, however, I suggest, rested in the social capital of its collective or institutional character. The weight of an organization representing a collectivity applying the law, was greater than that of an individual. Alexis León, as an individual unconnected to CODECE, found it illusory to denounce a neighbor for environmental infractions. Members of CODECE, on the other hand, were willing to exercise their legal rights. This appropriation of the application of the law was achieved by the weight of the social capital behind the organization. Despite the particular ineffectiveness of many of the law suits filed by CODECE, it was nevertheless able to instill in its members a willingness to appropriate the law as their own, infuse the law with greater democratic participation. CODECE was partially able to destabilize the previously fixed identity of the law as a force imposed by the State, and transform it into an instrument to be used by the people, as a source of local empowerment.

By bringing the law into the realm of popular practice, CODECE also made a previously unknown law visible to members of the community. By appropriating the institutionalized cultural capital of the law, CODECE reproduced the embodied cultural capital of information in the community. CODECE made the law visible, even though it may not have been clear. CODECE's actions revealed the existence of "a law" in the mountains, a law which many rural people, I found during my conversations with them, respected without actually knowing its contents.

One campesino in the county of Asserí, Gabelo Gamboa, mentioned the effectiveness of the law in the mountains.

"These lands are good for growing corn and beans. Over there, they exploited that many years ago. There's no longer any forest. Further on up, there are fields with cattle, but I find that for the question of water and all that, I don't agree at all with cutting down the trees. Because the waters are coming to an end, they are diminishing. See that little river, it's all dried up. Why? Because, in the mountains where the

springs are, I can almost say there's no more forest. Just fields and stuff. During that time when the law wasn't very, well, people didn't worry much about it, those people extracted all the wood. Things happened when there wasn't a law. Or rather, there was a law, but they didn't worry about it. But not now. With the law there is in the forestry zone, it's very difficult to cut down a tree for wood." (Gabelo Gamboa, Interview, April 7, 1992).

CODECE's collective nature provided a space of densely packed social and cultural capital which to some extent empowered its members to appropriate and democratize the application of the law. But this transformation of the lived context still remained limited by such external factors as individuals with greater economic capital and social connections within the legal system. Despite the democratization of the application of the law, CODECE found the actual laws to be ineffective against powerful private interests. No matter how successful CODECE's radical practice of redrawing the boundary between the legal institution and the people's appropriation of it might be, the actual content of the law was something CODECE considered also needed to be transformed.

CODECE Attempts to Change the Law

Soon after this initial enthusiasm and quick disillusion, CODECE began to work on writing up a Bill of Law that would replace what the Protection Zone Decree had established. With the help of their lawyer friend Patricia Madrigal and geographer William Zúñiga, Romano and Paulina wrote up in 1987 a Bill of Law for the Communal Administration of the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú. This Bill proposed a redrawing of the Protection Zone, based on natural geographic lines, and a policy of communal stewardship and administration of the area. The document stated that "...even though most of the land within the Protection Zone is private property, the common good must prevail over private interests," and proposed that a "representative community organization [should have] the authority to protect and administer the appropriate use of the land" (CODECE 1987:2). For CODECE, the Bill they proposed "represented a radical transformation of national law where community property was recognized and social welfare prevailed over private gain" (Romano Sancho, Field notes on Environmental Law Workshop, June 1990).

The common practice to get a new law passed in Costa Rica was to have a Deputy of the Legislative Assembly endorse and promote the Bill of Law before the Assembly. CODECE presented their Bill to Deputy Mireya Guevara, resident of Escazú, who offered to promote the Bill before the Legislative Assembly. However, the Bill Mireya presented to the Legislative Assembly for preliminary discussion was one of her own making, and in fact a complete disregard for CODECE's central arguments. The Bill Deputy Guevara authored sought to convert the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú into a National Park, which required land expropriations and severe restrictions on land use (Guevara 1987).

"One day I was still working at the farmers' cooperative," Romano recalled, "when a group of four men came in looking for me. I vaguely recognized a couple of them as large landowners of Escazú. They told me they wanted to have a meeting with me, that they were interested in talking about what CODECE was doing to protect the Mountains of Escazú. I agreed, but sensed something strange, and the following evening I took Pito with me to meet with them at a lounge in Santa Ana. There were about 15 men when we arrived. They were all large landowners in the Mountains of Escazú. When they began to question us about our intentions to make the Mountains of Escazú a National Park, we realized that there was a grave misunderstanding. They were aware of Mireya's Bill of Law before we were and had the idea that we were behind it. Pito and I had to work hard to convince them otherwise, but that is how we found out about Mireya." (Field notes, July 4, 1998).

CODECE asked Deputy Mireya Guevara for a meeting and called her to task, but she defended her conservationist re-write of the Bill. Although CODECE explained that the Mountains of Escazú did not meet the conditions to be declared a National Park, Mireya continued to promote her Bill in the Legislative Assembly, where it was eventually rejected. On the other hand, at the suggestion of Patricia Madrigal, CODECE submitted its own Bill of Law, without the patronage of any Deputy. However, over a decade since it was submitted, the Bill never had a preliminary hearing, being subject to a constant re-shuffling at the expense of other Bills with names of Deputies behind them.

CODECE's Bill of Law for the Communal Management of the Protection Zone attempted to re-introduce the concept of communal property into national law. Instead of the strict separation between individually-owned private property and State-owned public property, CODECE sought a long-discarded legal formula that would "create community", or endow the local community with "collective responsibilities" (CODECE 1987:2). Presenting this Bill without the patronage of a Legislative Deputy was also a break from established practice, an effort of self-empowerment to redraw the fixed boundaries that separated the people from the legal institutions. CODECE not only sought to democratize the content of the law, but the practice of creating laws, as well. But CODECE's attempt to create a new legal formula for "communal management", met with profoundly fixed lines delimiting public from private property, and accepting nothing in between. Deputy Guevara's Bill could only envision the alternative of State property, while the oblivion which CODECE's bill encountered revealed an incapacity or unwillingness of the legal establishment to even consider the option of communal property. On the second score, CODECE met with a legal institution superficially permeable to democratic participation, typical of State practice as revealed in Costa Rican history, but at a deeper level, the legal system was effectively impervious to popular appropriation of law-making mechanisms.

While the hegemonic interests that maintained the status quo appropriated CODECE's efforts as a way of dissipating them, CODECE began to address some of its own inconsistencies. Although CODECE's Bill of Law for the Communal Management of the Protection Zone declared the "local community" as the principal actor in the administration of the area, as well as the "primary direct beneficiary" of the region's environmental protection (CODECE 1987:3), the Bill was thought of and written up by the reduced circle of people who made up the organization at the time, and not by the "local community" it pretended to benefit. This inconsistency, Romano speculated, was the result of his political past.

"I was still under the influence of the centralized directive style of the Leftist parties," Romano explained, "in spite of the fact that I was expelled from the Socialist Party for my democratic tendencies." (Field notes, July 4, 1998).

In a self evaluation session in February 1988, the members of CODECE pointed out two major weaknesses of the committee: first, a lack of legal training for the members of CODECE, and second, a lack of community participation in CODECE (CODECE Monthly Report, February 1988). In other words, CODECE still lacked the necessary cultural and social capital for empowerment to transform the lived context.

CODECE Becomes an NGO

Two months later, in April of 1988, the Committee for the Defense of the Mountains of Escazú became an officially recognized association, opening its doors to any new membership that accepted to abide by its statutes. While keeping its original acronym, CODECE became the Association for the Defense of Natural Resources. By becoming a "legal person" as an association, CODECE was also able to opt for international funds. To this end, Paulina wrote up a project proposal to create an environmental legal office for CODECE. The proposal had two major objectives: "to contribute to the national legal framework in environmental matters" and "to train the local community in environmental law as a means of protecting the local environment". To do this the proposal called for a full time executive secretary and a part time lawyer during a period of two years (CODECE 1988). The proposal was accepted the following year by the Inter-American Foundation, whereby Paulina became CODECE's executive secretary and Patricia Madrigal its part-time lawyer. CODECE became a funded organization, entering the lines of NGOs supported by external funds.

It is important to note that the distinction between a community organization and an NGO is not always clear-cut. CODECE itself grappled with these denominations, tending to prefer the denomination of, or at least strive to remain, a community organization. Nevertheless, with the acquisition of external funding, the hiring of paid staff, and the eventual concentration of labor and information in the office personnel, CODECE tended to become more identified with an NGO. The organization bought a pick-up truck and a computer, and rented an office. They no longer held their meetings in donated space at the school of San Antonio, no longer depended on borrowed typewriters to write memos, or rely completely on voluntary unpaid work to carry out the Association's mission. With external funds CODECE became more

professional. But along with this, CODECE was also affected by a process of "verticalization", or loss of "horizontal ties" (Putnam 1995:77) important in strengthening the social capital of a community organization.

Nevertheless, accessing economic capital was one way CODECE sought to improve and expand its work. Economic capital allowed for the presence of Patricia Madrigal in CODECE. An ex-schoolmate of Paulina's, Patricia was one of a few law students in the country at the time working toward a specialization in environmental law. When I began my extended fieldwork in 1992, Patricia was no longer employed by CODECE, but figured on numerous graduate committees of law students seeking degrees in the newly established field of environmental law. While with CODECE, Patricia researched diverse bodies of law corresponding to environmental matters, and shared her findings with CODECE. Together with Paulina, they wrote these up in pamphlet form to be discussed by all of CODECE in the monthly meetings organized by Paulina.

CODECE also continued with its vigilance of the Mountains of Escazú, but concentrated more on stopping destructive actions by the wealthier and more powerful, instead of treating small and large alike. Also, with Patricia's close guidance, CODECE was much more careful on how it went about constructing its cases. Word went out that CODECE was the watchdog of the mountains, and soon the office was receiving complaints by community members against cases of burning, tree cutting, hunting, contamination of waters, landslides caused by construction activities, the stealing of water by people upstream, etc. While Paulina received complaints and consulted with Patricia, Romano along with other volunteers went to verify the complaints, check the files of the Municipality for construction permits and water concessions, and get the rural guard or Forestry Inspectors as official witnesses to environmental infractions (CODECE monthly reports 1989-1990).

By the volume of complaints CODECE had to attend, as documented in its monthly reports of this period, it appeared to me that many members of the local community saw the Association as the local authority on environmental law. Even the Municipality directed many of the environmental complaints it received to CODECE. During an evening of analysis which I attended in the office of CODECE, one of the topics was the Association's relationship with the Municipality. We discussed whether it was out of respect for CODECE's expertise, or out of incompetence of the Municipality's own departments and as a means of reducing its own work load, that the Municipality referred all the environmental complaints it received to CODECE. We even considered the possibility that it was a political strategy to discredit CODECE by flooding it with work it would be unable to execute. We did not reach any concrete conclusion, but rather considered all these possibilities as probable. (Field notes, July 28, 1990).

Whatever the case might have been, CODECE's professionalization reinforced the authority invested in it, and the Association's reputation expanded. The effects of this were contradictory. On the one hand, the organization grew. During the period that CODECE had the legal office, which eventually spanned from 1988 to 1991, its membership went from barely one dozen, to nearly 40 persons (CODECE yearly Assembly minutes, 1989-1991). Among them were several local farmers, rural women, local school teachers, young students, and university graduates. Although most limited their participation to the Association's periodic assemblies, some became actively involved in the work that engaged the office of CODECE. In either case, their joining CODECE coincided with this period during which the Association became an externally financed NGO, more professional, and willing to receive environmental complaints from everyone to act on them.

On the other hand, CODECE's newly acquired legal status, its transformation into an externally financed NGO, and its professionalization, placed great demands on it. The expectations the people had of CODECE as the organization whose duty it was to solve environmental problems, often resulted in disappointment and disempowerment. CODECE's legal and enforcement limitations, made it appear at times as ineffective and inefficient. Despite Patricia's legal counsel, there were very few solid resources in matters of environmental law, especially with regard to regulations in areas declared Protection Zones, for CODECE to employ. CODECE's law suits against people with infractions of Protection Zone regulations, became a bothersome thorn, a deterrent at best, but ultimately had little support from the law to stop actions destructive to the environment. Moreover, and more importantly, while CODECE became to some extent a means of local empowerment whereby local residents could channel their environmental concerns, CODECE also became the institution to which the people delegated, and ultimately relinquished, their own responsibility, action and power.

Legal Power to the People: Course in Environmental Law

Of the two major objectives CODECE hoped to achieve with the legal office financed by the IAF, the goal of training the local community in environmental law as a means of protecting the local environment took precedence. Despite the aura of authority CODECE had acquired in environmental regulation, it had no more authority than any individual. CODECE's continual preoccupation, despite its growing membership, was the "lack of community participation" (CODECE Monthly Reports, 1988-1991). CODECE, as a community organization with limited participation, had neither the material nor human resources to respond to all the concerns it received from the community. For CODECE, it was the community as a whole that had the capacity to make effective changes to guarantee local environmental protection. It sought to empower the community by endowing it with greater informational or cultural capital.

In 1990 CODECE organized a six month course on environmental law for community members. Patricia Madrigal established the contents that included water law, forestry law, land use regulations, and regulations of protected areas and wildlife, as well as the mechanisms available to citizens in order to file suits for environmental offenses. Paulina developed a participatory methodology that included role playing, board games, and field trips. Romano covered the District of San Antonio inviting farmers, bird catchers, hunters, students, house keepers, and professionals to participate in the free course offered by CODECE.

The course was held every Wednesday evening from 6:00 to 8:00 pm for six months. I was not present during the first months of this course, but the minutes Paulina kept on each of the classes permitted me to reconstruct some of the early sessions. The first night, 23 people arrived. There were 13 small farmers, among them Rodolfo León, Gilbert Sandí, Nino Fernández, Jaime González, and Fito Calderón. Both Rodolfo León and Jaime González brought their wives. There were two bird catchers, three students and three professionals, one of whom was a retired civil engineer, another was Pedro Mena an agronomist trained in Russia, and the other was Amalia León a young woman sociologist who had worked on housing projects for marginal communities in Alajuelita. Romano gave the welcoming speech in which he emphasized the importance of community involvement in the protection of the environment of the Mountains of Escazú, and the possibility, upon concluding the course, that each student receive an official license to detain environmental offenders. (CODECE, Minutes on Environmental Law Workshop, January, 1990).

The first session, ended up being dedicated principally to attending the concerns of the small farmers who were preoccupied with the possible "land-use restrictions" on their properties within the Protection Zone. They all agreed on the importance of protecting the watershed, but were defensive about their agricultural practices, and also resentful about wealthy outsiders buying up the land. Rodolfo León, who by this time was beginning to show what I later clearly detected as discontent with the professionalization of CODECE, salaried office work, and in general, with the "verticalization" of social ties in the organization, took the opportunity to address an audience.

"A course like this is only good for professionals. They work for a salary and when they leave the office, the rest of the day is theirs to do what they want with it. They can do what they like in the afternoons, drive around in their cars, go shopping, or go to courses like this one. But we "maiceros" don't have time to spare. We get up at three in the morning to begin working, and at eight at night we are still at it. Then many farmers don't have cars to come to these courses. They have to walk. Some live almost an hour away. One hour to get here and one hour to return. They can do that maybe once or twice a month, but not every week for six months" (CODECE, Minutes on Environmental Law Workshop, January, 1990).

The following session, only eight people arrived: three farmers, Rodolfo León, Fito Calderón, and Jaime González with his wife. There also were two students, and two professionals, Pedro Mena and Amalia León. At the end of the six month period, only three persons had followed through with all the course, Fito Calderón, Pedro Mena and Amalia León. I was able to attend several of the later classes and was present at the last one where the "diplomas" were handed out. While CODECE had not obtained any formal authorization for the course graduates to carry out legal detentions of people committing environmental infractions, the students that remained received the diplomas with obvious pride and satisfaction. The course was an attempt to place the instruments of the law in the hands of the community,

but the number of participants was much less than CODECE had hoped for. This lack of "community participation" continued to be a point of discussion within CODECE. Nevertheless, despite the reduced participation, this long-term exchange of information, and sharing of time and energy between CODECE and the students that remained, and even among some of those who did not finish the course, to some degree strengthened the social capital of CODECE, producing new dedicated members of the Association.

Opus Dei: Threat to the Protection Zone

In 1992 members of the clergy once again became a threat to the Mountains of Escazú. This time it was Alberto Cassal, a priest of the powerful ultra-conservative order of Opus Dei, particularly favored by the Pope, and with considerable influence in the national government. In an act of unselfishness, a loyal member of the flock donated a piece of land he owned in the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú, to Opus Dei. This piece of land was a plateau known as the Llano San Miguel, which marked the beginning of the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú. Traditionally, this plateau was favored by the local community as a place to go with the family and enjoy the breathtaking view. The obvious qualities of the site did not escape its new owners, who behind the legal status of an association (Asociación Pro Arte y Cultura), began plans to construct a spiritual retreat on the Llano, with a capacity for 60 guests and installations for cafeteria services, dormitories, sports activities, conference halls and auditoriums. When I arrived in Costa Rica in April of 1992 to begin my extended fieldwork, and joined CODECE for a hike in the Mountains of Escazú, most of those present commented on this issue (Field notes, April 10, 1992).

During the months that followed, CODECE intervened at least three times to halt the work of tractors on the Llano San Miguel authorized by the Municipality. CODECE's winning argument finally was that constructions in the Protection Zone required environmental impact studies, which Opus Dei did not have. In October, despite the heavy rains, the tractors were once again at work in the Protection Zone. At a meeting I was not able to attend, CODECE along with local residents, including my father who later informed me, went to the Municipality to protest the reactivation of construction on the Llano San Miguel. The Municipality had granted the Association Pro Arte y Cultura a construction permit after the organization had presented a "supposed environmental impact study" by a geologist, which according to Romano amounted to no more than a "poem" in praise of the work Opus Dei would carry out. Despite Opus Dei's formal compliance with an environmental impact study, Paulina pointed out that these studies had to be interdisciplinary. Faced with this argument, the Municipality was forced to take back the construction permit already granted. This, we discussed later in CODECE, we felt was only a temporary respite, and that once Opus Dei obtained an interdisciplinary study carried out by its own supporters, would exhaust any other legal action CODECE could take. (Field notes, October 28, 1992)

This struggle, though surprisingly similar to CODECE's first battle, had important differences. While both threats were identified with Spanish priests, Revilla's social capital was relatively scarce, whereas Cassal formed part of an extremely wealthy organization with strong influences in many areas of government. Revilla's construction was planned on a mountain peak that had already been subject to large-scale construction, and was already a visited destination. In contrast, Cassal's construction would be a first in a relatively untouched part of the Protection Zone, setting a precedent that would open the gate for a flood of construction by landowners who were only waiting for someone to get the road paved and electric lines extended into the Protection Zone. Revilla's threat came only from the works of his own project. Cassal's threats extended beyond the project of Opus Dei, over to a future frenzy of construction within the Protection Zone.

The day after talking with Romano over what had gone on in the Municipality, I climbed the mountain to see what Opus Dei had already actually done to the Llano San Miguel. Walking up El Curio road, I began to hear the sound of heavy machinery. When I got to the Llano San Miguel, a bulldozer was leveling the land. I spoke to the man in charge of the tractors, Jorge Ulate. He told me that the Opus Dei priest had told him that they had all the necessary permits to continue working. Ulate had told the priest that he did not want his boys to be involved in any problems with the law. I told Ulate that the town of San Antonio was very concerned with the construction planned by Opus Dei. I had my camera and was taking pictures, which seemed to make Ulate nervous.

"Nobody is going to build anything here," he assured me. "This is only going to be a place for retreats."

I found his comment ridiculously contradictory to the presence of tractors. But then I began to suspect (and later confirmed) that what Ulate said was in fact a rehearsed legal argument. The permits the Municipality revoked were for construction, and what the tractors were doing here was simply leveling the ground, not constructing anything. This was the legal loophole Opus Dei used to continue their construction work at the site.

I was still taking pictures when a fancy Mitzubishi four wheel drive arrived. I introduced myself, stating my name clearly so as to learn theirs in return: Federico Gamboa and his wife. He was the engineer of the project. I told him I was documenting the works because the people of Escazú were very concerned with what was happening.

"This construction is inevitable," he stated authoritatively. "We must protect Nature, but civilization cannot be stopped."

"Well, the people of Escazú most definitively do not see this construction as inevitable, " I answered his subtle threat with my own bluff, "much to the contrary!"

After that I hurried down to CODECE's office and told Paulina and Erik Alpízar, a law student who worked part time with CODECE, what had happened. They could hardly believe that only two days after the construction permits were revoked, Opus Dei was back at work. So I took Erik to the Municipality where he spoke to the Municipal Executive Armando Botassi.

"Does Opus Dei have, or does it not have construction permits?" he asked. "No?, OK." So we went to the Rural Guard. There the lieutenant told us that just the day before he had gone up and seen the tractors at work and the priest had told him that he had all the necessary permits, so unless CODECE had a document proving the contrary, he couldn't do anything.

"Let's go to the Municipality where we just talked to the Executive, and you can see."

He came with us and, in effect, found out that Opus Dei did not have the necessary construction permits. (Field notes, Thursday, October 29, 1992).

The following morning, Erik, Romano, and Rodolfo went up to the Llano San Miguel with the Rural Guard and stopped the work. They all went down, along with Ulate, the man in charge of the tractors, to the Municipality. Soon, the priest Alberto Cassal, himself arrived "like a raging bull", Romano later described it, "furious and arrogant saying that he would enter the Municipal Palace by himself to fix this matter." Cassal clearly wanted to prevent others from entering while he negotiated with Botassi.

"No sir," Romano responded, "this is a public place," and so they all went in.

Cassal argued in the Municipality that the tractors were not constructing, only leveling the ground. Finally, Botassi told the priest that he would not have a construction permit for any tractor work until he had an interdisciplinary environmental impact study approved by the Ministry of the Environment.

"Nobody is going to stop this!" the priest threatened on his way out. And Rodolfo responded, "This crap is not going to be built, and it's not going to be built!" (Field notes, October 30, 1992)

That same day in the evening CODECE had already organized a Forum "Construction in the Mountains: Development or Destruction?", which I attended.

Romano addressed an audience of about 50 people, among whom was the Municipal Executive, Botassi.

"The project planned by Opus Dei is a spearhead that would create the precedent for more and more construction invading the Protection Zone. Finally, the natural beauty, the scenery, the tranquillity, the fresh air, the solitude and the freedom to walk the countryside, would be trampled over. What would occur would be a cascade of construction, the buying up of land, urban expansion within the Protection Zone, with their barbed wire fences, cutting off passage along trails used traditionally by the inhabitants of Escazú. The Mountains of Escazú would become the exclusive garden of the new proprietors, instead of belonging to every Costa Rican, as they are still today. Soon, the haven for retreats that so impassions the priest of Opus Dei, would become one more neighborhood of San José, full of streets, cars, light posts, in addition to everything that brings with it, such as daily garbage, sewage, waters with detergents, smoke and noise from the cars. All this would take place above where the waters used by the inhabitants of Escazú are collected."

"It is a shame", he continued, "that our Municipality has been so disrespectful of the community and arrogant towards the very people it represents, and instead has been a lackey with the interests of the powerful."

One of the Sisters of the Catholic school where the Forum was held expressed her discontent with what Opus Dei was doing.

"This construction can be built in many other places, but we cannot make this mountain anywhere else. I want to continue to get up in the mornings and find the mountains green, and not covered in concrete. We are already circulating petitions to be signed by all the residents of Escazú, protesting the project of Opus Dei. Everyone in our school has already signed, and we are not stopping there."

"Considering how powerful Opus Dei is," Romano stated, "if we win this fight, nobody else will dare come in and build here."

Finally, Armando Botassi, expressed that he did not understand why the Municipality was being cast as the villain of the movie.

"Let's look together for solutions. The principal problem is that we do not have good laws to regulate what is done on private property. A Regulation Plan is an excellent tool, but its regulations must be protected constitutionally. The environment is the patrimony of everyone, and not only the concern of the Municipality. We must all help each other."

This new-found conciliatory tone by Botassi, several people commented on the way out, was probably aimed at earning him points for re-election (Field notes, October 30, 1992).

The following week, the only issue we discussed in CODECE was the threat of Opus Dei. We all recognized that it was only a matter of time before they obtained all the required documents to continue with their project. In the discussions, that included Romano, Paulina, Erik, a biologist Javier Sánchez who had become closely involved in CODECE since he lead the expedition for the biological inventory in the Mountains of Escazú, Pedro Mena, Amalia León, and two sociologists that were temporarily volunteering work in CODECE, and myself, we came up with two strategic areas in which to deal with Opus Dei: the technical-legal field and the area of communal mobilization.

In the technical-legal field, we considered that CODECE could continue blocking Opus Dei by focusing on technicalities, at least to stall for time. But in general, there was little we could do to prevent construction on private property within the Protection Zone, considering the sanctity of private property in the Constitution. Any prohibition by the Municipality was subject to a suit of unconstitutionality. However, restrictions, rather than outright prohibitions, on constructions within the Protection Zone might be effective. These could be stated in a regulation by the Municipality based on technical criteria. CODECE could supply these criteria. Another possibility could be to establish a Regulation Plan that would limit the activities and type of infrastructure allowed within the Protection Zone. Finally CODECE could push to have the Protection Zone be declared in the public interest and move in the direction of expropriations and severe restrictions on land use. All these options required the collaboration of the Municipality, and now, during the pre-electoral period, was the moment to seek this collaboration since Botassi was looking for re-election. Politically, the time was propitious to garner the social capital of the Municipality in favor of community interests. CODECE had to work quickly on writing up one document that specified what was required in an environmental impact statement, and another document that could be a provisional regulation on activities in the Protection Zone, and give these to the Municipality for ratification. (Field notes, November 5-10, 1992)

In the area of community mobilization we came up with the idea of creating a Council of Elders made up of local eminent personalities and local leaders as a group of the community that could demand the protection of the Mountains of Escazú. The idea was to create a community-wide front with CODECE simply as an advisor, so as not to be alone against a force like Opus Dei. Without wasting much time, CODECE called this Council of Elders, first among the membership of the Association, and then among particular community leaders. The meeting was held at the school in Escazú, with the presence of some 20 persons. From the leadership of CODECE, only Romano went so as not overwhelm the Council if Elders with members of CODECE. Romano later recounted the events of the meeting. After he gave a brief introduction explaining the issue at hand, those present then began talking without any order, nor did they all care that much about the issue. Each had their own issue that concerned them. Romano gave Fello, one of the participants and also a member of CODECE, copies of a summary of all the events regarding Opus Dei and the Llano San Miguel, to hand out to those present. Unbeknownst to Fello or to Romano, however, one of those present was Federico Gamboa, the engineer of Opus Dei, who infiltrated the meeting and took with him all the information that was handed out and discussed!

"We have to find an ace somewhere, because they have us screwed!" Romano concluded, after recounting the events. (Field notes November 9, 1992).

In confronting Opus Dei, CODECE made use of abundant information its members had been able to collect, including such crucial information as the requirement of an interdisciplinary environmental impact study for any construction within the Protection Zone. Besides this informational cultural capital, CODECE also made use of institutionalized cultural capital it had been able to generate with its own labor. CODECE had become the local "authority" on environmental issues, even in the eyes of the Municipality. This gave CODECE the power to "advise" the Municipality, as well as make demands on it, to restrict the activity of Opus Dei in the Protection Zone. In contrast, CODECE's efforts to expand its social capital by generating greater community participation, continued to fall short of the Association's expectations. Ironically, its accumulated cultural capital, which gave CODECE some type of authority, also seemed to raise the Association above the community, making it an entity to which members of the community relinquished their own participation and power.

Opus Dei eventually suspended its heavy construction work for some time, but during periodic walks to the Llano San Miguel I continually found new "improvements". Scarcely one month after the "event" with Father Cassal at the Municipality, I found a young man training boys in mountain climbing techniques on the Llano San Miguel. He belonged to the Opus Dei Association Pro Arte y Cultura, and oblivious to any controversy over the subject, mentioned that soon a recreation center for young people would be built there with all types of sporting facilities.

That same day, though, I found a hopeful sign of change. On my way back down the mountain, I met "Carreta", a local small-time merchant with his wife and children and father-in-law, Santiago Fernández, an older man who had participated in the Council of Elders. I struck up conversation with them. They were headed to see the damages Opus Dei had done. With tears in his eyes, don Santiago said to me, "The people are organizing to fight against the destruction Opus Dei is causing!" And Carreta confessed, "You know, I was very mistaken. I was a good friend of Norberto Salinas [the previous owner of Llano San Miguel, who donated the land to Opus Dei], but what he did was unpardonable. We have to fight against this. But where religion is involved, it's very difficult, and Opus Dei is very powerful." (Field notes, November 30, 1992). It was heartening to hear this type of talk beyond the walls of the office of CODECE.

However, the next time I hiked past the Llano, I found a "No Trespassing" sign posted at the entrance. Some time later, a barbed wire fence enclosed the entire property. At one point, I even found efforts of reforestation on the land, but these were with exotic species not suited to the region. Eventually in 1996, I found the road paved to the entrance of the property, with gutters and street lights all in place. Was it true that "nobody could stop civilization", as the engineer of Opus Dei had predicted? I hoped not, but had my fears.

Regulation Plan

The "ace" that CODECE tried to play in order to prevent Opus Dei and others from invading the Protection Zone with constructions, was supporting the legal institution of a Regulation Plan for the county of Escazú. In my field diary I had already made note of the idea of a Regulation Plan for Escazú in April of 1992. The notes made reference to CODECE's concern over the Municipality's version of the Regulation Plan that categorized Escazú as an urban county, opening the gate to rampant development (Field notes, April 1992). The following month, at a meeting among all the technical collaborators of CODECE, architect Marian Pérez, explained that her collaboration with CODECE focused on writing up a Regulation Plan for Escazú as part of a move for greater participation of the people in their self governance. (Field notes, May 4, 1992). The idea of a Regulation Plan was already being toyed with by such sectors as the Municipality, as well as a group of local businessmen and developers. For CODECE, however, it was the threat of Opus Dei that moved it to work seriously on a Regulation Plan for Escazú.

The Directive Junta of the Association and various others who participated regularly in the discussions, considered that, above all, it was the local communities of Escazú who had to give their opinions regarding what the future of their county should look like. Especially important was the need to hear the voices of those sectors rarely consulted in these matters. These included small farmers, women, and

students. CODECE presented the idea to friends in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of Costa Rica, where several graduate students took up the idea for their thesis.

In September CODECE made an open invitation to the communities of Escazú to a presentation of these students' thesis on the Regulation Plan of Escazú. There were about 25 people, more than half of whom were members of CODECE. In the presentation, the two architects made an analogy of Escazú to a sick patient that needed a diagnosis, which was provided by the Regulation Plan. In the Plan areas for further development were delineated, as well as areas for agriculture, protected areas, and commercial areas.

Rodolfo León raised the question as to the effectiveness of such a plan to regulate activities when faced with the constitutional right of doing whatever one felt like on private property, but no one had an answer to his question. After some discussion regarding the methodology the architects used to come up with their Regulation Plan, they explained that the importance of this meeting was to inform the people, so that when the Regulation Plan was offered for public approval at the Municipality, the community would be able to participate.

After the presentation, Paulina had mixed feelings about the presentation. CODECE had called the meeting as a way of informing the community on the importance of participating in the creation of a Protection Zone, but it was obvious that the architects' vision of community participation was limited to a one time approval of a project the community had not contributed to developing. The most important conclusion of the presentation, Paulina and I agreed, was in fact that real communal participation had to be inserted into the entire process of developing a Regulation Plan. (Field notes, September 24, 1992).

There were rumors during this time that several local architects and businessmen, along with some members of the Municipal government -all with pro-development interests- had already formed an Association for the Regulation Plan of Escazú in order to press for a line item in the budget of the Municipal government committed to formulating a Regulation Plan for Escazú. This information also pushed CODECE to move ahead with the issue, but it was the immediate threats of Opus Dei during the month of October, 1992 that set the pace for CODECE's work on the Regulation Plan. Soon after, CODECE asked for a meeting with the Municipal Council to discuss the issue of the Regulation Plan. I attended the meeting at the Municipal Palace, along with some 20 other community members. Romano opened the meeting.

"Good evening. Our interest is simply to be able to converse. You are well aware that whenever we come to the Muni, there is always some regulation or limiting time period, or there are other points to be attended, that we rarely have the opportunity to sit down without other pressures and exchange ideas about things that concern us and concern you; concerns that we share. We would like to present to you some of the ideas we have discussed in the Directive Junta of our Association, and of which we felt it would be important to hear your opinion, in order to search out possible actions. Because as Escazuceños, either by 'nativity', as the campesinos say, or by adoption, we share the same concerns that unite us.

"Basically, what I wanted to present to you, in name of the Directive Junta, is the following: the development of Escazú has till now permitted the conformation of three clearly identifiable zones. On this map -which you might already have seen- made by the architects of the University of Costa Rica- we can see first the urban part, where the residential areas, hotels and commercial areas are. This strip represents half or 60 percent of the county. Then there is the agricultural strip, which crosses the county. That is all the high part of San Antonio. Here we predominantly find rural aspects such as agriculture, trapiches, coffee farms, etc. I don't mean by this that all who live here are farmers. No, there are many who work in offices, in construction, etc., but one can still breathe a rural environment here. This agricultural strip borders the third region, the Protection Zone that is also clearly delineated. So, when one sees this map and sees Escazú, one finds that these three realities complement each other and are what make Escazú attractive. They explain what the attraction and the beauty of this county is, and what makes it different from other counties of San José. You no longer find this combination of realities in Desamparados nor in Guadalupe, nor in any other county.

"So in face of this evidence, one asks oneself many questions, and one which is fundamental: How to promote the development of the county, taking advantage of these characteristics, guaranteeing their permanence? In other words, how to achieve the development of Escazú, while maintaining these characteristics? Why maintaining them? Because as I said, the three combined are what make the county attractive. Imagine that the urban region did not exist. It would be very beautiful, bucolic and romantic, but there would be no services. Currently, from any point in Escazú, in 10, 15, 20 minutes, you can access all the services: supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, hardware stores, everything! Then, if we eliminated the

agricultural region, we would be losing all those traditions of which we are all so proud, adobe houses, ox-carts, trapiches, horse-back riding, and the source of such national celebrations as the Day of the Boyero [ox-driver]. Finally, if we eliminated the Protection Zone in the mountains, we would be losing a great hydrological wealth, recognized in numerous documents. The air currents from the Atlantic come heavy with humidity, and those clouds one sees constantly over the mountains, discharge their humidity by rain or condensation, permanently nourishing these watersheds. But the Protection Zone also holds a scenic wealth, which you recognize when you rise in the morning and look up to the mountains, a wealth writers have written about and which they link to our identity as Escazuceños.

"So, it is the combination of these three areas which we wish to maintain. When one sees the initiative of Escazuceños to declare the high region a Protection Zone, it is because they value the mountains. When one sees that, despite numerous difficulties, the farmers of Escazú continue strongly attached to agricultural production, despite the construction of houses and roads... There are 200, 250, I don't know how many farmers determined to continue farming, because as Rodolfo León says, 'Where will the ox go when he no longer plows?' In other words, they are farmers, they feel like farmers, and want to continue being farmers. And this is possible. Felipe's father once told me how in Europe one sees cities and towns coexisting with small farms.

"How then to achieve development, while maintaining an enduring balance between these three zones? When I speak of development, it should not be thought of in immediate terms. We have to think of the generations who come after us, otherwise we would be very selfish. What would happen if development today destroyed this reality, or in 10 or 15 years transformed it into something completely urbanized, into one more metropolitan region? We would be killing the chicken of the golden eggs. It would stop being interesting, it would become another Desamparados, or like any other town. But it is not by chance that Escazú has been maintained the way it is. Already 30 years ago, some Escazuceños had the foresight to buy up the watershed of Río Las Lajas, and today there are beautiful secondary forests there, where we have seen five sloths in one morning, and many wild turkeys. It's a beautiful forest, Las Lajas. And other Escazuceños made the Protection Zone possible, because they understood that Escazú could not only be this, or only this, or only this.

"Now there is an attempt to construct in the Protection Zone. All this, then, is to ask oneself: Is the current development of Escazú threatening this reality, or will it guarantee perpetuation of this reality? Take note that we are not opposed to development. We simply ask ourselves whether development can maintain these characteristics which make Escazú so beautiful? Or is the current development threatening this reality? It is regarding this that we would like to hear your opinions.

"For some time now, we have been hearing 'the footsteps of big animals', with more and more people coming to build in our beautiful Escazú. Thus, the initiative of a Regulation Plan becomes important and necessary . What has been the history of the Regulation Plan? Those of you who are carrying on this process can inform us on this. We too, have information on this and question whether the way the Regulation Plan is being proposed will guarantee these things? Is it focused to respond to these realities? Is the Association for the Regulation Plan composed of people who express an interest for these three sectors? There is a group of professionals who live in San Rafael, including the most exclusive residential areas of Trejos Montealegre, who are pushing this project forward. And we ask ourselves, 'from what perspective?' An architect who lives in Trejos Montealegre, would see Escazú with different eyes than Rodolfo, who is a farmer. If I lived in San Rafael, the mountains would tell me one thing, but if I lived at the foot of the mountains, they would tell me something else, and from the agricultural zone they would tell me something different, depending where you are from. So we ask ourselves, 'how is the Association integrated?' How has the process of the Regulation Plan been carried out, and will it guarantee that these three realities are maintained, combined but not destroyed? These are the doubts we have."

After Romano's presentation, one of the few members of the Municipal Council who attended the meeting, all of whom were of the National Liberation Party (PLN) and opposition of the current United Social Christian Party (PUSC) in power, expressed his views. After agreeing with Romano on many points, he explained that, indeed, there was an Association for the Regulation Plan.

"But at this time," he clarified, "it is very little what the Municipality has regarding this. In fact, I believe that the Municipality is going to have to take over this Regulation Plan, because the truth is that the Association has had the project for several months, and we have not seen anything definite. In fact, I think it is not going to work. They have not met with the required quorum. Only three or four people are the most

interested, and it is not working. But I would like to return to your question regarding the need to think about the future, and what a Regulation Plan is going to offer us. If it is going to fit us into a tight shoe that gives priority to residential projects in the Protection Zone, I think that would be the greatest error, the most inconceivable error that could occur, and that even the Municipality could not accept that. That, never! But I believe that all that is intended with the Regulation Plan, according to commentaries I have heard, is to end up with a balanced plan. We would have to find out how far it has gone, what has been done, in order to discuss what is currently the situation of the Regulation Plan. For the moment, that is all I could say."

Other people from the community present at the meeting also expressed their concerns. Doña Estefana, an elderly teacher from a farming family in San Antonio, who in years to come would become president of CODECE, touched on some points that confirmed CODECE's ideas about communal participation around the Regulation Plan.

"Well, I am very concerned about this blessed Regulation Plan because in it one finds the opinions of the rest of the county. Let me tell you something. What most interests me is San Antonio, because we can see that San Rafael has turned into pure gold, and Escazú into pure gold, but what do we get out of Escazú and San Rafael if they are in the hands of outsiders? Even the mountains will be of no use if this Regulation Plan or whoever, doesn't pay attention to what we really need. These mountains are our mountains, and the water they bring. And nobody, nobody is considering this. These gentlemen of the Regulation Plan should, in fact, coordinate with all of us, not only with the Municipality, but with all of the inhabitants of the county, because they all have different thoughts, some have very important thoughts, about the conservation of our county. Others, who I know about, the group Arte y Cultura, want to take away from us what we have. I believe that now is the time for CODECE and the Municipality to 'plug in their batteries', as the pachucos say, and stop them, or do something so that they leave. I believe CODECE would do a great job if they really decided to carry this out. Otherwise, what do we have so many university students for, so much stuff that is only up in the clouds? I am very concerned, maybe because since one is not part of the Regulation Plan, nobody pays attention to one. But we all have authority in Escazú! It is our county that is in danger of having all its mountains cut bare, of having those gentlemen of Arte y Cultura take away all the wealth this zone has. If we let them, they will take it! Because money is money, and the king of everyone. With money everything can be bought. It seems to me that this is something we have to be very careful about. The Municipality, CODECE and those of us who really care about our county, should begin now to work so that no gate is left open for people to continue invading the mountain."

To finish the meeting two other members of the Municipal Council briefly gave their opinions.

"There are many things that worry me about those of Arte y Cultura" Celina Villalobos said. "I don't know what we are going to do. And about the Regulation Plan, the Municipality doesn't know anything, starting with the fact that the president of the Association for the Regulation Plan, Mario Sancho doesn't give any information. When you ask him something, he says 'Direct your question in writing to the respective commission.' And I know of people who have done so and have never received an answer. It seems to me that they believe the Regulation Plan is under their authority, as if the county were theirs, and what they decide, goes. I think it's wrong."

The other member of the Municipal Council, Milton Corrales was the last to speak.

"The Association for the Regulation Plan is a very closed group, we have all seen this. Only yesterday Armando Botassi told me that the night before there was a closed meeting with Mr. Mario Sancho in which he arrogantly told Armando that they were expecting help from the Municipality of four million colones in the short term! Well, we all know that the Municipality is not in any position to give that type of help. The intention of the Association for the Regulation Plan is to hire several engineers full time, and those in the Association to serve as advisors. I believe we should place our efforts in creating awareness among the rest of the members of the Municipal Council and other organized groups in the county. Fortunately CODECE is taking this first step which is vital now. We're still in time to penetrate this closed circle, and demand participation of the different groups of the county."

After the meeting, Romano and I went to Bar Arenal down the street to talk over a few beers. The relative support we received from the members of the Municipal Council, Romano quickly observed, was simply "party politics". It was the PLN seeking favor, over the absent PUSC, who was not even willing to discuss the issue with CODECE. Romano began talking about how he saw the current two party political system, and how the people delegated their power to these parties every four years, as a system that was reaching its bankruptcy. Nor did he see an alternative in the socialist world. For him CODECE was an

experiment, a political model for civil society, where there was a union of community members and professionals, where treatment was horizontal, where scientific knowledge was combined with traditional knowledge, and where people exercised the power they held. "CODECE is an example not only of an environmentalist social movement, but of a new model for political action", Romano began to explain, but the conversation was cut short when Celina and Milton arrived and joined us at the same table. Unfortunately, we never got around to resuming this conversation. (Field notes, November 24, 1992).

After this, CODECE organized seminars to inform different sectors of the community about the need for them to participate in the formulation of a Regulation Plan.

By this time, the members of CODECE who contributed significantly to the work plan of the Association, either through voluntary work or hired part time had grown. Among them were Pedro Mena, whom I had met in 1990 at the course on environmental law. Pedro was one of eleven sons of a local farmer-turned-grocer. He had obtained a scholarship to study agronomy in Russia, where he had gotten married and divorced. In CODECE Pedro served as jack of all trades. He was the official photographer, he did the computer layout of the texts CODECE published, he organized educational hikes and served as guide in the mountains. Self-depreciating in temperament, he was everybody's friend, and nobody spent more unpaid time at the office of CODECE than Pedro.

Amalia León, whom I had also met at the course on environmental law, had also become strongly involved in CODECE. Hired as a part-time promoter, Amalia dedicated over full-time to CODECE. A loyal member of a group of "weight-watchers", during the decade that I knew Amalia, she demonstrated an unfaltering discipline to improve her physical, emotional and professional condition. She lost 100 pounds, slowly but definitively. Initially reticent to voice any opinion in public, she eventually became the first woman president of CODECE in 1995, and was re-elected in 1997 not only for her capacity as a public speaker, but for her overall leadership.

Javier Sánchez had also become a permanent collaborator of CODECE. Hired part-time as CODECE's biologist in 1991, Javier worked closely with the local farmers promoting a program of organic farming. I had briefly met him in 1989 at Romano's house when Javier returned with the group of biologists that were carrying out a biological inventory of the Mountains of Escazú. When I returned in 1992, Javier was fully involved, not only in technical matters of the Association, but in the political aspects, as well. Although Javier never confided in me information about his personal life, except for the barest facts -that he was the only son of a single mother, that his father was Mexican, that he and his mother had moved to Escazú when he was a teenager, and that he was married to a local farmer's daughter- through the years, in conversations with other people, I unintentionally discovered that he too, like Romano, had been involved in radical leftist movements. In CODECE Javier was probably the most circumspect when it came to analyzing the motives of other social actors CODECE had to deal with. Eventually, Javier Sánchez became the executive director of CODECE from 1994 to 1998.

When CODECE began promoting the participation of the community in the development of a Regulation Plan, these were some of the most active members, along with Romano and Paulina.

Over and over, paraphrasing the words that doña Estefana pronounced before the Municipal Council, the people of CODECE stressed at the Regulation Plan workshops that, "You have the authority in Escazú. It is your county that is in danger. If you let them, they will take your county away from you!" CODECE set up meetings with groups of farmers, women, and students to inform about the importance for these sectors of the community to express their own opinions in the formulation of the Regulation Plan. CODECE also set up meetings with influential individuals residents of Escazú to gather support for a Regulation Plan that would respect the different sectors of the county. One such meeting was with Rodrigo Carazo, ex-President of the nation, lawyer, and resident of Escazú. >From him, for example, CODECE obtained a promise that he would talk with the Papal Nuncio to deal with the Opus Dei problem (Field notes, January 5, 1993).

Taking up the Municipality on its momentary interest in working together to have more control over the Regulation Plan, CODECE was eventually able to obtain a seat in the Association for the Regulation Plan. Though Mario Sancho and the rest of the Board did their best (it seemed to us) to prevent CODECE's representative, in this case Romano, from attending the association's meetings, either by not summoning CODECE, or by misinforming us about the time or place of the meeting, it was only through sheer insistence that CODECE was able to continue gathering bits of information regarding developments with the Regulation Plan.

By 1994, the four million colones line item of the Municipality for a Regulation Plan was granted to the Association for the Regulation Plan. However, because of bureaucratic obstacles associated with changing government Administrations and the typical attempt to bury the projects of previous Administrations when they were of the opposition, it was not until 1996 that the Association actually disposed of these funds to hire several professionals to carry out the process of creating a Regulation Plan. The Association invited CODECE to recommend a sociologist and an architect to form part of the Regulation Plan Commission. The sociologist that CODECE recommended was Amalia León, who by that time, was also President of the Directive Junta of CODECE, in which I also participated. By CODECE's initiative and again by the new Municipality's re-election interests, the issue of public consultation among diverse sectors was incorporated into the project of the Regulation Plan. On CODECE's bequest, Amalia insisted on the need to carry out sessions with the different sectors of the county, particularly with farmers, women, and students. She also insisted on the duty of the Commission, to respect their opinions in the final Regulation Plan. (CODECE, Minutes of Directive Junta meetings, 1997).

At the Directive Junta meetings of CODECE, which we held every other Thursday night from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm, Amalia commented on the latest developments in the Regulation Plan Commission. As the sociologist in this Commission, she was finally given charge in January of 1997 of organizing the meetings with the different sectors of the community. During our Directive Junta discussion that month, I suggested that the meetings with the community might benefit by being organized around neighborhoods, instead of by social sectors, and where CODECE could guide the meetings to make sure that the different sectors voiced their perspectives. I believed that to discuss a Regulation Plan of Escazú, calling on people's identification with the place they lived, was more appropriate than summoning them on the basis of different "social sectors" (women, farmers, students, merchants, etc.) they might belong to. I expressed, for example, that personally, I would be more interested in discussing with my neighbors what we wanted with a Regulation Plan, than discussing it, say, with other university graduates from all around Escazú. My suggestion was rejected, however, when Javier Sánchez, as executive director, and Amalia, as President, were fearful, instead, that mixed group meetings would inhibit women or farmers from speaking up, in the presence of men or professionals, respectively (Field notes, January, 1997).

During 1997, through the Regulation Plan Commission, CODECE organized workshops to discuss the Regulation Plan with women, farmers, students, and merchants. All of these workshops were poorly attended with no more than a dozen people participating in each. While most of the results of these workshops were general statements detached from the specificity of particular places in the county of Escazú, there were a few specific demands. At the workshop with farmers, they demanded that land taxes be eliminated or reduced for areas under cultivation. At the session with students, they demanded that no construction be allowed within the Protection Zone (Field notes, March, June, 1997).

By the beginning of 1998, the Regulation Plan project was finally published in the National Gazette for ratification. After several readings, which I needed in order to digest the "legalese" of the document, a few points struck me as particularly significant. The first had to do with the contents of the Regulation Plan. Regarding the Protection Zone and the agricultural areas, for which CODECE had expended much energy and years of work, the document had little to show. The extent of the Regulation Plan's treatment of the agricultural region was first, to praise it for its contribution to the scenic beauty of Escazú. Second, it established the minimum lot size at 2 hectares, permitting, besides agriculture, other uses such as "residences, hotels, commercial establishments, educational, professional and religious establishments, of private and international organisms". (La Gaceta, 15 de Abril, 1998, p. 31). In a region where the average farm was slightly over one hectare, the Regulation Plan would, in effect, deal the final blow to the survival of the farming community.

Regarding the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú, the document only gave a descriptive definition, praising the environmental benefits it provided the residents of Escazú. The only norms attached to the Protection Zone were the requirement of filling out a Preliminary Environmental Evaluation Form for any construction, and obtaining written authorization by the General Forestry Directorate. (La Gaceta, 15 de Abril, 1998, p. 23).

The most daring statement in the document which made reference to community rights as essential to sustainable development, only hinted haphazardly at what CODECE had hoped the Regulation Plan would actually guarantee.

Article 4 on General Dispositions regarding Incentives: For the equilibrium between private and public interests, within the framework of sustainable development, besides the use of the authority of the State to regulate private activities, incentives to private interests in service of public interests, must also be sought." (La Gaceta, 15 de Abril, 1998, p. 18.).

This was still a far cry from the transformation of the law CODECE had long ago already attempted with the Bill for the Communal Administration of the Protection Zone, where the "common good" was to "prevail over private interests".

The other point, besides the contents of the Regulation Plan, that struck me as significant had to do with the impermeability, once again, of the legal instruments to effective participation by the people. Although CODECE had insisted that the Regulation Plan Commission provide a space for community participation in the process of developing the Regulation Plan, and ultimately honor the inputs of the community, in the end there were no established mechanisms to guarantee this. The finished product did not address any of the concrete demands that CODECE had noted at the workshops with the community. Furthermore, the means of ratification provided in the document, where the community was reduced to an "audience" with "observations" on an end-product it had not significantly contributed to, maintained the fixed barrier between the legal institutions and the possibility of the local people to transform these institutions.

"Article 1: The Regulation Plan is made effective in conformity with Article 17 of the Law of Urban Planning, to wit: "a) A public audience was convened by means of an Official Publication (the National Gazette No..... date.....) and by additional means (Newspaper..... page..... date.....). In said audience the project was made known, and the verbal and written observations by those interested were collected; b) The approval of its Regulations was obtained by the National Institute of Housing and Development (Accord by the Board of Directors No..... date.....); c) The formal adoption of its Regulations was agreed on by an absolute majority of votes of the Municipal Council (Accord No..... date.....)." (La Gaceta, 15 de Abril, 1998, p.5.).

The mechanisms of approval continued to make a simulacra of popular participation by calling a public audience and collecting the observations, but no dispositions were stated as to what was to be done with these observations. CODECE had been unable to de-stabilize the impervious boundary between the State and the lifeworld of the local people as represented by doña Estefana, when she exclaimed "We all have authority in Escazú!" The "participation of civil society" was salvaged only in form. The empowerment of the people which CODECE sought to obtain through the appropriation and transformation of the institutionalized cultural capital of the Regulation Plan, had mostly failed. Once again, institutionalized cultural capital resisted appropriation by the popular classes. Indeed, the institutionalized cultural capital of the Regulation Plan, backed mostly by elite interests, was reproduced in part through the appropriation of CODECE's labor. In the end, this gave the Regulation Plan its so-called "approval" by the "diverse segments of the community", justifying its representativity and authority.

The Regulation Plan as a drawn out battle waged by CODECE, represented a defeat for the Association. CODECE's revolutionary efforts of democratizing the legal institutions, both in their contents and their mechanisms, were met by fixed barriers to participation. The few particulars that were stated in the popular consultations were not included in the document, and the ratification of the Regulation Plan, though not yet carried out at the time of this writing (November 1998), showed clear signs of carrying on with the usual de-facto exclusionary practices.

Conclusion

The law, as a culturally recognized and accepted venue for exercising power, was one of the areas that continually attracted CODECE's attention. CODECE first attempted appropriating the enforcement of the law, which lead to resentment by those whom the law touched, and impunity by those whose greater economic capital and social connections lifted them above the law. To address these contradictions CODECE then proposed the Bill of Law for Communal Management of the Protection Zone, seeking to

change the law so that it would rest in the hands of the community and not be bypassed by the elite. When the legal institutions proved impenetrable, CODECE then sought other sources of empowerment as leverage in democratizing the law. CODECE obtained international funding and professional legal assistance which it employed to continue efforts of expanding its own social and cultural capital, as well as that of the community. Establishing a legal office, and having recourse to an environmental lawyer, a limited resource in Costa Rica at the time, seemed to hold important possibilities for empowerment. Indeed, these efforts increased CODECE's membership and promoted within the community a general awareness and respect for the laws regarding the environment. But CODECE's growing authority, nourished by the power the people delegated to it while relinquishing their own, contradicted one of the Association's fundamental goals of empowering the community. The course in environmental law attempted to restore the means of legal empowerment to the community, but the methods of encouraging community-wide participation remained elusive. Communal interest and participation again increased temporarily when Opus Dei threatened the Mountains of Escazú. CODECE's response was, again, mostly limited to the legal realm. Despite some temporary victories for CODECE who was able to prevent immediate construction in the Protection Zone, ultimately Opus Dei brought threatening elements of its "civilization" to the mountains. Finally, CODECE concentrated its legal efforts on the Regulation Plan for Escazú, where it still hoped to democratize not only the contents of the law, but also the mechanisms of creating and implementing the law.

CODECE was not totally unsuccessful in its legal battles. To some extent, it did, in fact, democratize the legal institution by demonstrating that one did not have to be a lawyer to demand that the law be respected, or to denounce environmental infractions, no matter how powerful the person who might commit the infraction. CODECE also provided a space where members of the community could take their environmental concerns to be attended. Moreover, CODECE spread the view among a few members of the community that "We [the people] all have authority in Escazú". But evidently, CODECE was unable to significantly alter the fixed boundaries of the legal institution that separated the mainstream interests that protected the status quo, from its own critical perspective of communal empowerment.

CODECE's lack of success in making the cultural capital of the legal institutions more accessible to the people was in part the result of its own self-limiting radicalism, as Cohen (1985) described this type of action. CODECE expended much energy in trying to reform, instead of revolutionize, a culturally sanctioned institution. But more significantly, CODECE's defeats in this area were the result of the limitations imposed on it by the social actors in control of the legal institutions. Ironically, often these limitations were imposed, not by open negation of participation, but on the contrary, by appropriation of CODECE's own labor, or investments in time and energy.

Despite CODECE's limited success in transforming established institutions, I still consider its efforts as revolutionary, where "revolution does not revolve around seizing state power, [but] gives as much emphasis to changing culture as it does to transforming political and economic structures" (Epstein 1990:37). In parallel fashion to its attempts at transforming political structures, CODECE undertook important efforts to transform the culture of the people, to transform their consciousness, their ideology regarding their relationship to the land. CODECE's efforts at cultural transformation for critical objectives of empowerment, respect for Nature and economic equity, are the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TRANSFORMING THE LOCAL CULTURE

Introduction

CODECE's attempts at appropriating the institutionalized cultural capital of the legal structure and its laws, for the most part failed. This pre-existing institutionalized cultural capital, structured around elite and mainstream interests, resulted relatively impervious to its appropriation by popular classes and critical interests. In fact, mainstream actors were able to make use of the institutionalized cultural capital of the law to reproduce class differences, by appropriating the labor invested by CODECE, despite its critical perspective in favor of popular class interests. But if appropriating cultural capital that was clearly linked to elite class interests did not lead to the empowerment CODECE sought, generating its own forms of cultural capital as a means of attracting more adherents to its cause, and thereby empowering them, might be a more appropriate strategy. In this vein, CODECE sought to transform the local culture by generating and disseminating pertinent information, as well as by promoting new ideas that the local community might identify with.

CODECE was initially formed in response to an external threat to the well-being of the local community. I suggested in Chapter 5 that the ability to mobilize members of the community against Father Revilla and his development projects for the Mountains of Escazú was the result of the clarity and immediate nature of the threat. Once CODECE defeated Revilla, it did not disappear, as many grassroots organizations tend to once they resolve the threat that mobilized them (Durning 1989a). Instead, CODECE persisted, becoming what has been called a new social movement. It was able to mobilize people to continue fighting for the sustained environmental, social and economic well-being of the local community.

Among the characteristics which make new social movements revolutionary, despite their move away from seizing state power, are their commitment to "transforming political and economic structures", as well as to "changing culture" (Epstein 1990:37). In the previous chapter, I discussed CODECE's efforts at transforming political and economic structures through attempts at democratizing the legal institutions that sustained these structures. In this chapter, I analyze the efforts of CODECE to transform the local culture towards a more critical perspective of sustainable development.

The labor of changing culture, in terms of ideology and practice, requires the exercise of power. This power is exercised by putting diverse forms of capital to work (Bourdieu 1986). In the case of CODECE, creating and maintaining a collective identity, through the mobilization of diverse forms of cultural capital (especially information), was one of the primary means it employed in reproducing its social capital. In turn, the identification of these people with CODECE's cause achieved social mobilization for the transformation of the lived context. Many analysts of new social movements have already pointed out that the strategic creation of a collective identity is fundamental for collective mobilization (Cohen 1985; Kauffman 1990; Escobar and Alvarez 1992b). Often, the search for a collective identity is based on the "affirmation of difference" (Jelin 1990:5), or even on "conflictual roles and positions" (Escobar and Alvarez 1992a:5). When CODECE confronted Revilla, their positions were clearly in conflict. But once Revilla was defeated, CODECE's affirmation of difference, in great measure lost a central point of reference. Escobar (1995:216) has stated that many new social movements mobilize against development. For CODECE, however, development as such did not become the point of reference against which it constructed and mobilized its collective identity. Without a clearly defined antagonist in either material or ideological terms, CODECE nevertheless, labored to create a collective identity for social mobilization to transform the context towards a critical conception of sustainable development.

In this chapter I review CODECE's efforts to construct a collective identity by appealing to existing collective interests and group differences, and where these did not exist, by changing the local culture to instill these sentiments. To change culture implies changing ideologies and practices. These efforts revolved around CODECE's attempts to establish a communal forest, whose responsibility and management would belong to the local communities, and whose benefits would also be theirs. CODECE's efforts at transforming the culture were geared to consolidate a critical perspective of sustainable development defined

by greater community empowerment, greater respect and appreciation of Nature, and greater socioeconomic equity. CODECE's transformation of culture was not only one of the primary goals of its social mobilization, but was also one of its primary means of mobilizing society.

Here I point out, however, that CODECE's efforts at creating and maintaining a collective identity for social mobilization to transform the lived context, were confounded by the appropriation of the products of this labor by mainstream social actors, who in turn, employed them to maintain the status quo. I show how the efforts of differentiation and collective identity that CODECE constructed around a transformed relationship with the Mountains of Escazú, and concretely around the creation of a communal forest, were appropriated by mainstream social actors to maintain a context of inequality with an apparent reconciliation of contradictions. I discuss how this blurring of boundaries between mainstream and critical perspectives affected the momentum of a social movement such as CODECE engaged in "political and cultural contestation" (Alvarez and Escobar 1992:321). But I also show how in the midst of processes of production and appropriation across boundaries that were "saturated with inequality", there was "borrowing and lending" (Rosaldo 1989:217), as well, which at times produced "synergistic relationships" (Evans 1996:1119) that advanced, albeit fitfully, some of the dreams of CODECE's critical perspective of sustainable development.

Strengthening a Relationship with the Mountains

Soon after CODECE was created to stop Revilla and his plans to build a basilica in the Mountains of Escazú, members of the Committee began to learn about numerous other threats to the mountains, including government-approved projects to build large-scale resorts in the mountains where the water that fed much of San Antonio and Escazú originated. But they also began to discover their own faults regarding the protection of the environment. Changing their own views and practices, as well as educating the community became a major goal for CODECE starting early on. Once, while I helped Romano prepare a presentation about CODECE for an encounter of environmentalist groups, he described this early period to me.

"By the time we had stopped Revilla, CODECE had expanded beyond the farmers' cooperative where it was born. Most of the members didn't belong to the cooperative: Paulina, Pito, Luis Chacón, Julio Jiménez. Then during that time we began to discover so many things about the Mountains of Escazú, other projects for large construction, and that there was a Decree that declared the mountains a Protection Zone. It was a matter that went beyond the capacity of the cooperative to handle. CODECE had assumed an environmentalist struggle for the Mountains of Escazú that nobody else was assuming. We held a meeting and the seven of us decided unanimously that CODECE was too important to disappear, that it had to continue. But how? We were like babies in diapers. None of us were really environmentalists at the time. I still liked to kill squirrels whenever I saw them. Rodolfo loaded his fields with pesticides. It was Paulina who began to make me see these contradictions. So we began a slow process of self-learning. We had to change ourselves before beginning to change the community." (Fieldnotes, July 21, 1990).

In response to its growing appreciation of Nature and all its resources, as well as the need for the community to assume the responsibility of its protection, in 1988 CODECE renamed itself the Association for the Protection of Natural Resources, retaining however, its original acronym. During this early period, CODECE began emphasizing environmental education as one of its main pillars of action. It produced a coloring book in which Father and Mother told their son how the Mountains of Escazú were being destroyed by deforestation and contamination, but then they began to plant trees and clean the rivers until finally the mountains were green, the waters pure, and the wildlife abundant. The coloring book ended with the boy himself planting a tree to help protect the mountains. CODECE distributed this book to the third, fourth and fifth grades of the schools in all the counties around the Mountains of Escazú. They held workshops with the teachers and directors of these schools to explain the importance of environmental education. CODECE also held workshops with local farmers, hunters and bird-catchers to discuss the importance of protecting the mountains against deforestation and contamination. To inform the wider community about its work, CODECE organized an Ecological Painting Contest, as well as an Ecological Music Festival (CODECE Monthly Reports 1988, 1989).

When I initially encountered CODECE in 1989, its most visible efforts of involving the community in the protection of the Mountains of Escazú were its reforestation drives. At the first meeting of CODECE which I attended, Romano asked me to deliver the following invitation which called for the organized groups of Escazú to participate in this effort.

"Our group, after numerous efforts and activities, has been able, along with the Committee for Water and Forests and the Municipality of Escazú, to initiate an important forestry project to protect Río Londres and Río Agres. These rivers provide nearly 70 percent of the potable water in our county. On their care and recovery will depend the future of the water that reaches our homes. This water is also indispensable for the agricultural activities that are carried out in San Antonio, activities that provide many of us with work and contribute to the economic development of our area. These agricultural activities are in danger of disappearing unless we take urgent measures to protect our mountains and rivers.

"We must also remember the dangers of massive landslides faced by the communities of Santa Ana and Aserrí, which are the result of deforestation and erosion. For these and other reasons too long to enumerate, we are asking the different organizations of Escazú to reflect on these things and to assume an active role in their responsibility to the present and future generations. We are hereby inviting you to participate in the grand Campaign of Reforestation of our mountains. This campaign, begun the 15th of June in the farm of Sr. Gerardo Gómez with the planting of 200 trees, will continue, starting Sunday the 30th of July on the land of Goicoechea Agricultural Society near Pico Blanco. The departure for this activity will be at 7:00 am from the Rural Guard Post of San Antonio de Escazú. In similar fashion, on every Sunday of August, and on the two first Sundays of September, this campaign will continue to plant a total of 2500 trees. Sincerely, Romano Sancho B., Pres. and Francisco Mejía, Sec. (CODECE, July 18, 1989).

I counted over 40 men, women and children participating that first Sunday. The hike up took about two hours. Along the way we came across several signs placed there by CODECE earlier that year. At a bend in the trail near the Llano San Miguel, there was a sign nailed onto a tree: "Area declared a Protection Zone for its vital importance to the production of potable water. CODECE". Further on up, painted on a large boulder near the river, it read: "The sources of water are everybody's patrimony! It is our duty to protect them!" And painted on yet another boulder was the formula: "Forest + Water = Life".

When we finally reached the property to be reforested, everyone contributed to the planting of trees. After the work was done, we stopped to have lunch and Romano gave a short speech reiterating some of the elements contained in the letter of invitation. He spoke of the importance of protecting the forest cover to maintain the sources of water in the mountains, of the threats of further construction in the mountains, of deforestation caused by the burning of fields and cattle grazing, and of the responsibility we all had to the mountains and to the well-being of the future generations. He also called for all those present to introduce themselves and to say what had brought them to participate in this reforestation drive. "Because in addition to being against the destruction of Nature," Romano explained, "CODECE is also against anonymity. Everyone has something important to say that we all can learn from." Eventually, the significance of this simple phrase took form when in the analysis of my fieldwork social and cultural capital emerged as central to community empowerment and to possibilities of sustainable development.

The farmer Gerardo Gómez, on whose land CODECE had already planted 200 trees, explained his reason for being present.

"In a few years this could be a desert if we don't start to reforest, because the only thing we have known how to do is to cut tress and not to plant them."

Ana Calderón, the mother of several children who were helping, expressed her reason.

"I remember when I was young there were squirrels and those big birds one used to see. Now it's not like it used to be. One would hear yigüirros singing everywhere. One misses the little birds livening up the environment. Maybe with more trees they'll return. But it seems like more and more people want to build houses up in these mountains. I would prefer to conserve the mountains, but I believe that if people don't cooperate, nothing can be done."

Another young woman, Ana Julia Rojas explained why she participated.

"As for me, I live right next to the water tanks, and here is where most of our water is born, and at least in my house we are without water every morning. The water is born up here, and down there we're without water. I think that one should have a little more concern and collaborate. Maybe what is lacking

sometimes is a little more information and someone to guide us like with this project to reforest the mountains." (Fieldnotes July 30, 1989).

Most of the adults and even some of the children showed an understanding of the relationship between forest cover and water catchment, between forest cover and the abundance of wildlife, as well as many of the causes of deforestation, such as cattle grazing, farming, and construction, and finally many made reference to the need for community cooperation in protecting the mountains. Maybe many were echoing Romano's words, but in any case, by appropriating this discourse, they revealed a susceptibility to cultural change. The fact that they participated planting trees, was a sign that they were already changing their cultural practices.

CODECE's efforts of changing the local culture through environmental education and fomenting practices geared at assuming responsibility for the protection of the local environment continued to be a hallmark of its work. One year later, when I returned to Escazú, I saw the video CODECE had made about the Mountains of Escazú, which it showed at the workshops in the local schools. Throughout the video, the narrator repeated "We are living a forestry emergency!" To conclude, the narrator said: "Ours is a nation whose primary resource are its forests. But we are lacking a forestry tradition. We must begin by creating a forestry culture in the nation. We must reconstruct the country to guarantee the life of our future generations." Through discourse such as this, CODECE continued to try to change the local culture, and to make the local community identify with its cause, gathering a greater social capital around its efforts.

During that summer, I interviewed Father Orlando García, the priest of San Antonio to see how CODECE was changing the culture of the people.

"The ecological issue is now everybody's problem," the priest said. "CODECE has made it its central focus, but it is a matter of concern for everyone. The people understand this. What CODECE is trying to do is a very noble thing. We have to protect our environment, especially since the government destroys everything, and so do the Capitalist interests. CODECE's efforts in protecting the environment, cleaning the rivers, educating the people, are very important. Our function is one of support and collaboration, because what CODECE wants is also what the Church wants: a healthy land, vibrant and full of life. The effort to establish an equilibrium is pleasing to the eyes of God.

"Having previously been the priest in Hatillo [Alajuelita] where the environment has been ravaged, one recognizes the importance of these mountains here in San Antonio. Unless we protect our mountains, we mortgage everything. The people here understand this. Many of them, without belonging to CODECE are united in the struggle. They come to me and express their concerns. And when certain problems come to me, I take them up in my sermons. I have also publicly acknowledged and congratulated CODECE for their efforts. Even though we don't have a very deep friendship with CODECE, I recognize they are good people. CODECE is doing a good work. If maybe they 'use' the Church, it is because they recognize its value in reaching the people. People of CODECE often come to me to inform me of issues. It is a pity I cannot participate in more of their activities, but we are all very busy. CODECE, however, is constantly keeping me informed, sending documents, notifying me of events, problems, programs, concerns, etc." (Field notes, July 14, 1990).

When I returned to the Mountains of Escazú in 1992, I found signs that a relationship of care for the mountains was taking root, when areas previously over-grazed were now under secondary forest growth. The land that belonged to Goicoechea, for example, which CODECE had begun to reforest in 1989 was now covered with Jaúl (Alnus accuminata), under whose shade other tree species had also begun to grow. On a hike into the mountains that CODECE organized during Holy Week, I found that the trails we had previously taken along grassy hill sides, were now lost among the undergrowth. (Field notes, April 19, 1992).

But I also encountered other signs of this same effort to conserve the forests in the Mountains of Escazú, which were somewhat disturbing. Some fields I had crossed through freely in the past were now fenced off with up to 20 rows of barbed wire. Behind one fence there was an elegantly painted sign which read in both Spanish and English: "La Naturaleza es Bella, Consérvela. Un menasaje de Finca Santa Ana. Nature is beautiful, preserve it. A message from Finca Santa Ana." Indeed, the land behind the forbidding fence was also thick with a secondary forest growth, where it had previously been covered in grass. (Field notes, April 19, 1992).

Finca Santa Ana belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Fennis, a Dutch couple who were buying up local farms at any price. The most prominent mountain in the landscape of Escazú, the Pico Blanco, which formed an

indissoluble part of the county's history and lore was now almost completely in the hands of the Fennis family. Much of the land they bought were coffee farms which they were allowing to revert to forest.

Later that same month, walking down the road of La Laja of San Antonio, I met Alexis León (Alexis), whom I had spoken to earlier on my way up, and another worker (Worker) whose name I didn't record. Both wore typical campesino white canvas hats, as they fixed the road, hired by the Municipality. A bystander (Bystander) in city clothes was there too. I (Felipe) greeted them.

Alexis: Are you already returning from Rodolfo's place?
Felipe: Yes, because one can't continue that way. The road ends at the land of the Dutch people. I didn't want to trespass their coffee field for fear of being kicked out by gun shots.
Alexis: Who knows what candies they give away!
Felipe: How big is their land?
Alexis: It goes from the road of La Laja to the road of El Curio.
Worker: I don't know why those people want so much land if they're not planting anything on it.
Alexis: They just want land to be landowners.
Felipe: How were they able to buy so much land?
Worker: They're millionaires. People say that they have a strange business. That they adopt children and then send them to Holland or the United States to sell their organs. I've seen them drive by in vans filled with children.
Bystander: They have stocks worth millions. They own banks. Those people can buy off the government and they have even bought off the Church.
Worker: What there should be is a law that prohibits them from having so much land left in abandon. Because they are shitting on the people. They have abandoned the coffee fields. What they are doing is shitting on the people, because many of us depended on picking coffee to earn our Christmas money. They're shitting in the pot of milk. Because people are like a chain: I produce something, you produce something else, I help you, and that one helps the other, like that. But they are isolating themselves, and there is no longer that chain where everyone helps each other.
Bystander: But also it is the same people who are helping to create this problem. Those Dutch people have not broken any law. They have the money, and we have sold to them. So, that's the way it is. You put a price, and they buy.
Alexis: Imagine what they pay for any piece of land just to enlarge what's theirs. There was a little corner which I wouldn't have bought even for 50,000 and they paid two million. Up there, all they need to own that entire mountain is to buy from Marín, from Arias and from Montoya. After that, all of Pico Blanco is theirs.
Worker: But the same thing is going to happen to them that happened to Vesco. They'll find something twisted and throw them out. Because they have strange businesses. What I say is that every goat to his hill. Why don't they buy land in their own country? Why do they have to come here and buy up everything and shit on the people?
Felipe: But why do people sell?
Alexis: They have a little lot that no longer pays to produce, and so they sell it.
Worker: The thing is that farming no longer pays. The other day, in order to sell all the sweet potato I had, I almost had to give it away to get something out of it. I felt like throwing the whole damn pile into the river!
Bystander: This goes from bad to worse. (Field notes, April 28, 1992).

Later that year, another local farmer, Rafael Valverde, also commented on the Fennis family.

"They bought all this. They bought that farm up there, all of it. Then an old coffee farm there that was very big. They bought this one in front, and that one over there. But those people, who knows what their project is. Nobody knows. Only buying up more and more land like that. Very strange. Imagine that they bought a farm that kept a crew of workers there. For coffee picking it was enormous. And now, now they have it abandoned. And they fired all the workers. Now those people have to find work somewhere else. It was a whole crew of workers, all from San Antonio, and now all that land is abandoned. And what will happen to all the people from here that picked coffee in the summers? Because at least here, many people earned a living picking coffee. And they say that last year they picked a little bit of coffee, but the owners let the rest go to waste. They're not interested at all in coffee, only in letting the forest grow. And now they stop people from passing through their land, even though the paths have been there for a lifetime.

Hardly anyone passes through here anymore, even though some still cut through the fences with machetes to pass through." (Field notes, November 6, 1992).

According to the maps in the Municipality which I consulted, and with the help of Julio Jiménez, who worked in the Engineering Department there, I figured that the Fennis family, under several corporate names, owned some 300 hectares in the Mountains of Escazú. CODECE was well aware of the Fennis family and their land acquisitions. Already CODECE had won a suit against Mr. Fennis in 1989 for introducing alpine goats into the Protection Zone, which contravened stipulations in the Bill against the introduction of exotic species.. However, CODECE's calls to protect the mountains were repeated by the Fennis family, (both in Spanish and in English!). And CODECE's work of reforestation was carried out by the Fennis possibly on an even larger scale by abandoning coffee farms to revert to forest by natural succession. But the similarity between the two environmentalist positions blurred fundamental differences. As members of the community had already observed, the mainstream perspective of the Fennis placed the growth of forests above the sustainability of the local community. They proclaimed that "Nature is beautiful," and called to "preserve" it, but in doing so, as one community member phrased it, they were also "shitting on the people".

The appropriation of critical discourse, and even some practices, by mainstream actors, threatened to dissolve important differences between the two perspectives, subverting critical efforts and weakening their capacity for social mobilization. This co-optation of CODECE's environmentalist identity forced it to redefine its critical position. It was no longer enough to call for the protection of the forests for environmental sustainability. CODECE had to address the issues of social and economic sustainability, of communal access to the mountains, and of equitable distribution of the benefits they might generate. In February of 1992, CODECE for the third time changed its name (still keeping its original acronym), to the Association for the Conservation and Development of the Mountains of Escazú

The Communal Forest

CODECE's new name which presented the major concerns of the -by then- dominant ideology of sustainable development, and a name that the Association conserved for the years to come. From an environmentalist organization, CODECE had matured into one that promoted a critical perspective of sustainable development, where local empowerment took top priority as a means of guaranteeing environmental sustainability and economic equity. But even before the year of the Earth Summit, CODECE held a perspective that placed community empowerment at its core. In an article about CODECE in a county newspaper in 1990, Romano stated: "Our efforts are directed at having the community become a protagonist in the defense of the environment and in the search for alternatives directed at the enjoyment of the environment and its riches." Paulina added: "CODECE has a communal perspective and is based on voluntary efforts." (El Brujo, April, 1990). However, in 1992, one of CODECE's continual preoccupations was still the lack of community participation. At the end of a day-long auto-evaluation session of CODECE with the participation of 15 people, Romano concluded saying that "Many people perceive CODECE as working in the mountains, and not in the community. Now it is important to develop programs in the community. We have to involve the community in an environmental strategy." (Field notes, June 13, 1992).

Shortly, after several sessions in which collaborators and staff participated to discuss CODECE's future, we agreed upon three pillars that made up CODECE's global strategy. These were: community environmental action, alternative production, and management of the protection zone. To implement the third, CODECE began to work on the creation of a communal forest in the Río Agres watershed, where the idea was, according to Romano, "for CODECE to buy the land and manage it by reforesting, keeping vigilance, building trails, and watch cabins, as well as a refuge for hikers and visitors, and possibly a camp ground for school children." (Field notes, June 29, 1992). Paulina asked me to help her write a fund-raising letter in English to send to philanthropic organizations in the United States. In it we stated that CODECE had already carried out the baseline research regarding the geology, hydrology and the biodiversity of the region, as well as the legal aspects that affected the Protection Zone. All CODECE required were the funds to buy the 550 hectares of land in the Río Agres watershed, in order to proceed with the activities of vigilance and protection, reforestation, environmental education, and community extension. (Field notes,

June 30, 1992). We sent this letter, but only received negative answers to the effect that they no longer funded land acquisitions, or that CODECE did not qualify for US tax-deductible donations.

In the meantime, moreover, Romano had become apprehensive about CODECE being the proprietor of the land of the communal forest. He feared that the community would "talk" and make CODECE out to be simply another consortium interested in buying up the land in the mountains, no different from the Fennis. We discussed his concern and finally concluded that what CODECE sought was not the ownership, but the stewardship of a communal forest in order to guarantee its sustainability not only in environmental terms, but in social and economic terms for the community. CODECE would seek the incorporation of the local communities in the vigilance and care of the communal forest by means of environmental education, training in occupations such as nature guides, and by devising a means of acquiring the land by the community. (Field notes, July 2, 1992).

Despite CODECE's previous efforts in the legal arena to introduce legislation for the communal management of the Protection Zone, there was still no legal model for establishing a communal forest, or communal property of any sort. We toyed with the idea of making certificates of ownership to sell among the community in order to finance the acquisition of the land, which at the same time would create a communal sense of ownership. On a hike up the Río Agres, in which I accompanied Romano, William Zúñiga the geographer who was working one quarter time with CODECE, and Javier Sánchez the biologist who was now full time with the Association, we surveyed the land that would be the communal forest. Here Romano calculated the cost to buy the land.

"None of this land is giving the owners a means of subsistence. That is, nobody lives off the land that would be the communal forest. True, some lands have cattle, but that is no great income. For example, I dealt in cattle for a long time, and an hectare up here can support two cows. You buy the calves at 7000 colones, and in a year, after fattening, sell them for 14,000 colones. That's a profit of 7000 colones each, that's 14,000 colones per hectare, per year. In ten years that is 140,000 colones. We could offer 200,000 colones an hectare, or 20 colones the square meter in cash. With that money, owners could invest and make more profit elsewhere. With 500 hectares at 200,000 per hectare, that is 100 million colones [750 thousand dollars at an exchange rate at the time of 135 colones to the dollar]." I argued with Romano that his numbers were extremely low. I had recently accompanied my father to negotiate a one hectare coffee farm in the same region, which cost 180 colones the square meter, and had even heard of people offering 1000 colones per square meter for another farm nearby. Romano responded that "they are ambitious people who simply want to make money off of the situation." (Field notes, June 29, 1992).

The fact that several of the local farmers with land in the Protection Zone began speculating with the prices for which they were willing to sell their farms when they heard of the project of the communal forest, made CODECE doubt the capacity of the local community to come up with the money to buy the land. Then someone suggested that CODECE should join forces with a recognized non-profit organization with buying capacity to acquire the land, while CODECE maintained the stewardship of the communal forest. Soon, together with Paulina, I had a proposal written for the Rotary Club of Escazú, in which they, with their social networks, would seek funds from Rotary Clubs worldwide for the acquisition of the land, and CODECE, with its experience and expertise, would be in charge of managing it. At a meeting I did not attend, Romano later informed me, the Rotary Club had accepted CODECE's proposal and had suggested a meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources to solicit official support for the endeavor. (Field notes July 16, 1992).

One week later, Minister Mario Boza received us in his office at the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines (MIRENEM). We introduced ourselves, starting with Walter Echevarría, the president of the Rotary Club in Escazú, Romano Sancho as president of CODECE, Rodolfo León as fiscal of CODECE, William Zúñiga as geographer of CODECE and professor at the University of Costa Rica, and me as biologist and doctoral student in anthropology working on my dissertation in the Mountains of Escazú and collaborator of CODECE. Boza seemed impressed with our credentials. Romano began by reviewing CODECE's achievements and then explained its current projects. He concluded by soliciting three things in particular: 1) the official support of MIRENEM for CODECE's work in making a global management plan for the Mountains of Escazú, in order to facilitate obtaining financial help; 2) the official support of MIRENEM for the pilot project of the Communal Forest CODECE was carrying out with the Rotary Club, in order to promote the project among Rotary clubs worldwide; and 3) that MIRENEM hand over to CODECE the administration of the Goicoechea land, which had recently been given to the government in

payment of past taxes, and which was located within the Río Agres watershed of the proposed communal forest.

To the first request, Boza agreed. To the second, however, he suggested that CODECE become a foundation, rather than an association, and that the land become a Private Reserve. "This," he said, "would guarantee a greater control over the finances, and then MIRENEM with all tranquillity could give its support."( ) Romano, stalling momentarily, explained that a foundation was already being created for this purpose, the Rotary Foundation for the Protection of the Mountains of Escazú, and that CODECE would simply be the administrator of the land. This seemed awkward to Boza, but anyway he agreed to support the foundation once it was formed. Finally, regarding the Goicoechea land, Boza explained that nothing could be guaranteed. "When it comes to land," he said, "there are many who want a piece of the pie. It is a first come, first served, situation. Especially when there are Legislative Deputies who dip their spoon into the soup and offer one thing in exchange for another. What you need to do is to be on top of the status of this land, know when it goes to the Ministry of Finance, and then when it is handed over to MIRENEM, in order to solicit it immediately." To this effect, Walter Echeverría, said he could talk directly to President Rafael Angel Calderón in order to guarantee this transaction. Boza concluded that that would be very useful. (Field notes, July 23, 1992)

One month later, CODECE received an official letter of support from MIRENEM, signed by Minister Boza.

"The Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines strongly supports any action taken by this Association (CODECE) for the acquisition of funds and aid to carry out its projects, which will result in a common benefit for the region and for the Great Metropolitan Area, consolidating a strategy which will improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the region by presenting a model of sustainable management, by protecting our natural resources and by creating an alternative for ecotourism of easy access and interest for our visitors." (Mario Boza, August 17, 1992).

However, during this period, CODECE had several other encounters that made it question its links with sectors such as those represented by the Rotary Club in the communal forest project. Soon after our meeting with Boza, and most likely as a direct result of this meeting, CODECE received a fax from Julia van Wilpe, along with a request to meet with CODECE. Already in April, I had recorded Romano and Paulina mentioning a rich foreigner Derk van Wilpe and his wife the architect Julia van Wilpe, who owned much land in Santa Ana, and who were self-denominated environmentalists, but whom CODECE labeled as "eco-tycoons." At a meeting in Santa Ana of environmentalist organizations, Mr. van Wilpe had approached Romano to have CODECE join forces with him to make a park in the Mountains of Escazú, where he planned to build bungalows for tourists. He had also asked for a copy of CODECE's biological inventory, which Romano had, "of course", not given him. (Field notes, April, 1992). The fax Julia van Wilpe sent was most likely intended as a form of pressure for CODECE to join forces with them. The fax was a copy of a letter from the "Friends of the Cerros de Escazú" 730 North Franklin Street, Suite 611, Chicago, IL 60610, dated, Nov. 27, 1991, addressed to Mr. van Wilpe.

Derek van Wilpe:

The Friends of the Cerros de Escazú, a not-for-profit association in the process of formation, wishes to help save and preserve this splendid 20,000 acre tropical forest just outside of the Costa Rican Capital.

We would like your request for help directed to your many friends in the Chicago area involved in forming "Friends" in order to adopt this tropical forest.

Please make clear in the request the importance of the forest, both to Costa Rica and to the rest of the world, including us here in Chicago.

Also send us a prioritized list of what needs to be done, in what stages and what the cost of each stage will be.

Awaiting your reply.

Very truly yours,

Elizabeth Hand, Jay Horberg, Lydia Zazlow,

Committee in Formation.

On August 6 in the morning, members of CODECE, including Romano, Paulina, Javier, two collaborators from the National University who happened to be there, and myself, met with Julia van Wilpe, her son Horst, and Elizabeth Hand from the "Friends of the Cerros de Escazú", who had just arrived from Chicago. I arrived late to the meeting, but was surprised to find Paulina speaking in slow but almost perfect English to Elizabeth Hand who spoke no Spanish. (After the meeting was one of those rare moments when Paulina revealed some of her personal history to me.) Paulina presented the work of CODECE, but more emphatically explained its critical perspective.

"For us, environmental protection must come from the community, and the benefits of this protection must go to the community. It is not protection for the sake of protection, but to insure an acceptable and sustainable way of life for the local communities. The work of CODECE has been one of education, consciousness-raising, and promoting community participation, as well as giving the community the tools to protect the mountains."

Then Elizabeth Hand offered a brief explanation of her foundation. "It began with a visit by the van Wilpes to Chicago, as well as with the input of Pablo Barquero of CINDE [a US-funded Costa Rican foundation for the promotion of private enterprise], and Jay Horberg. Also instrumental were the encouragement of Randy Curtis of the Nature Conservancy, and Bob Wells of CEDARENA [a US-directed NGO in Costa Rica]. The interest in the Cerros de Escazú is due mostly to their accessibility to the metropolitan area, and that nobody has been doing anything here to protect them, as compared to other parts of the country." To this statement, aghast, Paulina's mouth visibly dropped, and when I translated for the others of CODECE they all cringed. Elizabeth Hand continued. "The Friends would be a fund-raising non-profit organization, which would present these moneys as well as an outline of meritorious programs in the Cerros for the Nature Conservancy to fund. The Nature Conservancy would then channel the money to a Sister organization here, also called the Friends of the Cerros de Escazú, of which the president would be Derk van Wilpe, and a board of directors of five other persons."

Julia van Wilpe then interjected, "The foundation in Costa Rica is already in the process of being established, and Derk has gotten the title of General Director from MIRENEM for the investigation and management of the environment of the Cerros de Escazú because of his accomplishments in environmental protection all over Costa Rica for 20 years, namely in the beaches of Nosara and Playa Grande."

Then Elizabeth Hand went on. "The Friends of Cerros de Escazú in Chicago has an advisory board of important people, and a board of directors of people involved in environmental projects. Among these are the head of the Zoo of Chicago, important businessmen, real estate developers, two senators, video producers, CBS TV anchor Bill Kurtis, and an architect. In Costa Rica the foundation, also called Friends of Cerros de Escazú, would have an advisory team to include Robert Wells, Minister Mario Boza, and others to help direct the funds. The foundation would coordinate efforts with the Executive Branch of the government, with the local Municipal governments, as well as with the private sector."

Then Julia van Wilpe remarked emphatically, "We will not work against the landowners, but rather alongside of them. We must think of linking development with protection, of working with the people in the Cerros and not against them."

The meeting was tense throughout and ended on a confrontational note, when Paulina, unable to contain herself, questioned Julia about the discontent voiced by small landowners in Santa Ana, neighbors of the van Wilpes, who had been left without water when the van Wilpes had dammed a stream that ran through their property. Elizabeth Hand, for her part, seemed perplexed at the evident animosity between CODECE and the van Wilpes. Several times she suggested that CODECE and the van Wilpes should simply join forces to further their common interests. By the end of the meeting, however, it was clear that this was very unlikely. (Field notes, August 6, 1992).

This meeting made evident the contending perspectives regarding environmental protection and development at play in the Mountains of Escazú, but it also made evident how the perspectives were easily appropriated and confounded. Weren't CODECE, the van Wilpes and the Friends in Chicago all equally interested in "linking development with protection and in working with the people"? Yes, but what was the meaning of "protection" and the meaning of "development", and who were "the people", and what did it mean to work with them? Van Wilpe's mainstream perspective had the enthusiastic support of a First World elite, as well as the support of the national political elite. But van Wilpe's sustainable development was one that clearly lead the Mountains of Escazú on a path of eco-gentrification, of nature protection for the wealthy "people" and exclusion of the rest. This was irreconcilable with CODECE's struggle to get the community to

take destiny into their own hands in a process of communal participation in the conservation and development of the local environment.

In my field notes, I entered the following reflection of this meeting: "After working so hard in carrying out a biological inventory, in changing legislation, in training teachers, in organizing reforestation marathons, in promoting organic farming, in doing socio-environmental studies of the Cerros [mountains], in having river clean-ups, etc., CODECE is suddenly confronted by some eco-entrepreneurs who come by with powerful national and international contacts, using fax numbers and slick English to get their own projects in the Cerros off the ground. When CODECE's "eco-localism" is contrasted with van Wilpe's "eco-enterprises", it is as William Zúñiga once said, "a hobbled donkey against a tiger on the loose." (Field notes, August 7, 1992).

The confrontation between CODECE and the van Wilpes was one of contending ideologies and practices for the sustainable development of the local environment. On both sides of this critical/mainstream divide social and cultural capital was generated and reproduced, but was also appropriated and co-opted, with the danger of blurring the fundamental differences between the two perspectives. Derk van Wilpe sought to get hold of CODECE's cultural capital (biological inventory, hydrologic, social and geographic studies, etc.) by attempting to embrace CODECE as part of his own social capital, and justify his "project" to First World financial supporters. These efforts of appropriation and co-optation by a mainstream actor were almost successful, but ultimately CODECE was able to re-draw the line between its own critical perspective and that of the van Wilpes and their allies in Chicago, the Friends of the Cerros de Escazú. CODECE was even able eventually to "borrow" across the critical/mainstream divide, making use of the contacts the "Friends" had in The Nature Conservancy, to open an account there for its own "critical" project. The immediate result, however, of CODECE's encounter with the van Wilpes and the "Friends", was that the threat of co-optation along with the blurring of difference between mainstream and critical perspectives became evident.

But before we even had an opportunity to discuss this meeting at any length within the Association, CODECE had a meeting with another "eco-tycoon" which planted further doubts into CODECE's plans for joint ventures with the Rotary Club, whose members were mostly of the economic elite. The following week, Romano, Rodolfo, Javier and I met with Antonio Riva. Riva was the grandson of Jorge Zeledón, a rancher who had amassed over 2000 hectares of land in the Mountains of Escazú.( ) Now this land was distributed among the 10 sons-in-law that married Zeledon's 10 daughters. Antonio Riva owned 300 hectares in the Mountains of Escazú.

Romano introduced the meeting saying that as an important landowner within the Protection Zone, Riva was someone CODECE might possibly be interested in collaborating with. Riva, though scarcely 30 years old, spoke with an air of authority.

"My policy has been to remove all the cattle and abandon the fields completely, to recover the flora and fauna. And I come from a cattle-raising family. My grandfather Jorge Zeledón brought a lot of cattle and cut down much of the forest. I used to have a rancher's mentality, but now I don't want cows, nor horses, nor donkeys, nor dogs. Any hunting dog I find on my land is a dead dog. I find ecological tourism and real estate more promising. I prefer to sell lots to 25 people interested in protecting the mountains, than introducing 400 head of cattle to finance our family firm. Already those who have bought lots have been reforesting. Moreover, we have the Riva Foundation which is promoting projects of forest management. In fact, I would be interested in establishing an agreement of collaboration between CODECE and the Riva Foundation. As a project of public interest, I could get international financing, and CODECE with the local reputation it has, and the national reputation it is acquiring, a link with you would be very valuable. On the other hand, I have some very good connections. My cousin is secretary of President Rafael Angel Calderón, and I could ask her to have this project approved. You know how it is with politics. When you have something they want, they come looking for you. But if you look for them, they don't even pay attention to you."

Romano expressed interest in having access through Riva's property to transport trees for CODECE's reforestation projects. Riva quickly agreed, but simply asked that the request be put in writing, to take to the other members of the family firm.

"I would like to set up," he continued, "a Center for Ecological Studies in the Cedral Peak, where I already have a radio wave antenna with communications capability that cost me millions to set up. With this infrastructure, the Riva Foundation could offer the University of Costa Rica or CODECE an office there

for research or vigilance. This would be the heart of the Private Reserve. I would also like to strengthen the guards I have and carry out campaigns in the mountains to confiscate weapons, because we have an open war declared on hunters. Once this is declared a Private Reserve, I would be interested in making trails and charging an entrance fee, and controlling the number of people that enter. I know that this would not pay much, but a little here and a little there amounts to something.

"I have many brothers and cousins, however, who are not as ecologically minded as I am. So we have to get organized to decide what we are going to do with what we have, so that what we do is in harmony with the community. Imagine that an entire community depends on our family for water. If my cousins decided to put a bunch of cattle on the land, only cow piss instead of water would reach the people of the town of Palmichal. But I am not interested in having the community against me.

"I am looking for this to be declared in the public interest and have the Private Refuge be known internationally. In this sense, an agreement of collaboration with CODECE for its credibility in the zone and in the nation would be very valuable." Riva ended by showing us his logo depicting a sloth hanging in a circle, around which it said: "Refugio Privado Cerros de Escazú--Fundación Riva." Except for the words, it was practically an exact replica of CODECE's own logo. (Field notes, August 11, 1992).

After the meeting, Javier and Romano unraveled Riva's scheme to me.

"What Riva most wants is credibility," Javier said. "A connection with CODECE would launch him into an open sky of credibility. Even the written letter he asked of CODECE for permission to go through his land would be enough for him to prove collaboration with a public interest group. We have to beware of this astute entrepreneur."

"Here is the scam," Romano said, "Riva has a business enterprise, the so-called Private Reserve Cerros de Escazú for eco-tourism. Next to this he has the non-profit Fundación Riva, with the function of forest management and administration of natural lands. Riva's grandfather, Jorge Zeledón Castro, concentrated an enormous amount of land by dubious methods, so about one fourth of what is now the Protection Zone belonged to the old man. His ten daughters and their husbands inherited this land and bought other lands, so all the land from Jorco to Palmichal belongs to this one extended family. But what happens? Much of this land is non-productive, it is forest with little capacity for coffee, cattle, or agriculture. How to make it pay? Here comes the deal. The non-profit Fundación Riva with international donations offers to buy the higher mountain portions of these lands at very good prices, claiming environmental protection. Fundación Riva, whose board of directors is probably made up of the very same family members from whom it is buying land, buys up the land, while the family keeps the low portions of land strategically placed for hotels, restaurants, and entrance places to the Private Reserve. So, the family members get good prices for their unproductive lands, get a Forest Reserve established on these lands, retain control over these lands, and establish enterprises of eco-tourism to exploit these same lands. What a deal! So when Riva talks about his brothers and cousins who threaten to put cattle in these fragile forest lands, and how he has to struggle against his family to protect the mountains, this is only talk." (Field notes, August 11, 1992).

Like Riva's logo that was practically indistinguishable form CODECE's, his project for a Private Reserve was also extremely similar to CODECE's communal forest project. But the similarity, as in the case of the van Wilpes, hid important differences. Communal empowerment was all but absent, access to the mountains and equity in the benefits of environmental protection were also not even considerations. Indeed, a few months later, when a group of university students who were collaborating with CODECE went camping in the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú, they were ambushed one night by Riva's armed guards for trespassing on his private land. After the fright, and some serious negotiation, Riva's guards allowed the university students to remain the night, but warned that an entrance fee would be required from then on (Field notes, December 12, 1992). In seeking to blur the differences between his own interests and CODECE's (carry out projects that are "in harmony with the community"), Riva made an effort to appropriate CODECE's cultural and social capital, by establishing a formal alliance with the Association, in benefit of the family firm.

Alerted by these cases of appropriation, co-optation, and the blurring of difference between mainstream and critical perspectives, CODECE, reconsidered its association with the Rotary Club. After much discussion in CODECE, we concluded that private ownership of land meant absolute control over it, and an agreement of stewardship meant nothing if suddenly the Rotary Club decided against it and opted, for example, to sell lots or even give them away to their members on which to build their mountain chalets.

Despite the numerous drafts of the communal forest project I helped write to present to the Rotary Club, CODECE finally never signed an agreement with them.

Nevertheless, the dream of a communal forest remained alive in many of the members of CODECE. It seemed to be the only solution against the threats of construction in the Protection Zone which CODECE continually confronted. But as time passed, the prices of the land in and around the Mountains of Escazú continued to climb, making acquisition by the community seem that much more unrealizable. One hectare at the base of the Protection Zone in San Antonio de Escazú in 1992 had cost 1.8 million colones (slightly over US$ 13,000 at an exchange rate of 135 colones to the dollar). Five years later, in 1997, the same piece of land cost 20 million colones (US$ 87,000 at an exchange rate of 230 colones to the dollar). Only millionaires could buy in the Mountains of Escazú, and those who did, invested equally in their constructions. Though the Protection Zone did not become covered in concrete, during the years that followed, enormous mansions did begin to speckle the mountain landscape.

One segment of the membership of CODECE was always moved by the dream of a communal forest. As Carmen Madrigal, a farmer's wife and member of CODECE once expressed to me in an interview in her home.

"One hardly sees animals or birds because people kill them. There are hardly any trees, because there is too much construction. Now there are houses everywhere. We do not like that everything is coming to an end, because we love Nature. It would be nice to conserve the mountains, because everything is green and you can breathe fresh air. CODECE works very well reforesting and preventing forest fires. I believe that the good things God gave us, no one has the right to take away." (Field notes, May 11, 1993).

Indeed, some people became and remained members of the Association in hopes of materializing the dream of protecting the forests in the mountains for the benefit of the community. The strongest representative of this segment was doña Estéfana, the elderly school teacher who at a meeting in the Municipality had exclaimed "These mountains are our mountains!" (Field notes, November 24, 1992). A constant participant in all of the Association's meetings, doña Estéfana often voiced frustration at CODECE's efforts that were not directly concerned with environmental protection in the Mountains of Escazú. "If CODECE has a reason to exist," doña Estéfana expressed at CODECE's General Assembly in 1997, "it is to protect these mountains. It should concentrate on that instead of dedicating so much time to other things!" It was with words such as these which expressed her commitment to the Mountains of Escazú, that doña Estéfana was elected Vice President of the Directive Junta of CODECE in December of 1997. (CODECE, Minutes of General Assembly, December 13, 1997). By June of 1998, after Javier Sánchez resigned as Executive Director of CODECE to dedicate himself to organic farming, and Amalia León resigned as President of the Directive Junta to assume the position of Executive Director, doña Estéfana became President of the Directive Junta of the Association. Under her leadership, the project of establishing a communal forest was revived with the creation of a Land Buying Foundation and a campaign to protect the Mountains of Escazú. A flyer distributed during this campaign ended with the following:

"How do the Mountains of Escazú benefit us? They provide water to more than 350,000 inhabitants of the counties of Alajuelita, Aserrí, Acosta Santa Ana, Mora, Puriscal and Escazú. They play an important role in the production of fresh air. They have an agreeable climate and beautiful natural scenery for the enjoyment of national and foreign tourism. They are a refuge for a great variety of animals. They constitute the best legacy that we can leave as inheritance to our future generations.

"We ask of each one of you, land owner, farmer, house wife, professional, merchant, student, politician, that from your daily work you contribute a little grain of sand so that the Mountains of Escazú will once again become what they were before: green and dense forests, untiring producers of water, creators of fresh air, and the home of an infinite variety of fauna. Let us assume this challenge with enthusiasm. We are counting on you! The future of the Mountains of Escazú, as a fountain of life, are your responsibility. (CODECE, Flyer, October 9, 1998).

Though no concrete measures were spelled out for how individuals could contribute to the protection of the Mountains of Escazú, CODECE continued to bet on environmental education, on

transforming the culture of the people to assume a sense of belonging and personal responsibility towards the mountains, as the best way to protect them for the future generations.

Conclusion

CODECE's efforts to transform the local culture were characterized by instilling an appreciation of the value of a protected environment in the Mountains of Escazú, by promoting an ideology of equity in accessing this value, by appealing to a sense of belonging and to a sense of local responsibility towards these mountains. These efforts, which were directed at diverse sectors of the local communities, were uneven in taking root. Nevertheless, they were partially responsible for maintaining CODECE active as a social movement. People identified with the idea of a communal forest, and joined and remained members of CODECE in hopes of making this dream a reality. Moreover, CODECE's reputation as a public interest organization, as a community force engaged in environmental protection, as an authority on matters concerning the Mountains of Escazú, continued to grow, serving CODECE as a social movement.

CODECE's labor of cultural transformation, however, was also appropriated by mainstream social actors whose intentions were contrary to the critical perspective of this new social movement. The Fennis created their own "communal forest" for their 25 adopted children by buying up land from local farmers and allowing it to revert to forest. Their call to "preserve Nature", however, was contingent on fencing it off from communal access, and on extracting it from the local economy of coffee production. Their "communal forest" in which stood Pico Blanco, Escazú's most significant peak, was instead a very private garden which generated poverty in the surrounding community.

The van Wilpes claimed to be "linking development with protection" and to be "working with the people in the Mountains of Escazú and not against them". They too, hoped to create their "communal forest" in the Mountains of Escazú for a community of real estate agents in Chicago and wealthy home-owners who would benefit from the "splendid tropical forest just outside of the Costa Rican Capital." The van Wilpe's "communal forest", although in all likelihood capable of attracting much economic capital towards the "sustainable development" of the Mountains of Escazú, was a project that would lead towards the eco-gentrification of the mountains, instead of one in which the local communities derived any sustained economic, environmental, or social benefits.

The "communal forest" Riva envisioned in the Mountains of Escazú was openly a profit venture to serve the interests of his family. Although he clearly stated his interest in a Private Reserve, Riva's discourse included that it be "in harmony with the community". Moreover, he wanted to be able to claim the status of "public interest" for his Private Reserve, by appropriating CODECE's good name. His proposal to CODECE was in the best of mainstream terms: a reconciliation of interests where everybody won. CODECE could have access through his land to facilitate their reforestation efforts, and Riva could obtain international financial support to protect the mountains, as well as earn a profit on the side, "a little here and a little there". Riva's concept of public interest was limited to the hydrological benefits of protecting the mountains. Beyond this, the communities would have no access to the benefits of his Private Reserve.

These examples of appropriation across the mainstream-critical divide confounded the "difference" CODECE attempted to erect as a marker of identity and as a banner for social mobilization in favor of a critical perspective of sustainable development. At the same time, however, the blurring of this frontier also demanded of CODECE a continual re-evaluation of its critical perspective and re-affirmation of its difference.

On the other hand, however, the production and appropriation across the mainstream-critical divide was not strictly a one-way street, either. CODECE, too, was able to capitalize on some of the mainstream production. Taking their cue from the van Wilpes and the Friends of the Cerros de Escazú from Chicago, CODECE contacted the Nature Conservancy and negotiated an account for US tax-deductible donations to go to its work in the Mountains of Escazú. From Riva, CODECE took the idea of eco-tourism more to heart, eventually developing a project for communal agro-ecological tourism (see Ch. 9). From the Fennis and their land concentration and disregard for its effects on the economy of local communities, CODECE continued to establish its diacritics, illustrating with this negative example, what a critical perspective of sustainable development ought not to be.

Despite a general context dominated by an ideology favoring the reconciliation of contradictions, resulting in the blurring of differences between mainstream and critical perspectives, CODECE was able to maintain a clear identity, with which to mobilize social action, and was able to insist on its critical perspective of sustainable development, which continued to make CODECE revolutionary.

CODECE's efforts to consolidate its critical identity and gather force as a social movement included other strategies. Of particular importance were CODECE's efforts to reproduce its social capital on a national level, as a means of empowerment for its directed at local sustainable development. This is the topic of the following chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CREATING A NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Introduction

CODECE labored to transform the ideology and practices around conservation and development, or what came to be known as sustainable development, not only at the local community level, but at the national level, as well. Complementary to what CODECE did within the borders of Escazú, attempting to change the local culture by creating a collective identity for social mobilization around a sense of ownership of the Mountains of Escazú, at a national level CODECE attempted to expand its social capital by joining existing collectivities, and contributing to the creation of new collectivities, as a means of empowerment to promote a critical perspective of sustainable development both within Escazú and nationally.

I have shown throughout this study how social and cultural capital are important means of community empowerment for sustainable development. In this sense, I have brought together the ideas of such authors as Putnam (1993a, 1993b, 1995), Evans (1996), and Ritchey-Vance (1997), who point out the merits of social capital, and the ideas of other authors, such as Hirabayashi (1993) and Wikan (1995), who deal with the importance of different forms of cultural capital in social reproduction. But I have also described how these forms of capital are not the exclusive property of the popular classes. On the contrary, as Bourdieu (1973; 1986) has already pointed out, social and cultural capital are most often used by elite classes to maintain class differences in favor of their own class privileges. In this study I have revealed how this is often, though clearly not always, the case. Class interests do, indeed, clash, and there are attempts at appropriating each other's social and cultural capital as sources of power to further their respective interests. But the outcome of these struggles is never entirely predictable. In any case, what has become quite clear is the importance of these subtle forms of capital, and the need to consider them in issues of social mobilization and community development, among others.

One area of inquiry that has received little, if any, attention, are the contradictions in which diverse forms of capital may enter among themselves. In Chapter 6 I hinted at some of the contradictions that emerge between cultural and social capital, when a concentration of the former generates differences between those who have access to this capital, and those who don't, resulting in a verticalization of ties, and a loss of social capital. This occurred when CODECE became an NGO, was professionalized, and achieved an aura of authority in the community. One contradictory effect was the lack of active participation of community members in the Association's struggles, but who instead became, in effect, non-participants in the community struggle, by delegating their power to CODECE. In this chapter I deal more in depth with the contradictions that emerge between different forms of capital, namely economic capital and social capital, and how this affects community empowerment.

Social movements involved in promoting sustainable development are confronted by a mainstream perspective which values economic growth as the ultimate goal, and economic capital as the necessary requisite to launch the process of sustainable development (Durning 1989b; Meyer 1993). This focus of privileging economic capital, I contend, is one of the ways in which the mainstream perspective achieves "a co-optation of the very groups that are creating a new dance of politics," as Visvanathan (1991:384) has pointed out, and which he suggests must be resisted "by creating an explosion of imaginations." But if new social movements allow themselves to become caught up in strategizing according to an "economic calculus", as Amin (1992:524) has warned, this reduces their possibilities of transcending a system dominated by the logic of capitalism.

Both mainstream and critical thought have considered civil society to be an important terrain of democratic institution building (WCED 1987; Cohen and Arato 1992). However, in this chapter I show how a critical sector of civil society can be hampered as a social movement when mainstream actors, such as nation states and international cooperation agencies, not only appropriate the labor of critical sectors, but ironically, when they finance this labor, as well. By compelling civil society to focus on what they most often lack -economic capital- mainstream actors achieve what Visvanathan (1991:384) has aptly called a

"freezing [of] the imagination" of critical sectors, who disregard the social and cultural capitals at their disposal, and enter instead into a "zero-sum" squabble over subtractable resources.( )

In this chapter, I analyze CODECE's efforts of empowerment in taking hold of accessible social capital, first, by joining COPROALDE (Coordinadora de Organizaciones con Proyectos Alternativos de Desarrollo), an already existing network of social organizations with projects of "alternative development", and second, by helping to create CONAO (Consejo Nacional de ONGs y Organizaciones Sociales para el Desarrollo Sostenible), a national council of NGOs and grassroots organizations for sustainable development. I show, however, that despite CODECE's good intentions and arduous labor invested in these efforts, the results are contradictory. Although these collectivities of civil society harbor diverse sets of social capital, which at times are sources of empowerment and are wielded to pressure for social change, when economic financing of their projects becomes the primary focus, several forms of demobilization of these social movements occur. Ultimately, these social movements must contend with this dilemma, and are most successful, I consider, when they resist economic co-optation with an "explosion of imaginations" by reinventing power in their own terms.

CODECE Joins COPROALDE

At a brainstorming session in June of 1992, which included the Directive Junta, staff, members, collaborators, and volunteers to discuss CODECE's global strategy, after much discussion, Romano summarized the four major points that emerged. The last of these was the need to coordinate with other groups in order to confront problems which transcended the local site.

"We must have a policy of coordinating with environmentalist groups who share our vision, because environmental problems often extend beyond the local site. We must begin by creating alliances with environmental groups who hold the community and the human element as central to their work perspective. We have evolved in this way, from being solely conservationist. Today we see it is necessary to combine production and protection. We can form alliances with, say, COPROALDE, which is a network of organizations which deal in matters of sustainable production, and who have had much success. What is needed is a national network of environmentalist groups with a vision of community empowerment." (Field notes, June 13, 1992).

During my initial exploratory fieldwork in 1989 I had attended COPROALDE's earliest public activity ( ), the "First National Symposium on Appropriate Technology and Biological Agriculture for an Alternative Rural Development", where over 50 presentations were offered during the three days of the event, ranging in topics from the microbiology of soils, to experiences of community development with women's organizations, to the generation of solar energy and biogas. (Field notes, July 26, 1989). In the program they handed out to the participants, COPROALDE expressed what they considered an alternative model of development should do and be.

"...orient research projects and social action towards the consolidation of what may be termed development with scarce resources, that is to say, a form of development understood in the following terms: that the goals are not imposed, that the practices do not lead towards increasing the external debt, that we may carry them out with our own means, that the grassroots sectors of society understand their position, and that they can become the agents of transformation of their own development." (COPROALDE 1989:1-2).

When CODECE joined COPROALDE in July of 1992, it was the affinity in perspective which attracted it. The expectation CODECE had was "to participate actively in a space of discussion in search of sustainable productive alternatives for the local communities" (CODECE, Minutes of the Directive Junta, July 7, 1992). By the time CODECE joined COPROALDE, the network was a made up of five other organizations.( ) Some of these had organized a series of meetings in 1988 in order to develop and present a proposal to Bread for the World, a German cooperation agency that financed issues regarding the environment and development, and which in its 1988-1994 work plan had emphasized the need for creating networks among like minded organizations. In May of 1988, these organizations decided to create a social

and conceptual "space" in which to discuss, exchange experiences and develop practices of alternative rural development. This space, or network, was baptized the Coordinator of non-governmental Organizations with Projects of Alternative Development, or COPROALDE.

Years later, when I became intimately involved in COPROALDE as its general coordinator, members of COPROALDE nostalgically recalled this time as the network's "first period" when it was mostly a forum for political discussion, for the exchange and sharing of experiences, and for learning. At one of COPROALDE's assemblies, Anita Calderón, one of the old-time members recalled the early years.

"During this period nobody, and surely not the government, was talking about the things we talked about: organic farming, community participation, self determination, food security. Basically we were the only ones. And everyone considered us crazy." (Field notes, November 18, 1995).

But this space dedicated to the exchange of ideas eventually matured when the members sought to become more proactive. After an initial process characterized by the exchange of ideas and discussion, the possibility of accessing economic resources became a prime focus, as a means of putting their ideas to work and carrying out coordinated activities. When CODECE joined the network, COPROALDE was in the process of developing a two year project to be financed by Bread for the World. This project included seminars on homemade tools, organic fertilizers, cover crops and green manures, the publication of textbooks on environmental education, a video on tools, and courses on gardening and agroforestry. Each member organization within COPROALDE managed its own projects which were included separately in the project funded by Bread for the World. While there was still no need for someone to coordinate a "collective project" of COPROALDE, it still being fundamentally a space for discussion, the network hired an executive secretary to carry out the administrative and accounting issues needed for the project, including the periodic progress reports required by the cooperation agency.

The executive secretary was Paulina Chaverri, who complemented her half time with CODECE in Escazú, with a half time position in COPROALDE. As hired staff, Paulina did not represent CODECE, but at the assemblies had a voice, although no vote. It was Javier Sánchez, who in CODECE had already begun to organize a project of organic production among local farmers, who became CODECE's delegate at COPROALDE's monthly assemblies. It was also Javier who later would recommend me for the position of general coordinator of the network, where I was able to continue as participant observer of CODECE's efforts of sustainable development at a national level. CODECE's expectations of joining COPROALDE, as expressed by Javier at an assembly of the network (which, by that time, I coordinated), stressed the political importance of gathering together the social and cultural capital of the diverse organizations to employ them in a collective effort of social transformation.

"CODECE joined COPROALDE with the idea of developing a proposal of alternative rural development. This was a crazy notion then. Nobody except the organizations in COPROALDE were speaking about this yet. The first three or four years of COPROALDE were dedicated to this. This was when CODECE became a member. We were interested in COPROALDE as a space to unite forces to make changes in the social economic structures of the rural zones of this country." (Field notes, November 18, 1995).

COPROALDE as a forum for discussion, however, gave way around the time CODECE joined, to a more active network of organizations involved in the execution of projects with financing. The capacity to implement transformative ideas in the lived context, as well as the desire to reduce the network's dependence on a single cooperation agency, lead COPROALDE to search for diverse funding sources.

The BASD and the Creation of CONAO

During this time Paulina discovered that the Dutch Embassy had resources to finance projects on issues such as those dealt with by COPROALDE, especially on sustainable forms of production. So the network contacted the Embassy, and finding a receptive attitude, endeavored to write up an ambitious project on organic farming. Paulina and members of COPROALDE dedicated much time and effort to this task, coming up eventually with a 1.5 million dollar proposal for a ten year period.

But this proposal had to wait. The Dutch Embassy informed COPROALDE that the Netherlands and Costa Rica were involved in important negotiations to write up an agreement to fund projects of

sustainable development, and it was via this bilateral agreement that COPROALDE's project could be financed. The year was 1992 and the upcoming Earth Summit had already made "sustainable development" a household word at a global level. Moreover, the "crazy" discourse that COPROALDE had been promulgating for four years, seemed to be gaining official recognition. At the Earth Summit, besides signing "Agenda 21" and other documents of international consensus, the Costa Rican government also signed a letter of intent with the government of Holland to establish a Bilateral Agreement for Sustainable Development (BASD).

In January 1993, CECADE, a well established NGO, summoned a national meeting of NGOs to discuss the need for civil society to participate in the government's Structural Adjustment Agreements. Billy Reuben, the founder of CECADE, and a professor at the University of Costa Rica, introduced the meeting.

"The purpose of this meeting is to achieve an impact on the definition of State policies, and to counteract the tendency for policies and agreements to change with every change of government every four years. NGOs, in representation of civil society, have to take an active role in defining national policies." (Field notes, January 15, 1993).

For this, Reuben proposed the full participation of civil society via the inclusion of NGOs in bilateral or multilateral agreements for development. It then became clear to most of the participants, that the meeting was a direct response of CECADE to the imminent Bilateral Agreement for Sustainable Development between Holland and Costa Rica, and that CECADE was possibly seeking to assume a leadership role among NGOs in the BASD.

During lunch, Reuben "leaked" important information, commenting that the Minister of the Environment Mario Boza and several others were already strongly pushing for the bilateral agreement with Holland not to be limited to the governmental spheres, since they soon would be replaced by the incumbent party, as almost always occurred every four years in Costa Rica.

"By seeking the active participation of NGOs in this process," Reuben suggested, "Boza with his curriculum as Environmental Minister, and others like him, could create their own NGOs and at least for the next ten years be guaranteed an interesting activity, as well as an income." (Field notes, January 15, 1993).

After lunch, Reuben explained in greater detail the importance of the BASD. This was a promising agreement for two main reasons: first, it moved away from conventional development projects, and instead, was designed specifically to fund "sustainable development" with ten million dollars a year for a period of ten years; and second, the agreement was proposed as being not only between two States, but between two societies, where a condition for its ratification was the participation of civil society. It was here that CECADE explained that the State had recently created the National Commission, a new structure bringing together different sectors of society, to manage the BASD. The government had already named CECADE to represent the NGO sector in this National Commission. So, to carry out its responsibility, CECADE was opening the process to the wider population of NGOs. Already CECADE had proposed three thematic areas for discussion in the National Commission: forest conservation and its sustainable use, land use planning, and aquatic resources.

Among the participant NGOs, many had already heard about the BASD, but were not aware of the details. The financial information generated a stir of approval among those present. Needless to say, however, most were not satisfied with their representative being assigned arbitrarily by the State. Romano and Paulina, who knew Billy Reuben from his militant days in the Socialist Party, commented to me their concern over the possible temptation of CECADE to repeat patterns practiced by some of the Leftist parties of centralizing power. At the final plenary discussion, Paulina voiced her concern.

"A structure of representation has to be created in order for the NGOs to be legitimately represented. Moreover, participation is not simply a matter of being informed, but to have a say in the decision-making process." (Field notes, January 15, 1993).

Another participant added that the thematic areas CECADE had announced were not sufficient, leaving many NGOs out of the discussions. Reuben acknowledged that these observations were important, and that in fact, CECADE's aim was precisely to open the space for greater NGO participation in the National Commission. Nevertheless, to finalize this meeting, which was later remembered as the First National Assembly of NGOs, CECADE set an agenda to discuss these thematic areas on a break-neck schedule out of expediency, to generate results that the National Commission was already asking for. Those present signed up for the meetings that followed to discuss these areas. Romano and I signed up CODECE

for all three, and Paulina, who participated as representative of COPROALDE, placed the network's name in the three spaces, as well.

The following weeks became an interminable series of meetings, as one lead to the next to discuss new issues that inevitably emerged. This pace, however, favored the participation of larger, more powerful and richer NGOs with resources to participate in the process, hurting the smaller ones with fewer resources. NGOs that were highly financed were able to generate book-length documents for the different thematic commissions proposed. Whereas others, like CODECE, could only put forth a four page list of suggestions, and this because as a financed volunteer for CODECE, at least I was able to participate in the process in CODECE's name, attending day-long meetings often every day of the week. Many NGOs were unable or unwilling to invest so much energy in this process, despite the faint possibility of imprinting their own discourse or agenda onto the BASD.

Soon, another process of NGO collaboration emerged, spearheaded by organizations who rejected CECADE's leadership role in the BASD. These organized a second Forum in March with support from the Dutch Embassy to discuss the terms of sustainable development and to search for a more participatory process and methodology in the BASD. In this Forum three brief documents were given to each participant: a copy of the letter of intent between Holland and Costa Rica, a summary of "Agenda 21", and the following definition of sustainable development to be discussed by the participants:

"Sustainable development implies empowering local action in the creative and productive expression of what is one's own at a personal, communal, regional and national level, respecting and supporting all forms of diversity at the genetic, ecological, productive, organizational, ethno-cultural and ideological level, where these actions are economically feasible, socially just, and environmentally viable through time." (Field notes, March 15, 1993).

Now, however, there were two parallel processes in which NGOs had to participate in order not to be left out of the decision-making processes of the BASD. At the end of the Forum there was a consensus that both processes should fuse into one in a single coordination of efforts. One participant summed up the prevailing sentiment.

"Never has there been in Costa Rica such an important opportunity for so many NGOs to get together to discuss such transcendent matters. This is an opportunity that must not be lost!" (Field notes, March 15, 1993).

Thus, the two parallel efforts were fused into one, creating a national NGO commission, and electing four provisional representatives from different NGOs, one of which was Paulina Chaverri representing COPROALDE. The mandate of the commission was to open spaces for the NGOs to participate in the Bilateral Agreement.

The time and energy that NGOs dedicated to the process that followed revealed a purpose that went beyond a mere desire to share ideas on issues of sustainable development. Access to economic resources was an important incentive, but the potential political power this collectivity represented, seemed to me at the time to be equally, if not more important. We continued to hold weekly meetings, which gathered numerous NGOs, to discuss thematic and methodological issues of the BASD. Decisions had to be taken quickly as the Dutch commission was to arrive in town shortly.

Again, the pace of these NGO meetings restricted the participation of organizations with fewer resources, and organizations located in the provinces outside of San José. At an NGO meeting in April, where some 17 organizations participated ( ), the issue we discussed stopped being how to achieve a greater representation within government structures, such as the National Commission where CECADE still remained, and instead centered on issues of participation and representation within the collectivity of NGOs. According to Jorge Polimeni of AECO, the Costa Rican Ecological Association, the small number of participants at these meetings was preoccupying.

"This collectivity does not have the authority to emit proposals that are representative. We must amend our own process."

To this I added, "we must take steps to widen participation."

Wilberth Jiménez of CEDECO, a member organization of COPROALDE, suggested that we organize a National Encounter. Jaime Bustamante, another member of AECO, agreed.

"For now, it is OK that a few speak for us, but in a National Assembly we can elect our representatives." (Field notes, April 16, 1993).

Finally, we all concluded that a National Assembly should be organized in order to bring in the participation of all the NGOs of the country. On the 26th of June the event was held with the participation of 220 people from 170 organizations. After a long day of often heated discussion, we reached a consensus on the structure and function of a representative national council of NGOs and grassroots organizations. The accord was "to organize the participation of NGOs and grassroots organizations by regions, guaranteeing the creation of regional spaces of coordination, and to create an organ of national representation to be integrated by three representatives of each region." (Field notes, June 26, 1993). This national structure of NGOs and grassroots organizations brought together to participate in the BASD became known as the National Council of NGOs and Grassroots Organizations for Sustainable Development, or CONAO.( )

Seven months later, in January of 1994, the Second General Assembly of NGOs and Grassroots Organizations was carried out with the participation of 300 organizations. Most of the work and activities carried out by NGOs in the framework of the BASD up to this point were financed by their own funds and fired by faith alone, still without a definitive agreement beyond a signed letter of intent between the governments of Costa Rica and Holland. It was not until March 21 of 1994 that the Bilateral Agreement for Sustainable Development between the Netherlands and Costa Rica was signed in the city of Noordwijk, Holland.

Projects, Financing and Demobilization

COPROALDE, through Paulina Chaverri as executive secretary and representatives from its member organizations, including myself as collaborator of CODECE, had become intensely involved in participating in this arduous process where NGOs and grassroots organizations, in meeting after meeting, negotiated levels of participation as civil society, and thematic areas to be included in the BASD. The Assembly of COPROALDE found it absolutely necessary to participate in all the stages of the negotiation of the agreement, in order to ensure funding for its project and to imprint its interests in the thematic areas of the BASD. The meetings were important events of information exchange regarding the latest decisions of the State and the Dutch Embassy, of who was named for what post, of what commissions were being created, of how much money was at play, of what thematic areas were emerging as important, of who was getting what. Participation in this process, as well as the work around the project financed by Bread for the World, were practically the only activities of COPROALDE during this period.

With the eventual signing of the BASD in March of 1994, the period for presenting project proposals was opened up, and the Dutch Embassy instructed COPROALDE to redirect its 1.5 million dollar proposal through the BASD. This required a total change in format and a substantial reduction of the budget to one tenth its original size. By this time, the project financed by Bread for the World was coming to an end, and with it, COPROALDE's economic resources. Despite the fact that many in COPROALDE were "burned out" with the BASD process, some assumed the job of rewriting the project previously presented to the Dutch Embassy. By mid 1994, the first phase of the project was approved to begin the following year.

At the same time COPROALDE was executing its project with Bread for the World, it had invested great amounts of energy going to meetings, gathering information, and transmitting it at the network's monthly assemblies for discussion. Participation during this process had meant access to information, which in turn had implied possible access to significant economic resources. However, during this two year period, the contradictions caused by this "activism" generated numerous criticisms within COPROALDE. In early 1994, during a two day-long session dedicated to evaluating COPROALDE, the delegate of CEDECO and one of the founders of the network, Wilberth Jiménez, expressed his concerns.

"During this year the Assembly of COPROALDE has been involved mostly in resolving administrative matters. The demands of participating in the assemblies has caused fatigue among the delegates and eroded

the work of our institutions. On the other hand, we have abandoned the discussion of fundamental issues, and we have lost our political direction. We need to be more executive in the formulation of projects, and dedicate more time in discussing issues such as the growth of COPROALDE. We are lacking a global strategy. We don't know where we are headed." (Field notes, February 9, 1994).

At the same session, another member pointed out some problems associated with COPROALDE's focus on the execution of projects.

"COPROALDE has enclosed itself too much in its own work, losing all its possibilities to project itself outwards. Moreover, the work of COPROALDE has remained solely in the hands of the delegates of the member organizations. We have to find a way to democratize the work of COPROALDE. And we have to find a way to strengthen our capacity to have an impact in society." (Field notes, February 10, 1994).

By the end of the year, the members of COPROALDE had generated more critiques of their organization. During another two-day evaluation session, the members of COPROALDE again commented on the major deficiencies of the network. Javier Sánchez spoke for CODECE.

"We are lacking a coherent strategy as a collectivity. Each organization is executing its particular project, but we are not taking advantage, either technically or politically, of the collectivity we represent. For example, we don't have an integrated proposal for the training of farmers in organic agriculture, and the result is weakness in stimulating promoters in farming communities." (Field notes, December 14, 1994).

Wilberth Jiménez was concerned with critically evaluating the context in which COPROALDE was immersed.

"The process we have fallen into, and the actual situation, have surpassed the initial ideas of COPROALDE. But we have not taken the time to analyze this. We are involved in many activities, but we are not systematizing our experience. There is a lack of analysis, a weakness in theoretical reflection, a weakness in diagnostic methodologies, and so we also lack a political proposal." (Field notes, December 14, 1994).

An important element of the context in which COPROALDE was involved as a social actor was, by this time, the ubiquity of the concept of sustainable development. The "crazy" notions which had originally united COPROALDE in their difference, as promoters of an "alternative", were now, at least rhetorically, the norm. COPROALDE had, indeed, not analyzed this, as Wilberth complained in general terms. But the dissipation of the differences that gave COPROALDE its identity, nevertheless, preoccupied its members. During this same evaluation session, several members echoed the fact that there was "a lack of clarity around the concept of sustainable development." One member declared that "we must avoid being dragged by the dominant sectors who make of sustainable development and organic farming a fad." Another person warned that "we must be careful that they don't rob our discourse." In fact, COPROALDE had already made an attempt to affirm its difference from the mainstream perspective of sustainable development.

"Development for COPROALDE is an alternative dimension to the concept of sustainable development. It should not be understood as an ascendant and lineal process, but rather as an opening of potentialities based on diversity as a key factor that guarantees sustainability. This diversity should be understood in its multiple aspects: genetic, productive, cultural and political. In this way the concept of alternative development points toward the articulation of the human being, technology and nature within a framework of democratic and participatory processes whose purpose is the satisfaction of present needs of communities without compromising and guaranteeing the future of new generations." (COPROALDE 1993:5).

Despite COPROALDE's emphasis on holding an alternative perspective of sustainable development, the daily practice which brought the members of the network together, was less a matter of critical difference from the mainstream perspective, than it was the financing that guaranteed its economic survival and the execution of its projects. This excessive attention to accessing economic capital, in lieu of considerations over generating cultural capital through analysis and discussion, and strengthening social

capital through strategic alliances and maintaining a political presence, brought on negative consequences which members of COPROALDE continued to complain about. They criticized the fact that there was too much administrative work, too much work concentrated on only a few representatives, no clear policy of institutional growth, too little impact, too little analysis and discussion, no clear political position or political presence, no clear idea of where they were headed, no coherent proposal of integral training in organic agriculture, and no clear vision of sustainable development. Nevertheless, despite this lack of clarity, just a few months later in February of 1995, COPROALDE undertook the largest project it had yet assumed as a coordinated effort: a one-year 145,000 dollar project of "Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development" financed by the BASD.

The magnitude of this project, instead of guaranteeing a smooth persistence of COPROALDE, exacerbated many of the ills its members deplored, namely unconnected "activism", lack of opportunities for discussion, and few prospects for achieving political impacts. The project involved a nationwide survey of organic farming experiences, a feasibility study for the marketing of organic products and the establishment of an organic food store, a feasibility study for credit opportunities for small farmers, a study of the role of women in organic agriculture, technical support to ongoing and new experiences of organic farming, a Mesoamerican Encounter of small organic farmers, three seminars on organic certification, and a series of ten workshops in organic agriculture for small farmers throughout the country, technicians and professionals. These activities had to be executed by the less than ten member organizations which besides, had their own work plans independent of COPROALDE.

To coordinate this work the administrative structure of COPROALDE had to grow, and for this I was hired as full-time coordinator at about the same time Paulina resigned from her part-time post as executive secretary, in order to initiate her graduate studies in the United States. My job was to guarantee the smooth and timely execution of all the activities programmed in the project, for which I began requiring progress reports of the project activities from all the members, which I also used to report back to the BASD Office in the Dutch Embassy.

With this project, COPROALDE was flung into an even greater frenzy of executing programmed activities and responding to administrative demands, and had even less time to discuss issues, develop a coherent strategy, or offer a political proposal. Moreover, COPROALDE now had to respond not only to the communities it worked with, as well as to the international cooperation that funded it, but in addition, was bound internally -each member to the rest- to comply with the commitments assumed together for this project. COPROALDE was no longer a space for discussion partaken of freely, but a financed enterprise where members were bound by rights and responsibilities. The possibilities of theoretical production, collective mobilization, and social transformation that the social network of COPROALDE held, were dissipated, instead, by strained discussions over rights and responsibilities, over the assignment of work loads, and over the distribution of funds among the members.

While Paulina was executive secretary, COPROALDE's accounts had been managed by CODECE who offered its legal status as a registered association to cover for COPROALDE, which for diverse reasons was not yet registered. Under the BASD, however, and with pressure from the Dutch Embassy, the issue of COPROALDE's legalization became a protracted topic of discussion. Because no existing legal formula fit the reality of COPROALDE as a network of organizations, the Assembly asked me to write up a contract outlining the rights and responsibilities of each, which all the members could sign. After discussing three drafts which I wrote, and then a fourth and fifth drafted by one lawyer, and finally a sixth drafted by another lawyer, without ever reaching a consensus, the Assembly of COPROALDE, fatigued over repeating the same discussion, had the issue of the internal contract filed away, although it was not resolved.

Because the funds COPROALDE received were for a collective project, they were not distributed equally among all the member organizations. This made one organization bring up the question of "equity" within COPROALDE and asked me to provide the Assembly with a graph showing the distribution of funds by organization. When I did, this brought about further discussion around moneys that were shared by organizations involved in joint activities, but where their responsibilities were not equally shared. The issue of equity, though continually placed on the agenda of the monthly Assemblies, was also never resolved to the satisfaction of all the members.

While COPROALDE now held more resources in common than ever before, it also had a greater work load, and a new array of responsibilities, including more paperwork and more meetings to coordinate activities. This increased "activism" in 1995 was accompanied by an escalation of tensions, as well. One

organization resented another's failure to coordinate a joint activity. Another organization rejected a work load it felt was being imposed on it. Many complained about the reports I demanded of them, and the continual and lengthy meetings I called to decide operational matters, while others rejected giving me, as coordinator, greater freedom in making decisions, possibly for fear that I would concentrate power, and because of my links, favor CODECE over others. The monthly Assemblies were characterized by complaints, unconstructive criticisms, and a general unwillingness to be present.

By the end of 1995, despite the intense work carried out during the year, there still was not a clear collective vision of what COPROALDE was nor what it aimed to achieve. But in a meeting in November, with the entrance FEDEAGUA (Fundación Ecuménica para el Desarrollo Integral y Sostenible de Guanacaste) as a new member to COPROALDE, by the recommendation of CODECE and one other organization, EL PRODUCTOR, it seemed the network might be revitalized with new blood. While criticism over the lack of direction of COPROALDE marked the beginning of the meeting, Wilmar Matarrita, president of FEDEAGUA, a broad based grassroots movement of the province of Guanacaste, accepted into COPROALDE that day, offered fresh ideas for the future direction of COPROALDE.

"We believe that organic agriculture is an important component of alternative rural development, and that it may be an instrument of change. Another component of alternative development is community organization. So is training, the organization of local producers, spaces of discussion at local and regional levels. A series of components such as these may form part of a strategy of COPROALDE. We need to identify clearly what we mean by alternative development. Alternative to what? What current project are we confronted with, and what interests does it support? In this regard, we can create regional spaces of popular power. The important components of regional power are: local organization with an alternative agenda of participation; commercialization, including the international market, eventually, but starting by opening a regional market and even a national market; commercialization is power; communication, and having our own varied instruments of communication such as radio and television; credit, by way of the campesino bank which lends in kind with tools, materials, etc.; strategic alliances. We believe moreover, that those spaces of popular power must be expressed in electoral political participation. Even in this field we must present alternatives. A national strategy of alternative development as a political project of development for the grassroots sectors of our country, coming from the regions, can be an interesting option for us: to construct an alternative national project beginning in the regions. In the regions it is easier to identify allies, enemies, processes, organizations, and alternatives for the people. This project can be constructed starting from the regions." (Field notes, November 18, 1995).

With the entrance of FEDEAGUA into COPROALDE at the end of 1995, all except one of the provinces of the country had a member organization in the network. Wilmar's idea of moving COPROALDE's project of alternative development forward from the regions had not been considered, or until now been feasible, with COPROALDE. At this point the idea struck a chord of approval among all the members. Hugo Villela, the delegate of EL PRODUCTOR, exclaimed, "We are almost a national movement, with representation in every region of the country!" (Field notes, November 18, 1995).

These fresh ideas for COPROALDE's strategies, however, were once again reduced to issues of project funding, when the Assembly instructed me to write up a proposal for the second phase of the project "Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development" to present to the BASD for the next three years. In the Assemblies that followed, the issues of work loads and the distribution of funds in the project proposal dominated the discussions with a greater virulence than before. After debating the six versions I eventually drafted during all of 1996 and not reaching a consensus, COPROALDE again became a joyless space of reluctant participation. With the additional problems of the bureaucratization of the process of project approval within the BASD, which contributed to the different drafts of the project required of COPROALDE, the weakening of the network for alternative development became increasingly evident.

By early 1997, the Assembly finally agreed to desist in its efforts of seeking funds from the BASD for its project, and turn its attention, instead to a process of self evaluation and strategic planning. At this meeting, Hugo Villela summarized what he felt had happened to COPROALDE.

"Instead of strengthening the coordinating capacity of our organizations for a sustainable development, our project with the BASD and our efforts to continue with a second phase have been a significant force of demobilization." (Field notes, February 26, 1997).

In effect, the possibility of accessing significant funds, turned the attention of the members of COPROALDE toward this externally donated economic capital, and away from their locally generated social and cultural capital. Any amount of financing obtained, no matter how large, was a finite quantity, and what was assigned to one organization reduced the amount available to the others. The subtractable nature of this donated economic capital, led to internal strife when the members of COPROALDE became each other's competitors in this zero-sum game.( ) Their focus on economic capital degenerated the internal ties of trust, bringing about a deterioration in COPROALDE's social capital.

In addition to this intrinsic quality of economic capital which generated tensions between the members of COPROALDE, there was another element of it which generated fatigue among them. The fact that this economic capital was not generated by COPROALDE, but was received from an external source and was externally conditioned, converted the members of COPROALDE into dependent subjects of external forces -a form of debt peonage, or more accurately, "credit peonage"- instead of strengthening their autonomy. Disempowered to determine their own needs, once they were financed, the members of COPROALDE were tied to a pre-established schedule of activities. These had to be completed within a certain period, documented and reported back to the cooperation agencies, unless the moneys were to be returned, and possibilities of future financing lost. This led COPROALDE to dedicate time and energy to activities that, although the network had originally proposed, were often not a priority at the time of execution. This activism precluded COPROALDE's mobilization for other matters of greater import.

Eventually the members of COPROALDE began to sense the disempowering effects of the zero-sum game and the virtual "credit peonage" they had fallen into by their excessive interest in externally donated funds, in detriment of their own social and cultural capital as important sources of empowerment. Because of this, COPROALDE finally decided to abstain from seeking more funds from the BASD, and during 1997 began to free itself from the debilitating tendencies that had possessed it by establishing an agenda of self-evaluation and strategic planning. Eventually, COPROALDE was also able to made use of the labor it had invested in executing the project the BASD had financed. COPROALDE's ability to extricate itself from a purely financial focus was not true, however, of CONAO which also fell victim to a zero-sum squabble over increasingly limited resources of the BASD.

"Economic Calculus"

As with COPROALDE, CODECE also dedicated time and energy to CONAO with the aim of creating, in Romano's words, "a national network of environmentalist groups with a vision of community empowerment". My early participation in CONAO as a representative of CODECE was geared in this direction. Later, Javier Sánchez and Amalia León intensified CODECE's participation in CONAO.

The functions of CONAO, as declared in the first volume of its bulletin were:

* To strengthen the participation of NGOs and grassroots organizations as a sector of Costa Rican civil society in matters dealing with policies and actions for sustainable development.
* To represent the sector in all possible actions related to sustainable development in Costa Rica and with the counterpart sector in Holland.
* To coordinate with such actors as the government and the Dutch Embassy with the aim of achieving the institutionalization of the Agreement so that it corresponds to the philosophic principles that sustain and identify said Agreement.
* To process and monitor the selection and approval of projects. ("Sin Barreras" v.1 n.1, abril, 1996).

These functions of CONAO were clearly in line with CODECE's expectations of creating a national movement of organizations with a critical vision of sustainable development. Other NGOs and grassroots organizations in CONAO shared this political intention, dedicating time and resources to making effective the participation of civil society in a national process of sustainable development.

CONAO took the initiative in establishing the themes of the BASD in Costa Rica, and it also labored to create a democratic and representative body of NGOs and grassroots organizations nationwide to guarantee the participation of civil society in this novel agreement between "two societies" for sustainable development. CONAO consisted of a General Assembly, at one point, of over 600 member organizations. This Assembly elected a National Executive Secretariat that was made up of three representatives from each of the seven administrative regions of the country. In each of these, there was a Regional Council for Sustainable Development elected by their own Regional Assemblies made up of the different organizations of the region. As well as these Regional Councils, CONAO also had Thematic Commissions that dealt with specific issues of the BASD. These included commissions on gender issues, sustainable agriculture, waste management, tourism, and a special commission to evaluate project proposals that came from the sector of NGOs and grassroots organizations.

These achievements of CONAO were the result of four years of arduous efforts on the part of many people to generate critical ideas around the BASD and its implications, and to create a democratic and representative national network of organizations with a critical perspective of sustainable development. This extensive and sustained collective effort to generate a pool of cultural and social capital for the empowerment of the people in search of sustainable development, was unprecedented in the history of Costa Rica. The Secretary General of CONAO, Jorge Coronado envisioned the future of the Council in mostly political terms.

"If we continue in the same direction, CONAO will become the principal coordinating platform of the organized social groups. This coordination could become the most representative network in the country, possibly even more so than the other forms of organization such as labor unions, peasant organizations and other traditional entities that have been adversely affected by the global changes in recent years. In political terms, because of its high representativity, CONAO can become a platform to discuss issues with other actors." (Coronado 1996:11)

However, despite CONAO's stated functions to strengthen the participation of civil society, to represent this sector, and to coordinate with other sectors, it was its last, and supposedly least important function, "to process and monitor the selection and approval of projects", which eventually became CONAO's center of gravity. I contend that this occurred mainly because of CONAO's privileging of externally derived economic capital over its own social and cultural capital.

The BASD was established on the principles of "solidarity, equality, reciprocity and the participation of civil society" (CBDS 1994:2). But while there was a global rhetoric of decentralization and of participation, the mechanisms for this were not well established. As had already been foreseen, and responding quickly to the active organization of the NGOs, Environmental Minister Mario Boza, together with others in the higher circles of the National Liberation Party (PLN), created "Fundecooperación", a foundation whose sole function was to administer the funds of the BASD. Although the creation of this foundation could be seen as a hybrid model of State and civil society working together, the control by the State of Fundecooperación was undisputed. While CONAO was granted one of two rotating seats on the Administrative Board of Fundecooperación, to be shared with a representative of the Universities and the Business sector, three permanent seats went to State representatives.

As the administrator of the funds of the BASD, which promised to be a total of 100 million dollars during a ten year period, Fundecooperación quickly became the space where the different sectors involved discussed the terms of the Agreement. Here CONAO, in representation of civil society, coordinated with the other sectors to guarantee respect for the principles of the BASD of "solidarity, equality, reciprocity, and the participation of civil society". Ultimately, however, the discussions inevitably gravitated around the economic resources of the Agreement. In Fundecooperación Jorge Coronado called for a greater portion of the funds for CONAO, in proportion with its greater representation. However, Coronado was outvoted and the funds were divided in equal portions. Likewise, CONAO continued to lose battles around the table of the Administrative Board, outvoted by the State representatives. According to Jorge Coronado, one of the main obstacles in carrying the BASD forward were the politics and practices of the government.

"They still have not understood that this Agreement does not belong to the government, but to the social groups. On the subject of how to give the participatory bodies that were created a specific role in decision

making, we have had problems. In many cases the government has not wanted these groups to assume a leading role, and so has concentrated information. We have had constant friction with the government. Moreover, governmental authorities have a very narrow concept of sustainable development. They believe that sustainable development is only a matter of the environment and the conservation of natural resources." (Coronado 1996:9)

Once the moneys began to arrive the country, the BASD ended up being structured around the processing of project proposals. Each sector had its own decision making body to receive proposals and give them a preliminary review. The government had its Ministry of Planning, the Universities had their National Council of Deans (CONARE), the private sector had its Chamber of Commerce, and the NGO sector had CONAO. Once these bodies received and reviewed proposals from their own sectors, those projects which were approved, had to be forwarded to Fundecooperación where the intersectorial Administrative Board made the final decision on the projects, forwarding those approved to the Dutch Embassy. In turn, the Embassy sent the projects it approved to the Dutch Foundation Ecooperation in Holland, who gave the final recommendation to the Dutch government for the financing of a project.

In the Costa Rican sectors of private enterprise, government and universities, the decision making bodies were pre-existing entities with established administrative capacities and with appointed directors who made decisions executively. CONAO, on the other hand, had labored to create a representative structure with mechanisms for democratic decision making to review project proposals. As a condition for reviewing a project for financing, CONAO had established the requirement of participation of the organization in CONAO. This was also, clearly a strategy of attracting members to CONAO and increasing its social capital. Although at one point, in 1997, CONAO was made up of over 600 organizations, its strategy of "baiting" its social capital with economic capital, I contend, lead to CONAO's downfall.

Participation in CONAO began to concentrate where financial decisions were made, and the primary discussions of the participants centered on assuring that CONAO got a fair share of the BASD pie. On this matter, the struggles with Fundecooperación were constant. At one point, in July of 1997, Fundecooperación even questioned CONAO's legitimacy to be on the Administrative Board of Fundecooperación, on technical grounds that it was not a legally constituted organization, and even froze CONAO's funds, until CONAO won the legal battle that ensued.

But while the four sectors in Costa Rica fought each other for a share of the promised 10 million dollars a year, the Dutch Government unilaterally gave one single private entity, the National Institute for Biodiversity (INBio) 14 million dollars to finance its pharmaceutical research of Costa Rica's biodiversity, and thus reduced in one unconsulted sweep the entire fund of the BASD by that amount. Effective funding by the BASD in 1997 and 1998 went from the promised ten million dollars a year, to only two million to be distributed among the NGO and grassroots sector, the university sector, private enterprise and the government.

Meanwhile in CONAO, an escalating number of organizations struggled to have their projects financed. In search of a participatory and democratic structure, CONAO had all projects reviewed by a series of councils made up of the member organizations, beginning with sub-regional councils, regional councils, the national project commission, and finally CONAO's National Executive Secretariat. Unwittingly, CONAO became an enormous administrative structure dedicated almost exclusively to the revision of project proposals. All the member organizations reviewed each other's proposals, and competed against each other for increasingly scarce economic resources.

CONAO's political potential to bring together NGOs and grassroots organizations from every region of the country under a single banner to transform policies in favor of a critical perspective of sustainable development, was lost to the emphasis placed on project financing and obtaining a piece of a shrinking pie. Organizations who before the BASD had freely cooperated with each other on political issues, now confronted each other as competitors over the Dutch funds. Tensions between organizations rose to a high pitch, until participation in CONAO began to crumble, especially with the reduction of resources promised originally.

In meetings of the National Executive Secretariat, which I attended as coordinator of the thematic commission on sustainable agriculture, the issue of CONAO's deteriorating membership became a topic of discussion late in 1997. I maintained the perspective that in CODECE we had agreed on from the beginning

of the BASD process, namely that participation in CONAO was based on the premise that it could become an important socio-political actor on a national level. I stated my thesis at a meeting in March.

"CONAO's focus on the economic resources from Holland have pitted us against each other and have weakened CONAO as a collective political force. CONAO should not try to maintain membership with the promise of funds, but with the possibility of becoming a political force." (Field notes, March 6, 1997).

To this, Hugo Villela of EL PRODUCTOR, who participated in the National Executive Secretariat as a representative from the southern Brunca Region, added his concern over what the BASD had done to the member organizations of CONAO.

"Not even the CIA, if it had wanted to divide and conquer, would have been able to think up a more effective means of pitting one NGO against the other and dividing the most progressive sector of civil society." (Field notes, March 6, 1997).

By this time, CODECE had resigned from CONAO, after an investment in the process, which later Amalia León calculated amounted to more than one million colones (over $5,000) in labored time. Amalia recalled what CODECE stated as its reason in probably the only letter of resignation CONAO received from any organization.

"Despite the dedication CODECE has given CONAO trying to develop critical policies in the thematic commission on Tourism, and in the Regional Council of the Central Valley, promoting the democratic participation of civil society in a national movement for sustainable development, we find these efforts have been sidetracked by a tendency to concentrate discussions solely on the financing of projects. When discussions again concentrate on a political agenda, CODECE will eagerly return to participate in CONAO." (Field notes, November 11, 1998).

However, the fear of losing a substantial portion of the current membership by disregarding the economic resources of the BASD, prevailed in CONAO. Nevertheless, in July and August CONAO began a national consultation among all the member organizations to determine what changes were necessary to guarantee the future of CONAO. The pivotal question was: "Do we represent a sector in the BASD, or a socio-political actor on a national level?" The final conclusion to this question was a conciliatory "both". In CONAO's final issue of its bulletin, the "new" goals read as follows:

"To seek new alternatives of international funding: Keeping in line with the principles for which CONAO was created, it is important to diversify funding sources, and establish new agreements with other nations and other organizations.

"To become a political representative: Faced with the current model of development which tends to be threatening to many of our organizations, it is vitally important to become a legitimate political representative in order to participate in the public agenda in favor of social rights." ("Sin Barreras" July/August, 1997).

This recipe for "more of the same" did nothing to extricate CONAO from its "economic calculus". What had promised to be a grand-scale mobilization of NGOs and grassroots organizations, five years after its creation, representing thousands of hours of labor, anguish, dreams and hopes, CONAO was finally seen by many not only as a wasted effort, but as a source of demobilization, of fission and new-found enmity among the progressive sector of civil society.( )

Unfreezing the Imagination

By early 1997, besides desisting in its efforts at seeking funds from the BASD, the Assembly of COPROALDE had also already agreed to stop participating in CONAO. It turned its attention, instead, to a

process of self evaluation and strategic planning, hoping to turn around what the Assembly had recognized as a tendency toward demobilization.

The Association of Ngöbe (Guaymi) Communities, NGOBEGUE, who through recommendations by EL PRODUCTOR and CODECE became COPROALDE's latest member in November of 1996, like FEDEAGUA before it, also contributed fresh ideas to the network. During the following year, the number of meetings did not diminish as COPROALDE embarked on an intense and extended process of strategic planning. Nevertheless, a sense of enthusiasm once again began to take hold of the members, as I was able to observe by an extraordinary level of attendance, a greater cheerfulness and willingness to participate in discussions. Each meeting became, to some extent, an "explosion of imaginations", where again the members debated fundamental issues regarding the national context, COPROALDE's work areas, and its mission.

"The mission of COPROALDE is to provide a space for the coordination of grassroots organizations and NGOs in their efforts to promote a social movement geared at environmental protection, sustainable campesino and indigenous production, and the transformation of political institutions to guarantee an improved quality of life for all, marked by greater opportunities, economic equity, social justice." (COPROALDE 1997:3).

COPROALDE, in effect, began to "reinvent" itself and rediscover in its social and cultural capital, the sources of power for social transformation. From a weakened perspective of "alternative" development, whose difference had dissolved in a context saturated with the mainstream discourse of sustainable development, COPROALDE opted to emphasize its identification with its grassroots constituents, and fight for the sustainability of campesino and indigenous forms of production. COPROALDE also sought its own sustainability, "by its own means" and "with scarce resources", as it had proposed early on in its history. The member organizations began, or strengthened, joint ventures with their "beneficiaries", who now became business partners.

COPROALDE made use of the cultural capital it had generated with the regional feasibility studies it carried out in 1996 under BASD financing. In the Northern Huetar Region, Anita Calderón of CENAP helped organize the Regional Association of Organic Farmers, ARAO, with which CENAP began a large scale commercial venture. This consisted of selling the organic produce of the members of ARAO to the CEN-CINAI, a State-run network of child care centers, with a potential market of 2.5 million dollars a year. In the Southern Atlantic Region, Cilike Comanne of GUILOMBE, used the information to strengthen an already functional organic banana export business, UCANEHU, S.A., a combined project of GUILOMBE and indigenous farmers of the Talamanca Region. This business, which produced organic banana pulp for export to Germany, then sought to expand to other products for the mutual benefit of GUILOMBE and the indigenous communities. In the Central Region, Carlos Solano of CEDECO, employed the feasibility study to begin a shared business between the NGO and the small organic coffee farmers of the county of Acosta. In the Southern Brunca Region, Hugo Villela of EL PRODUCTOR, along with Pablo Síbar of NGOBEGUE organized a regional association of organic coffee producers to begin commercialization. In the Northern Chorotega Region of Guanacaste, FEDEAGUA entered the business of financing low income housing as a means of generating funds for the organization, and providing a needed service to its grassroots constituency.

In December of 1997 I resigned from COPROALDE to dedicate myself to dissertation writing. While at this time COPROALDE still had much to discuss regarding its collective nature and its capacity for concerted action, its willingness to rediscover the potential of its social and cultural capital as sources of empowerment, continued to make COPROALDE revolutionary by inventing new forms of partnerships and shared enterprises between NGOs and the grassroots.

Conclusion

CODECE's hope of accessing social and cultural capital beyond the borders of Escazú as a means of empowerment paid off to some extent. In COPROALDE, through the dedicated participation of Javier Sánchez, CODECE was able to learn from the work of other organizations in matters pertaining to organic

farming, and sustainable agriculture. With COPROALDE's regional workshops on organic farming, CODECE was able to interest more farmers of San Antonio de Escazú in trying out organic methods, and put farmers of San Antonio in contact with other campesino and indigenous farmers from the rest of the country, where they exchanged their own experiences and information. In CONAO, through the constant presence of Amalia León in the thematic commission on Sustainable Tourism, CODECE eventually obtained funding for a project on "Communal Agro-eco Tourism" which gave numerous families in San Antonio de Escazú new and diverse options to generate additional incomes, while conserving their traditional lifestyle.( )

On the other hand, CODECE's expectations of contributing to a national movement of social transformation for sustainable development, were quelled by such unexpected factors as the "activism" required by COPROALDE's "credit peonage" to external financing, and the confrontations with fellow organizations which were generated by the zero-sum game over financial resources CONAO fell into. COPROALDE concentrated on the execution of its programmed activities in order to opt for further funding to guarantee its economic survival. CONAO focused on obtaining funds as a means of attracting and maintaining its broad-based membership and political survival. Both COPROALDE's activism and CONAO's economic calculus, were the result of privileging economic capital to the exclusion of social and cultural capital, along with their potential for empowerment.

CONAO was created to dialogue with other sectors of society, whose mainstream perspective on sustainable development was generally economistic. Thus CONAO's relationship with these sectors was subsumed under this economistic logic. No matter how it aimed for a higher political purpose, CONAO remained enmeshed in an economic calculus, and disempowered. In contrast, COPROALDE was created as a space unto itself, for dialogue among like-minded organizations. When it finally perceived the co-optation of its possibilities of "creating a new dance of politics," as Visvanathan (1991:384) has cautioned new social movements, COPROALDE once again took hold of the social and cultural capital it had itself generated, and began anew to create power "in its own terms" (Fals Borda 1992:315).

The contradictions that emerged between economic capital, on the one hand, and social and cultural capital, on the other, during CODECE's participation in COPROALDE and in CONAO, were probably, in the final analysis, less about the intrinsic nature of these diverse forms of capital, and more about their source. Had the economic capital that propitiated "activism", "credit peonage", and enmity among contenders in a "zero-sum" game, been generated by COPROALDE and CONAO, themselves, instead of deriving from external sources, possibly the outcome might have been different. In the following chapter, I deal with CODECE's efforts of concentrating on and generating local resources, including social capital and cultural capital, as well as economic capital. Locally generated forms of capital, I argue, are more accessible for local empowerment and local sustainable development. Moreover, I sustain that local empowerment and local sustainable development are ultimately incumbent upon local definitions.

CHAPTER NINE

CAMPESINOS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ESCAZU: A MEASURE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The measurement of sustainable development is still a much discussed and unresolved issue. Many authors have attempted to operationalize the measurement of sustainability by suggesting diverse sets of indicators. They have, for example, offered "land quality" indicators (FAO 1997, Schomaker 1997), indicators to measure the sustainability of agriculture and of natural resources (Altieri 1987; De Camino and Müller 1993), and indicators to measure sustainable "human development" (Gutiérrez-Espeleta 1996). While the importance of their contributions is undeniable, all these attempts at measurement fail to consider that sustainable development, even in its mainstream rendition, is based fundamentally on the imponderables of "present and future needs". And these "needs" can ultimately only be defined subjectively by the present and future communities. It is for this reason that the critical perspective places local empowerment as the most important element of sustainable development. Only through local empowerment can communities define their needs and take action to satisfy them. Thus, even the critical perspective must in the last analysis set aside its theoretical constructs to allow the local communities to express their lifeworld and the means by which they would choose to maintain it. It is only by allowing the local lifeworld to continually nourish their discourse and practice, that a critical perspective can hope to remain critical.

In the previous chapters I looked at CODECE's efforts of over a decade to promote a critical perspective of sustainable development in and around the Mountains of Escazú. As an NGO within civil society, CODECE formed part of a new and growing social sector recognized for its capacity to "provide an efficient alternative to public agencies in the delivery of programmes and projects" (WCED 1987:328), and for being "an important new terrain of democratization, and of democratic institution building" (Cohen and Arato 1992:16). As part of a new social movement, CODECE waged a protracted struggle against what Luke (1989:220) has referred to as the "core", "technocratically empowered", "lifeworld colonizers", in favor of the "periphery", "disempowered", "lifeworld colonized". CODECE attempted to defend the interests of the local rural communities around the Mountains of Escazú, above all, by seeking ways to empower them.

CODECE did this first by inventing itself as a social space for community participation in the defense of the local environment, gathering the social and cultural capital of its membership, for collective appropriation, empowerment and mobilization. Then CODECE embarked on efforts of "democratic institution building" through attempts at transforming and appropriating the institutionalized cultural capital of the legal system which maintained a political and economic status quo contrary to local interests. CODECE also sought to sustain the local lifeworld by transforming the local culture and generating new ideologies which fomented a sense of belonging, ownership and responsibility among the people in their relationship to the Mountains of Escazú. Finally, CODECE sought to harness greater social, cultural, and even economic capital, beyond the borders of Escazú, as a means of empowering its own work in favor of the sustainable development of the local community.

I concluded the last chapter suggesting that sustainable development is best served by making use of local resources, and is ultimately dependent on local definitions of what "needs" are to be sustained, and by what means. The proposition that CODECE made use of different forms of capital as means of local empowerment to maintain or create a lived context of social, environmental and economic sustainability, would require the verification of its impact in terms of local definitions of sustainable development.

CODECE's target population, since its birth and throughout its existence, was primarily the rural communities around the Mountains of Escazú, and particularly, the campesinos in San Antonio de Escazú. In this chapter, I focus specifically on the sustainability of the lifeworld of campesinos in that community, and discuss the extent to which CODECE has had an impact there. Where CODECE has contributed to empowering campesinos to maintain their desired lifeworld, that, I argue, is the primary measure of its impact on local sustainable development. Ultimately, though, I contend that it is, in fact, the lifeworld of campesinos which provides the measures for a locally appropriate and appropriable sustainable development.

The Local Context

Before the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s, Escazú was already settled by native Huetar communities dedicated to hunting, fishing and shifting agriculture. By 1560 the Spanish had taken over their territories and transformed the land with cattle grazing and irrigated cultivation (IFAM 1990:31). Most of the Spanish settlers of Escazú, as in the rest of Costa Rica, were poor peasant farmers who maintained their European farming practices, but who also began adopting some native crops and forms of cultivation (Sánchez 1992). Subsistence farming predominated in Escazú until the mid 1800s when coffee was introduced as an export crop (Hall 1991). Many family farms dedicated part of their land to the cultivation of coffee as a source of income. Others began selling part of their land to larger coffee growers. By 1920, the district of San Rafael de Escazú had a coffee processing plant, or "beneficio", in the hands of a coffee exporting elite who showed signs of capital accumulation and land concentration. With reduced land, some small farmers began to change from extensive coffee cultivation to a more intensive vegetable farming for an expanding national market. After the Second World War, the Green Revolution promised greater yields and economic income to farmers with the introduction and promotion of "improved" hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides.

In a study carried out in 1969, San Antonio de Escazú was registered as having a population of 5,459 people, with coffee and sugar cane still being the principal crops. At that time there were 425 coffee growers, and nearly two dozen family-owned sugar mills, or "trapiches", to process the sugar cane, half of which were powered by oxen, and the other half were already motorized. There were only 10 cars and 15 motorcycles registered in all of the district. Virtually all of the houses were made of adobe, and above an elevation of 1400 meters, the mountains remained uninhabited (Bozzolli 1969:8). As a child, I remember walking up to San Antonio on dirt roads where only ox-carts passed. Thirty years later, when I carried out my fieldwork, the population of San Antonio was nearly 16,000 inhabitants (IFAM 1990), there were hundreds of cars, and constructions above 1400 meters speckled the hillsides. Other changes that were evident were the transformed agricultural practices from an extensive form of production of sugar cane, coffee and cattle, to a more intensive practice of vegetable farming on increasingly smaller lots.

During my fieldwork, I also quickly learned that land prices had risen tremendously, and along with that, property taxes. During my interviews, many farmers would inquire if I was interested in buying a piece of land they were selling. Moreover, luxurious mansions seemed to mushroom in what previously had been land dedicated to agriculture. The "quaint" rural lifestyle that predominated in San Antonio, as well as the scenic beauty provided by the mountains, attracted outsiders to buy land and build their homes there. San Antonio also became an attraction to tourists who stayed in a growing number of hotels and B&Bs in Escazú. Many farmers expressed their concern over being displaced by outsiders, but also complained about the difficulty of making a living by continuing to farm in San Antonio. Property taxes became increasingly onerous for small farmers. Access to water for irrigation became more of a struggle with the piping of streams to supply the growing demand for drinking water from surrounding residences. Large-scale construction in the Protection Zone brought about erosion and mud slides that further degraded the water quality of communities downstream. These were some of the elements which jeopardized the sustainability of the lifeworld of campesinos around the Mountains of Escazú, which CODECE attempted to resolve, in part, by promoting the importance or local knowledge and local organization.

CODECE Promotes Organic Farming

During my summer visit in 1990, Romano Sancho commented to me his concern over the extensive use of pesticides by campesinos and was enthusiastic about beginning an organic farming project in CODECE, "to recover the ways our campesinos used to work 40 years ago, without pesticides" (Field notes, July 15, 1990). When I returned in 1992, CODECE had recently initiated a project to promote organic farming among the campesinos of San Antonio. CODECE first started out helping Nino Fernández, a small farmer who by his own initiative had decided to produce organically. One Saturday afternoon, collaborating with CODECE, I picked up Nino at the Escazú feria, or farmer's market, to drive him home to San Antonio.

"How is it that you plant without chemicals," I asked him, "while others continue to fumigate with pesticides?"

"It's a matter of this," he said, tapping his heart. "Some of us have a conscience. One cannot play with the health of the people. One does not have to fumigate because there are natural ways to control pests. The thing started some time ago, and I must confess that I did it principally for health reasons. I suffered from gastritis and my problem was quite serious. I didn't want my family to suffer the pains that I had, and it also worried me to know that the people who bought my vegetables at the feria would fall ill from the pesticides on the produce they bought from me. It worried me a lot to see how fellow farmers used pesticides that were quite toxic and then would take their harvest to market. This has been talked about for some time, but you know that we farmers are quite obstinate. We can be killing each other, but we continue with the same stubbornness. Another thing: you probably already know that agrochemicals also cause sterility. In this country there are very many campesinos who are sterile: in the banana plantations, in the region of Cartago, and right here, in San Antonio de Escazú. Moreover, I am not ashamed to say that I myself am sterile because of agrochemicals. Imagine how harmful farming with agrochemicals is! Because of all this I am telling you, was why I decided to change systems. In January of this year, CODECE invited the farmers of the zone to start a program in organic farming, as part of the fight being carried out for the defense of the environment here in San Antonio. I was able to share the way I work, known only to my family and to my friend Rodolfo León. Now, very slowly, others are beginning to take the plunge."

"Was it difficult for you to change to organic farming?" I asked Nino.

"Organic farming is very difficult," he said. "It is difficult for others to understand what one does. I had many problems with fellow farmers of the region who didn't believe in this. And another thing: all this experience is a slow process, and very costly at first, and a risk because one is poor and doesn't have the capital others can secure, and everything one does is an experiment at first. I also had definite problems with some engineers from the Ministry of Agriculture. Imagine, that I was denounced for the way I farmed, and my permit to sell at the feria was taken away from me. I had to invite them to my piece of land so that they could take vegetable samples to analyze in laboratories. They found out that what I sold was completely healthy, and they returned my permit. But you know that the Ministry of Agriculture is the prime importer of agrochemicals, and of course, it does not benefit them for farmers to become aware, and organize themselves to use other forms of agriculture, abandoning all the toxic substances they sell. This is definitely a difficult struggle, a fight of truth against lies, of justice against deception.

"At this moment, I am satisfied to be able to count on the support of all my family. We are very happy to know that we have good health, and that we are offering health to all those who for more than a year have been buying our produce. When we submitted ourselves to this change, we made a promise. We offered to give what we knew to anyone who wished to practice organic farming, and also to give some of the harvest to the poorest; all this so that my health would improve, and so that whatever we undertook would not turn out badly. I had always done that, but now we had even more reason to do so. It is a promise we made to the Virgen de los Angeles, which we must follow to the word, and for ever. I don't think that I will become poor for giving to others who are also in need. When my family and I made the change all at once, we made an important decision: either we would go forward producing without agrochemicals, or we would continue poisoning the people. These were the two possibilities, and there was only one option. So we took the plunge." (Field notes, May 23, 1992).

In June, I attended a workshop on organic farming organized by Javier Sánchez, who was in charge of the project. The workshop was held at Nino's home, where some 15 other small farmers attended. Nino showed us around his land, less than half an hectare on a steep hillside with slopes greater than 90 percent. He had terraced the land and was cultivating beets, mustard, lettuce, coriander, radishes, onions and beans, among other things. After commenting on the benefits of diversifying the crops, the farmers then began discussing some of the disadvantages of organic farming.

"The way I see it," Rodolfo León offered his opinion, "the problem is that there is no awareness among the people, or among any of us. The day consumers become aware, they will come to you and tell you to charge them what you want. But this awareness doesn't exist." Javier, however, turned the discussion toward the opportunities of organic farming in the region.

"Let me suggest a market none of you have exploited," he said. "It is a market nobody has exploited here in Escazú or in Santa Ana. It is all the Gringos and all these foreigners. They are a sure market for whoever will offer organic products and sets up a stand at the feria only for organic products. We

have an advantage here in Escazú -although in other ways it's a disadvantage- that the large number of foreigners form a large market with important buying power, and are willing to pay a higher price for healthy products."

Rodolfo agreed. "See here," he said, "how many of us are there in this course? Some fourteen, very well. What has to be done is that at least five or four of us have to commit ourselves to begin planting organically, even if with small amounts. Produce something every week, and each one of us something different. Then yes, try to set up a stand together. The important thing is that something useful should come out of this course. A commitment. Fine, maybe we continue farming with chemicals. No matter. But have a small part be completely organic. That's a commitment. And if not, then it's best we pack up and leave." (Field notes, June 6, 1992).

Two months later CODECE had set up a stand at the feria where Nino, Rodolfo and a third farmer, Jaime González advertised their produce as organic. Some time later, however, each returned to tending their own particular stands, though they continued selling organic produce. By the following year, things again had changed.

Nino had been able to save up enough money to buy a pump to irrigate his hillside from a stream at the bottom of his land. But one day I passed by to visit him and he was not his usual self.

"Your crops look beautiful," I said.

"To you they look beautiful," he responded sullenly.

"How has life treated you lately?" I asked.

"Healthwise, well, fortunately. But materially, bad. They robbed my pump. They came Tuesday of Holy Week, broke the box, and took it."

Two weeks earlier I had helped Nino finish a concrete box in a shed by the stream, where he kept the pump locked under an iron lid.

"What hurts me the most," Nino said, "is that this was an effort of many, including you. But in San Antonio I realize that, as well as good people, there are also bad people."

"And now what?" I asked.

"Nothing. Not even the police want to get involved. For less than 250,000 colones they don't do anything, and the pump cost 200,000. It's lost, and it's lost! This year has been a bad one for me. I haven't been able to save a cent. I have remained with what I started. Now I am bummed out, totally disillusioned. One cannot work here. I feel like selling this piece and looking for land somewhere else, because here one cannot do anything anymore. Specially because of the thieves who cramp you, and cramp you. And not only me, but everyone, and it's all the time. If it isn't the harvest they steal, its the clothing, the tools, everything. The last time we were robbed I told my family that I felt like looking for land somewhere else, but they were against it. This time it was they who told me we should go. And like I say, one cannot farm here anymore. There is no help from anyone. The banks don't help. And without your own transportation, the intermediaries eat you up. And if you pay transportation, they also squeeze you. There is no help from anyone. We farmers have been abandoned. And CODECE didn't return. It's been more than a month that Javier hasn't come by. Before, he would come every week. I lent that piece over there to CODECE for experimentation, but there it is, abandoned. If they are not going to use it, I can work it. Maybe you can do me a favor and pass by CODECE and tell Javier that I want to talk to him about this. Because definitely, I am not returning to CODECE. Too many meetings, too much time wasted, and nothing gets done." (Field notes, April 13, 1993).

This was a difficult period for Nino, but he did not sell his land. In fact, some time later, he was even able to rent a larger and flatter piece of land in San Antonio near a stream where he increased his organic production. Moreover, he remained a faithful member of CODECE, and was later elected to the Directive Junta of the Association.

Rodolfo León, in contrast, moved away from producing organically and away from CODECE. Despite being elected president of CODECE in February of 1993, at an assembly in April he confessed not believing in organic farming any more. Rodolfo also sold half of his land to a German family, where they soon erected a mansion. By November, Rodolfo had resigned as president of CODECE and was at odds with many of the members over diverse issues, including a green house the Association had built on his land some years earlier and over which it was now trying to settle accounts with him. After Amalia's election to the presidency of CODECE in February of 1995, the Association and Rodolfo León became engaged in a

protracted legal battle over the issue of the green house, with Rodolfo eventually winning, but definitively distancing himself from CODECE.

Jaime González, like Nino, continued farming organically, joined, in fact, by two of his sons, Guido and Nixon, who also began farming organically. They farmed a small piece of land behind the house where Jaime and his wife Olga lived, along with Guido and Nixon, as well as two daughters, one of whom, Tina, was a teacher at the school in San Antonio. I visited them occasionally, and would exchange plant cuttings with doña Olga who kept a garden that resembled a tropical forest. On one visit, I commented on Rodolfo's disillusion with organic farming. Tina said she understood him.

"When you consider the price of agricultural products," she said, "and compare it to the exorbitant prices people are willing to pay for clothes, for example, without a complaint, it's easy to get disillusioned. But the government continues fixing the price of the products we grow, without considering that farmers, too, have to earn a living."

Guido was less lenient with Rodolfo.

"The problem," he said, "is that we live in a materialist culture. People want to have more and more things and so need money to buy them. Rodolfo, why did he sell his land? He didn't have to, but there he is. Now he is against organic farming. But organic agriculture is not a system of production with which one makes money, but rather a system of production one can live with, and live a long time. That is the point. Organic agriculture has allowed us to live a good life. We can't complain. We all study, and we eat well." (Field notes, May 5, 1993).

In fact, I learned that Jaime had recently bought another piece of land in Sarapiquí (in the northeast lowlands of Costa Rica) to expand his organic production, where he cultivated other crops that did not grow in the cooler climate of San Antonio. And on the recommendation of Javier Sánchez, Nixon was studying agronomy at the University of Costa Rica to become a professional organic farmer.

Several years later, in a conversation I had with Nixon, after he had graduated and was farming the family property, without the direct help of Guido who had by that time become a musician and a mechanic, Nixon seemed fully convinced of the value of organic farming.

"Organic agriculture provides for both our material and spiritual needs," he said, "and our family's material needs are few. Otherwise," he continued, "we would already have sold this piece of land for so many millions that have been offered, cash in hand. We will never be able to make that much money by farming. But you can't eat money. And no money can buy the tranquillity of sitting under the shade of a tree my grandfather planted." (Field notes, May 14, 1998).

CODECE's efforts of promoting organic farming and "recovering campesino practices" as a way to sustainable development in San Antonio, did not result in its widespread adoption, to the extent that CODECE had hoped for. Almost seven years after CODECE had brought together some 15 local farmers to interest them in organic farming, of these, only Nino and Jaime remained organic farmers. However, outside of this group, most farmers of San Antonio had at least heard of organic farming, recognizing it as farming without pesticides, and there were a few farmers who, independent of CODECE, had adopted organic farming themselves. Moreover, through Nixon and Nino's son, who accompanied him in the field, a younger generation of farmers now had representatives of this sustainable form of production that revived traditional campesino practices.

Despite the low rate of adoption of organic farming among the campesinos of San Antonio, CODECE can be said to have raised the visibility of this "traditional" practice, rendering it, once again, a part of the community's cultural capital, appropriable for empowerment, once conditions, such as greater consumer consciousness and demand, or the increasing cost of pesticides, made organic farming more attractive.

Promoting Traditional Practices

Besides attempting to promote the recovery of campesino agricultural practices, CODECE also sought to contribute to the persistence of local traditional knowledge, including architecture, cooking, music, and crafts, among others. When in 1993 tourism became the main source of foreign currency in the country (Chacón 1994:5), CODECE began to consider ways for the community to exploit its local knowledge and traditional practices to benefit from this new industry.

At a meeting with Romano, Paulina, Javier and CODECE's accountant, I recounted what don Gregorio, a 50 year old retired Gringo resident of San Antonio had commented to me a few days earlier.

"You and I," he said, "are seeing the last generation of small farmers. It's inevitable. It's sad, but inevitable, and we have to be realistic. This zone is not for agriculture. These mountains covered with trees would be much more profitable. Hotels and tourism would bring in a lot more money than onions. Already in Escazú there are 35 Bed and Breakfasts. Two years ago when I came here there were only three. The small farmers have to abandon agriculture, just as they have done in the United States. Here hotels can provide jobs for all these farmers. That would generate a lot more money for the country than what these farmers do." (Field notes, February 9, 1993).

"What we need," Paulina said in response to this, "is a way for the local residents to exploit tourism, instead of being exploited by it. Why should the farmers of San Antonio be reduced to being bell-boys, and the women to changing the sheets of the hotel beds? The local community should be the owners of the tourist industry in San Antonio! We have to attract a different kind of tourist, one who is interested in learning about the people, how they live, how they work, and in sharing with the people." (Field notes, February 17, 1993).

In the months that followed, we discussed possibilities of how local farmers, women, artisans, students, musicians, etc., could appropriate the phenomenon of tourism for their own benefit. Eventually I wrote up a first draft of a project of Agro-Eco Communal Tourism highlighting the importance of local cultural and productive practices, as well as the local environment as attractions for a particular sector of tourists and as sources of supplemental income for the local community.

At about the same time, Romano began to think about possibilities of CODECE running a restaurant as a central element of the community agro-eco tourism project. During several extra-ordinary assemblies, the members of CODECE discussed investing in this business venture, and finally, in November decided to go ahead with the project. Romano negotiated with doña Inez, a member of CODECE, for the use of an old adobe house of hers for CODECE's restaurant. During four months, all the members of CODECE contributed intense voluntary work to restoring the house, cleaning the grounds, getting equipment and furniture, designing a menu, obtaining permits, etc. The restaurant opened its doors in March of 1994 with hired, as well as volunteer cooks, waiters and waitresses. The menu was of a traditional cuisine, cooked by local women, with produce from local farmers.

Although the restaurant was not able to generate enough income to finance CODECE's other projects, as had been originally hoped, it was in itself a tangible project which many people became identified with, bringing them together as volunteers for the "cause", during a sustained period of intense interaction lasting over two years, where they contributed considerable time and labor. Besides generating this social capital, the restaurant also gave work to over a dozen people, mostly women, from the local community, raising their awareness about the value of their own cultural capital, such as their own cooking tradition. After two years running, the restaurant also served as the keystone to the Agro-Eco Community Tourism project proposal CODECE presented to CONAO-Fundecooperación, for which it was granted BASD financing in May of 1996 for a period of two years.

Unfortunately, CODECE's restaurant was abruptly closed down in December of 1996 by an executive decision of the Directive Junta, when they considered that the project was, in fact, losing money and "eating into" the funds of the Association's other projects. This decision took no consideration of the social and cultural capital generated by the restaurant, but privileged instead only the economic capital the project was costing. This had some serious consequences for the Association, contributing to the eventual loss of some of its membership. Nevertheless, the experience of the restaurant, though short-lived, had some long-lasting positive consequences in the local community.

During 1996 CODECE organized workshops inviting all community members who might be interested in forming part of the Agro-Eco Community Tourism project. Among those who attended were the cooks of CODECE's restaurant, local musicians, some of whom had entertained at the restaurant, a mask maker whom I encouraged to participate, artists, ox-cart drivers, horse owners, students, organic farmers, home-owners with a room to rent to tourists, etc. In total, over 30 people attended the series of workshops CODECE lead with the aim of collectively designing a strategy to take the tourism industry into their own hands. Towards the end of the year and in early 1997, this group organized a few events for several bus-loads of tourists, events which included hikes in the mountains, visits to organic farms, visits to trapiches at

work, and traditional dinners with live music and entertainment with "payazos" (traditional giant masked figures), as trial runs in consolidating the Communal Tourism project.

But financing for the Communal Tourism project was abruptly stopped in May of 1997, when Fundecooperación unilaterally decided to retain any further disbursements, arguing that CODECE had used funds for activities not included in the contract. As executive director of CODECE, Javier Sánchez argued that these activities were "born out of a process of dialogue and negotiation with the community," and that the contract contemplated this flexibility (CODECE, correspondence, June 11, 1997). Fundecooperación, however, demanded the return of all the funds for non-contract activities. CODECE continued to argue for flexibility based on community input, while Fundecooperación insisted on administrative points. This resulted in protracted negotiations which were still unresolved after two years.

Nevertheless, CODECE's efforts of promoting and strengthening locally generated social, cultural, as well as economic capital, through its restaurant and its Agro-Eco Community Tourism project, improved the life quality of individuals, some of whom I came to know well. More importantly, however, by helping these individuals appropriate and exercise their traditional knowledge and social networks as means of empowerment, through them, CODECE had a significant impact on the life quality of the community as a whole, as well.

One case was doña Irene Badilla, who had been one of the cooks of CODECE's restaurant. When CODECE began its Community Tourism project, doña Irene became an interested participant. After her experience in the restaurant, she became aware of the economic potential of her culinary abilities in the local traditional cuisine. With CODECE's help, doña Irene opened up the garage where her husband previously kept his ox-cart, and began offering cafeteria services of a traditional cuisine cooked on a wood stove. This activity complemented the income her husband generated by farming, it added to doña Irene's self esteem, and in addition, it offered other members of the community an example of the possibilities traditional knowledge and practices had for establishing a small business that could contribute to the household income. Moreover, it offered the community the opportunity to continue savoring our traditional cuisine (as I did on my wedding day when I asked doña Irene to cater the food).

Another case where CODECE contributed to the improvement of an individual's life quality, by recognizing the intrinsic value of local cultural and social capital, as well as their potential for generating economic capital, was that of Gerardo Burro, the "mascarero", or mask-maker. Through him, CODECE also had a lasting effect on the local community. In my opinion, the case of Gerardo Burro was exemplary, though I am possibly biased because of my close involvement with his transformation.

Gerardo Burro: The Mascarero

I first met Gerardo "Burro" (as that family of Montoyas is referred to in San Antonio), in May of 1992 while I was walking in the Mountains of Escazú following the River Agres up to its source. I came to the small reservoir where Gerardo, then a man in his late thirties, was cleaning out one of the sedimentation tanks. He was glad to strike up conversation with someone while at his rather lonely job. We began talking about farmland in the mountains and after a bit, we discovered that we were almost related.

"That piece of land down there," Gerardo pointed, "belonged to the wife of an uncle of mine, Amado. Did you know Amado, Amado Arias?"

"Of course, the one who made the payazos?" I remembered visiting the home of Amado Arias once when I was a child. My father had taken me to meet the husband of my late aunt, who died in childbirth, and whom I never met. Amado's house was inhabited by demons, giants and enormous headed dwarfs that sprang to life in fearsome pursuit of children during the fiestas of Escazú. Amado was the only son who continued the work of his father, Pedro Arias, known as one of the greatest "mascareros" in the country. Pedro Arias was the creator of many of the traditional papier mâché masks and giant dolls, known collectively as "payazos", that continued to liven the town fiestas in the country.

"Amado's first wife was my father's sister," I told Gerardo.

"So that's how it goes. Chabela was your father's sister. My late mother talked to me about her, Amado's first wife. My mother was Amado's sister. You see, I am Montoya Arias because my father was Montoya. But my father had a problem, he became an alcoholic, and he died of that. He went so deep into liquor that it sent him into the hole. He died very young, only because of his vice. It sent him into the hole,

so that's why we had to sell the land we owned. When I was 15 or 16 I worked hard in the field. But unfortunately the friends one has invite you to a drink, and you get hooked, and before you know it you can't live without liquor. I never had anyone to give me advice. I didn't spend my youth well. I'm 37 now, but it's been nine years, and God forbid! I stopped because I wanted to change my life, and here I am now. I have a wife and three children, and I am living in peace.

"Do you still have land, though?" I asked him.

"No, not any more, we had to sell, but I am looking around for land to cultivate. This summer I rented land to plant. It's a habit one has, to be planting something. The land was mine, but we sold it. In fact, it's just right there, that piece of land by the river with the sign that says "No Trespassing". That glade was ours but, well... We sold. First my late grandfather died and there were lawyer fees, then my father died, and we didn't have money to pay the new lawyer fees. We were cleaned out. We are six brothers and sisters. All of us were cleaned out. Then that German appeared. He offered us three million for the two hectares and he would take care of all the lawyer fees. We didn't think twice! That was over three years ago. But now, that farm of ours, they have offered the German ten million for it.

"I ended up working for the German on my own land. He would lend me a small piece to grow my own things. But let me tell you something. Frankly, I regret having sold. If one thinks and analyzes what one is going to do carefully, you don't do crazy things like that. Now I wish I had my own piece of land, where one can go and be at peace. Three years I worked for him on my land, but then I quit and went to work for the Municipality.

"Now I'm trying to see if I can buy even a fourth of an hectare to plant. Because one needs to be doing something, to put one's mind into something. I started working for the Municipality, but in this job there is really nothing to do. One takes care of this because, really! One has children and a wife, and one needs security. One is used to making the body work. But with this job, one starts becoming flabby. The body needs to be warmed up. I work here till two in the afternoon and I have one day off. During that time I wish to be doing something. I was talking to a man who said he would rent a piece of land to me to cultivate, but darn it, he charges 25,000 pesos a year! Idle land should be given freely to cultivate. This morning I climbed the mountain to see it, but it is too far away for me. I guess, if I were single, I would probably be up there somewhere cultivating the land. Like I am telling you, one yearns to cultivate the land.

"When I had the farm there, let me tell you, I was happy. I would be shoveling away loosening the dirt, and my boys would be there behind me. That was a pleasure for me. My wife would come and say "Oh, Gerardo, how beautiful, see how beautiful the boys are." And they would be digging away next to me, and I would let them. You should have seen them. And that is what I want now, that is what I want. Have my own piece of land or even plant somewhere so they can be there next to me, watching what I do, and put their minds to something. But well, that's what I'm into now. I have a little money and was hoping to gather some to buy a fourth of an hectare that would be mine, my own. Where I can plant guineos, chayotes, celery. Know that you can say, "I'm going to the farm to bring some oranges, some chayotes." But now? See me now, darn it! I live right in front of that farm, there of that German, right in front in a humble house, that's where I live. Well, sometimes I get desperate, because, darn it, I grew up in that glade." (Field notes, May 2, 1992).

We continued talking for a long while. Gerardo Burro was more than just eager to talk. He seemed to have a need to express himself in more ways, to "put his mind into something" as he put it. And it was not simply to forget the loss of the farm. He talked to me about his childhood, and I learned that because of his alcoholic father, Gerardo Burro had spent his childhood with his grandfather Pedro Arias, the great mask maker.

"And did you help him when he made the payazos?" I asked.

"Oh yes, he would have me there sitting next to him for hours cutting up strips of brown paper. Then I would help him paste them on the masks. I remember helping him make La Giganta, el Colacho, la Muerte, el Cabezón."

These were now the well known retinue of payazos that danced at the fiestas and still survived in the hands of a son of the late Amado Arias, who had kept them, and continued repairing them.

"I remember," Gerardo continued, "going to the fiestas on stilts dancing the Giganta. Oh, I loved the payazos. I would have a great time. I would walk to Escazú on stilts all the way down from San Antonio and dance la Giganta."

"Have you continued making payazos?" I asked, excited to have an apprentice of Pedro Arias before me.

"No, when my late grandfather, Pedro Arias died, I was a boy, and when Amado took over the payazos, I went to live with an aunt and I couldn't loaf around with payazos any more."

"But you did learn how to make them."

"Oh yes, I know how to make them better than my cousin, the son of Amado Arias. But he inherited them. I am the one who helped my grandfather. My cousin, he only repairs them. I could make payazos."

It suddenly dawned on me that this was a craft that could not only improve Gerardo Burro's economic condition, but that it could be that creative outlet he seemed to yearn for.

"Nobody knows how to make payazos nowadays," I told him, "and it's a dying art. Pedro Arias is known throughout the country as the best mascarero, and you grew up with him. If you made masks you could probably sell them and make more money than working for the Municipality."

Gerardo Burro sat pensive for a long while. My tape ran out and the recorder clicked off. But I remember clearly what he then said with great intensity.

"You have opened my eyes. I am sitting on a gold mine and haven't realized it." (Field notes, May 2, 1992).

I continued visiting Gerardo Burro at his home. He had told his wife about what he wanted to do, and she further encouraged him.

"But what do you need in order to start?" I asked him once.

"A pile of potter's clay is what I first need."

Eventually, I was able to help Gerardo Burro get started. One afternoon, I drove through Guachipelín, a neighborhood of San Rafael, and passed the construction site of the soon-to-be largest shopping mall in the country. My father had always mentioned the poor soils of Guachipelín, "terrible for farming, pure black potter's clay". I drove up to the construction site and found enormous mounds of sticky black clay. The following day I took Gerardo Burro and his son with a couple of shovels to load up my VW Bug with his potter's clay.

Gerardo Burro started making small masks, but they required too much work for what people were willing to pay. He wanted to make a family of payazos, to take to the fiestas, rent them to the Municipality. That was the business he wanted. But he would need a lot of paint, re-bar for the structures of the payazos, cloth for their clothing. All this cost money he didn't have. Nevertheless, he was hooked. He would hang the masks he made on the outside wall of his house. Tourists who passed by would take pictures. With this, he commented to me once, he knew that his art was important.

Slowly, with help from his wife, who also worked, and from CODECE, to whom I had mentioned Gerardo Burro's case and for which the Association had provided financing for the materials he needed, Gerardo was eventually able to create a family of payazos with enormous heads, complete with wardrobe. Gerardo Burro's payazos had their debut at events organized by CODECE, but soon his family of payazos entertained not only local fiestas in Escazú, but were contracted for fiestas as far away as Liberia in the northern province of Guanacaste. For the presidential inauguration of Miguel Angel Rodríguez in March of 1998, it was Gerardo Burro's payazos who danced to the music of the band, being televised nationwide.

Although this "campesino" was not able to buy back his land, nor return to farming, by becoming aware of the value of his own cultural capital, and by making use of his own social capital, which in this case included his family, my friendship, and CODECE, Gerardo Burro took hold of his traditional knowledge of mask-making and exercised it to enrich his life both economically and spiritually. Moreover, the creative expression of Gerardo Burro's empowerment also enriched the lifeworld of our community. By reviving Escazú's mask-making tradition, embodied in the memory of Pedro Arias, and by bringing back to our town the mythical payazos of the past, as well as offering us new creations, Gerardo Burro not only gave new life to our fiestas, but to our identity as Escazuceños. The long-term implications of this, while subtle and difficult to measure, are undeniable.( ) This, too, was one of CODECE's contributions to the sustainable development of the communities around the Mountains of Escazú.

The Measure of CODECE's Contributions

While the cases I have reviewed in this chapter of CODECE's contributions to local sustainable development have mostly dealt with individuals, this is an artifact of my attempt to provide tangible examples, rather than a reflection of the limits of CODECE's impact. With these cases we can see how personal empowerment can result from recognizing the value of locally accessible social and cultural capital, appropriating them, and ultimately using them to transform the lived context in desired ways. This included employing social and cultural capital, as Bourdieu (1986:243) and Putnam (1993:35) have pointed out, to generate economic capital. CODECE consciously sought the "conversion" value, especially of locally generated cultural capital, as a means of making use of the tourism "boom", by commodifying local traditions as a source of income, which in turn, they hoped, would also reinforce the value of local knowledge.

CODECE's less obvious contributions to local sustainable development, were how these individual cases had ripple effects that radiated out into the community, further empowering people. Yet these, too, could be traced somewhat if one were determined to measure the indirect effects, for example, of CODECE's efforts, such as: a surge of mask-makers, following Gerardo's example; a younger generation of small farmers enthusiastically taking up organic agriculture; a reactivation of traditional trapiches and a revived local market for sugarcane growers; pride in the local cuisine and local adobe architecture, etc.

But through all its efforts sustained for over a decade, some being more successful than others, CODECE contributed to local empowerment for sustainable development in ways that were especially significant, though easily disregarded. The existence and visibility of CODECE, in itself, served as a model for the emergence of other locally based organizations, which added to the number of local "spaces" offering dense social interaction, production and exchange of information.( ) Of great significance was the heightened awareness CODECE generated in the community regarding diverse issues. These included the importance of protecting the Mountains of Escazú in order to sustain a desired life quality; the authority that members of the community had, or should take hold of, in deciding the fate of their own county, and; the rights they had in partaking of the benefits the local environment offered.

One of CODECE's most important contributions, but possibly the most difficult to fully assess, was not what it helped create (e.g., new jobs, new organizations, new awareness, etc.), but rather, what it helped prevent. CODECE can be credited with directly and indirectly preventing an onslaught of construction in the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú, during the decade of the 1990s, when the county of Escazú experienced the most precipitous commercial growth of its history. CODECE directly fought against numerous construction projects, which included basilicas, hotels, spiritual retreats, condominiums, roads, radio-communication towers, and private residences. Indirectly, CODECE's presence, and visibility, most likely dissuaded an even greater number of would-be projects to be constructed in the mountains.

CODECE contributed in preventing the imposition of "civilization" in the Mountains of Escazú, but clearly, it did not definitively stop this threat. CODECE established a communal counter-force with which these efforts of bringing "civilization" into the mountains had to contend. Nevertheless, these threats continued to loom before the communities around the Mountains of Escazú. Moreover, there were other macro tendencies which affected these communities, and which an organization like CODECE could with difficulty hope to confront, much less, control. These, however, were tendencies that formed part of the lived context which the communities themselves could not avoid. It was their means of confronting these grand processes, their ways of sustaining their lifeworld, their own definitions of what should be sustained, and how, that ultimately provided the most appropriate "yardstick" to measure local sustainable development.

Macro Tendencies

The context in which small farmers of San Antonio acted in the 1990s was substantially different from that described by Bozzolli in 1969, as a result of demographic changes, as well as environmental, economic and productive transformations, among others. Involved in a dialectical relationship with their evolving context, small farmers both affected, and were affected by the natural and social systems they formed part of. Their ideologies, strategies and practices transformed the context, and in turn, were themselves transformed by the context.

The demographic tendencies were a case in point. The population of San Antonio had grown at a rate that surpassed the national growth rate, tripling in the last thirty years. In 1997 I surveyed a sample of 58 farming families in San Antonio, representing approximately 30 percent of the family farming population. The demographic distribution in 1997 augured a significant population explosion. In this sample, I found that 58 percent of the women were under 30 years of age, that is, in their reproductive years, which implied a significant potential in population growth among farming families (see Table No. 1 and No. 2). Parallel to this, the farming families in San Antonio tended to distribute their land equally among sons and daughters as inheritance.

TABLE NO. 1

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
OF 58 AGRICULTURAL FAMILIES IN SAN ANTONIO, ESCAZU, 1997

AGE RANGE	FEMALE	MALE
0 to 10	18	30
11 to 20	34	29
21 to 30	29	36
31 to 40	18	32
41 to 50	21	19
51 to 60	11	17
61 to 70	4	8
71 to 80	3	3
more than 81	0	2
no data	7	2
TOTAL	145 WOMEN	178 MEN

TABLE NO. 2

MARITAL STATUS OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS
OF 58 AGRICULTURAL FAMILIES IN SAN ANTONIO, ESCAZU, 1997

TOTAL	MARRIED	SINGLE	SPECIAL CASES
84 DAUGHTERS	24	60	0
109 SONS	18	87	4
TOTAL 193	42	147	4

Special cases: divorced, separated, widowed

With a total population in San Antonio of about 16,000 people (CODECE 1995), this corresponded on average to less than 700 square meters per capita, excluding the area belonging to the Protection Zone. However, for the farming families, the situation was somewhat different. Of the sample of 58 families interviewed in 1997, 39 owned land totaling almost 45 hectares outside the Protection Zone in San Antonio. This represented on average, 11,750 square meters, or little more than a hectare, per family with land. But projecting the distribution of land among the family members in equal parts, as was the custom, the result was an average of 2,167 square meters per person, a significant reduction in land per farming family in the following generation (see Table No. 3).

TABLE NO. 3

FARMING FAMILIES OWNING LAND IN SAN ANTONIO, ESCAZU, 1997

NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH LAND	AREA IN SQUARE METERS IN S.ANTONIO	NUMBER OF MEMBERS PER FAMILY	PROJECTION OF INHERITANCE PER/CAP.(M2)
1	15,000	8	1,850
2	15,000	4	3,750
3	3,500	6	583
4	7,000	4	1,750
5	352	5	70
6	10,000	5	2,000
7	14,000	5	2,800
8	7,000	5	1,400
9	42,000	8	5,250
10	17,000	4	4,250
11	3,500	3	1,167
12	23,500	5	4,700
13	7,000	6	1,167
14	164,500(*)	8	20,562(*)
15	10,500	6	1,750
16	3,500	5	700
17	21,750	8	2,719
18	35,000	5	700
19	1,750	4	437
20	GARDEN	4	-----
21	1,900	2	950
22	------(**)	3	-----
23	10,500	3	3,500
24	14,000	4	3,500
25	13,500	7	1,929
26	15,750	6	2,625
27	17,000	5	3,400

28	3,500	5	700	
29	6,800	10	680	
30	21,000	6	3,500	
31	45,000	11	4,090	
32	35,000	1	35,000	
33	GARDEN	6	-----	
34	------(**)	4	-----	
35	------(**)	5	-----	
36	3,500	5	700	
37	1,750	9	194	
38	2,000	11	181	
39	18,000	3	6,000	
TOTAL	446,552 M2	214	-----	
AVERAGE	11,750 M2	5.5	2,167	

(*) Not included in average or total (area in Prot. Zone)
(**) Numeric data was not obtained

Already, among the farming families interviewed, one third of these cultivated land that was not their own, farming instead, land that was rented or lent to them. Otherwise, they did not have access to any land at all (see Table No. 4). Thus among the farming families in San Antonio, one fourth of the land under agricultural production was land they did not own (see Table No. 5).

TABLE NO. 4

LAND TENURE REGIME
OF 58 AGRICULTURAL FAMILIES IN SAN ANTONIO, 1997

LAND TENURE REGIME	NO. OF FAMILIES	%
OWN LAND	33	56.9
OWN LAND AND RENT LAND	6	10.3
WITHOUT LAND, ONLY RENT	11	19.0
WITHOUT LAND, ONLY BORROW	5	8.6
NO ACCESS TO LAND	3	5.2
TOTAL	58	100%

TABLE NO. 5

TENURE AND AREAS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND
OF 58 FARMING FAMILIES IN SAN ANTONIO, 1997

LAND TENURE REGIME	AREA (HAS.)	%
OWN LAND	44.66	73.5
RENTED LAND	12.90	21.2
BORROWED LAND	3.18	5.2
TOTAL	60.74	100%

The parceling of land for inheritance equally among sons and daughters has been a common practice among farming families in San Antonio. This has resulted in a situation of minifundios, or extremely small pieces of land for each family. Although in the past this tendency was countered by purchasing other pieces of land in the same district, allowing the subsequent generations to continue cultivating sufficient amounts of land, by the 1990s this option was practically impossible. In the decade of the nineties the prices of land climbed vertiginously, becoming inaccessible to farming families. The tendency of an irreversible parcelization of land until the lots could only fit a home on them threatened the persistence of farmers in San Antonio de Escazú. Those small farmers who still retained a piece of arable land counted their blessings.

"Thanks be to God, I have half an hectare," Nino said to me the first time I met him. "Because we farmers are being pushed out from here. Don't you see that all this land is becoming residential. But it is the people's own fault. They don't want to fight for their rights. A bunch of Gringos are coming here and they hoodwink us, we who are humble folk, paying any amount of dollars for the land. And I have seen many people selling needlessly. The most foolish thing is to sell the land. The land is something that doesn't have a price. They are cornering us and soon they will do away with us all. The thing is that this has become residential. Then come the road taxes, sewers, garbage collection, and the property taxes go up and many of us cannot pay. So, with paved roads, electricity, and water, the Gringos come and buy this up. What we have to do here is to hold on to the land as far as we can, and sell only as a last resort. (Field notes, May 23, 1992).

The demographic tendencies, the rising property taxes and land prices, the inability of campesinos of San Antonio to compete with "First Worlders" to buy the land in their own home town, were just some of the macro tendencies an NGO, or community organization like CODECE could not tackle, but that the community itself had to contend with. In addition to these, there were other more overarching macro-tendencies, even less susceptible to change by local organizations. These included global processes, such as an increased liberalization and interconnectedness of the global economy, the transnationalization of capital and production, including agricultural production, the decreased sovereignty of Third World States, the decreased interest of the State in national support systems for farmers and workers. The list goes on.

These may be, however, the very factors which most impinge on the sustainability of local communities such as the community of small farmers around the Mountains of Escazú. If CODECE could not be expected to transform these macro tendencies, the small farmers of San Antonio had to confront these issues, developing their own means to sustain their lifeworld, coming up with their own measures of sustainable development.

Campesino Measures of Sustainability

It is interesting to note that the majority of the land sold in San Antonio to outsiders in the last ten years were coffee farms. Many farmers explained that with raised property taxes, with the high cost of coffee pickers during harvest time, and with the lowered coffee prices, "coffee no longer pays for itself". Thus, many small farmers changed from the extensive cultivation of coffee, to a very intensive cultivation of vegetables. If at one time coffee represented the main crop of San Antonio, in the 1990s vegetable growing prevailed, with one third of the farming families dedicated exclusively to their cultivation, as compared to only less than seven percent of the farming families dedicated exclusively to coffee (see Table No. 6).

TABLE NO. 6

LAND USE REGIME OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN 1977
BY 58 AGRICULTURAL FAMILIES IN SAN ANTONIO, ESCAZU

LAND USE REGIME	NO. FAMILIES	%	AREA HAS.	%
ONLY VEGETABLES	19	32.8	19.7	22.8
ONLY COFFEE	4	6.9	5.6	6.5
COMBINATIONS AND OTHERS	35	60.3	61.2	70.7
TOTAL	58	100	86.5	100

Contrary to coffee, which required many workers during a brief harvest of two months, vegetable cultivation was a year-round activity requiring a few permanent helpers to aid with the weekly planting, weeding, pest control, picking, packing, loading for market, and selling at the ferias. With economic capital to pay coffee pickers during harvest, and the size of available land becoming the limiting factors, farming families were, nevertheless, able to continue with agricultural activities as a way of life and as a way of earning a living. One way they did this, was by making greater use of their social capital, mostly through family labor (see Table No. 7).

TABLE NO. 7

LABOR EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE IN 1977
IN 58 AGRICULTURAL FAMILIES IN SAN ANTONIO, ESCAZU

FORM OF LABOR EMPLOYED	NO. FAMILIES	%
ONLY USES FAMILY LABOR (DOES NOT HIRE PEONS)	25	43.1
HIRES PEONS EXCLUSIVELY (DOES NOT HAVE FAMILY HELP)	17	29.3
COMBINES FAMILY LABOR WITH		

OCCASIONAL PEONS	12	20.7
WORKS IN PARTNERSHIPS	2	3.4
DOES NOT APPLY	2	3.4
TOTAL	58	100

Besides making use of social capital within the family to access increasingly scarce labor and land, campesinos also made use of social capital outside the family through a system of mutual help they referred to as "manos chocadas", or joint hands. I came across this term early in my fieldwork.

Leon Sandí, a farmer in his mid 40's was tilling the ground on a piece of land behind the school in San Antonio one morning. I asked him what he was cultivating.

"We plant onions and garlic here."

"And how is the onion business lately", I asked.

"Good, even though onion prices were low for some time, but now they are climbing again. On the whole, onion farming is a good business if you know how to work it. My brother and I bought a piece of land for two and a half million colones five years ago and it is almost all paid for. By pure onions."

"Is all this your land?"

"My father left us that piece over there, and he kept a piece for himself in order to sell eventually and to keep on living. I also have another small piece of land further on up which I am selling, because it is too far away to work. This piece of land here belongs to a foreigner, from Jamaica. It is his land, but he lets me cultivate it. I pay the taxes, take care of the land, and when he comes by we give him something. Last week we paid him 5000 colones. But my idea is that I help you, and you help me, you see, manos chocadas." (Field notes, April 10, 1992).

The use of family labor, partnerships among brothers, and the inheritance of land by sons and daughters, were only some of the uses of the social capital which derived from the family, making of this an extremely important social unit of the campesino lifeworld. As other authors have found elsewhere (Putnam 1995:75), "the most fundamental form of social capital is the family." Without this social capital, the sustainability of the lifeworld of campesinos in San Antonio would be most improbable. Outside of the family, the use of social capital in the form of "manos chocadas", or as another campesino expressed, a "chain where everyone helps each other'" was also indispensable for the sustainability of these small farmers.

Campesinos in San Antonio de Escazú also made use of the cultural capital they constructed, molding it into an ideology which "naturalized" their perspectives (Hamilton 1987), and thus legitimized the actions that sustained their views. They held to their ideology, shielded by the authority it conferred, to sustain them in their campesino lifeworld despite adverse global market tendencies, national agrarian policies, local market relations, and even the biases of their own neighbors, who scoffed at them for being "maiceros". During the survey I carried out in 1997, of farming families in San Antonio, I gathered many statements which revealed diverse elements of this ideology. Among them was an identification with a campesino lifeworld as an inevitable continuity with the past, as something natural, even spiritual.

"I am a farmer by nature, because I was brought up in it, and in it I will have to end my days." (Victor Corrales)

"All the way from my late grandpa, and now to me, farming is something marked in one's destiny, it is hereditary." (Juan Bautista Corrales)

"I have the spirit of a farmer. That is why I like to farm. There is nothing more beautiful." (Roque Madrigal)

A very important element of the campesino ideology was the strong attachment they expressed to farming as fundamental to their lifeworld.

"Despite the difficulties one finds in agriculture, one is dedicated to farming because it is something one has inside, it is something one likes, because even though one suffers, it is like when one wants something and you can't let it go. It is inside of one. I feel good working in agriculture. I could work in something else, but I like farming." (Aquilino Marín)

"It's the most beautiful thing there is. The farm is where one can go and be at peace. I like farming because it is working with life, bringing things to life and making them grow." (Alexis Sandí)

"Farming means too much to me. It is the most honest work that can exist. I would leave it, but only against my will." (Juan Fernández)

One of the elements of this ideology which I found as a motive for remaining campesino, was a sense of duty to provide for society.

"What I say is that some of us have to be farmers, because otherwise, everyone would suffer. What would they eat? Agriculture feeds the people. The most fundamental thing in life is to produce food." (Bernabé León).

I also repeatedly encountered expressions of independence from a capitalist dominated system as one of the most important elements of the campesino lifeworld.

"One works for oneself and no one is making you punch a clock. I like it because one depends on oneself, and not on a boss who is telling you what to do. The human being who is most at peace is the farmer. In a factory it is different." (Segundino Delgado)

"It is important for survival. Otherwise everything would have to be bought." (Juan Arias)

"With farming, it is not a matter of making money, but rather, of gathering money, turning the money around, and reinvesting it to be able to work again, and continue eating." (José León)

"The money earned with agriculture lasts much longer than any other money." (Juan Fernández)

The measures of campesino sustainability can be seen on the one hand, as the strategies employed by campesinos to maintain their lifeworld, such as the use of social capital within and outside of the extended family unit as ways to access scarce labor and land. On the other hand, campesino measures of sustainability can be seen as their definitions of those aspects of their lifeworld which sustain them; how they define what keeps them going as small farmers. To this, they say that farming is hereditary, it is one's destiny, one is a farmer by nature, it is something one has inside, one has the spirit of a farmer. In other words, farming is inextricable from a campesino's identity. Moreover, they value farming, almost above all else: there is nothing more beautiful, it is the most honest work there is, it is the most fundamental thing in life. They would leave it only against their will. Farming then, is not only what sustains campesinos by feeding them, but more importantly, it is what campesinos wish to sustain as one of the most important aspects of their lifeworld.

As essential to their identity, farming is also central in marking the difference between the campesino lifeworld, and the hegemony of a Capitalist ideology. Farming brings independence from having to buy food, from being subject to the commodification of time, from having to submit to a boss. The campesino lifeworld offers a set of values which fly in the face of a Capitalist logic. "It is not a matter of making money," they say, "but of turning it around." Moreover, the money earned by farming is qualitatively superior to any other. "It lasts much longer." Ultimately, the campesino ideology concludes that despite the suffering they must endure, "the human being who is most at peace is the farmer."

These elements of a campesino ideology in San Antonio de Escazú revealed a different set of values, locally embedded and locally meaningful, regarding what sustained campesinos in their lifeworld, as well as what it was of their lifeworld that campesinos especially hoped to sustain. Sustainable development

for them, included not only a link of responsibility to the future generations, but to the past generations, as well. "No money can buy the tranquillity of sitting under the shade of a tree my grandfather planted," Nixon González. A farming way of life was less the result of choosing a profession for one's future, and more the fact that it was something handed down to us from our grandfathers. Contrary to the mainstream perspective of sustainable development, which regarded economic growth as primary, the local campesino ideology concentrated on the "use value" of money, on "turning the money around", instead of accumulating it. The local campesino ideology also contrasted with the critical perspective of sustainable development. More than empowerment, campesinos valued the peace, tranquillity and independence their lifeworld offered them. These were some of the "campesino measures of sustainability", that ultimately had to nourish CODECE's critical perspective, in order to maintain it "critical". By contributing to the empowerment of the local community to define its needs, and be able to act to satisfy these needs, CODECE ultimately had to incorporate these "campesino measures of sustainability" as fundamental to its own critical perspective.

Antonio Solís: To Be a Small Farmer

In a memorable conversation I had with Antonio Solís one morning, he illustrated many of these "campesino measures of sustainability", and what it meant to be a small farmer.

Antonio Solís only finished sixth grade, he was 50 years old and had 13 children. He owned half a hectare of land on which he mostly cultivated vegetables. I asked him how he saw his future with farming.

"Well," he began, "farming is always good. The problem now is that on the one hand there are no workers, and on the other hand, seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are more expensive every day, whereas our products, we have to sell them at any price, otherwise we lose our merchandise. I don't sell at the ferias because it is just little bits here and there. I sell directly to retailers, because wholesalers skim off most of the earnings and the victims are the workers and the consumers. Farmers practically give away their produce, and consumers have to pay impossible prices, all because of a long line of intermediaries. I continually tell my children "Watch out, take care, this thing gets worse every day, with fewer people who want to work, and more people who need to eat." The truth is that if everyone worked as they should, life would not be so dear, and food so expensive. But everyone wants the easy life. Here in Costa Rica, all people talk about is football, politics, and having a good time. But who talks about work, who? The day will come when there will be no food to eat. Yet people pass by and see me working and they say 'What a fool, working like a mule, groveling in that stinking pile of manure.' And the government knows how to tighten the screws on us with taxes, feeding the big guys. The government favors the big guys, the businessman, the wholesaler. But it doesn't consider the farmer, because the farmer doesn't contribute. Rather, he contributes a lot, but he isn't considered because they say 'Well, he has to work or he will die of hunger.' One is obliged to work the land. If that is what one knows, that is what one does. But what I mean is that there are no incentives for the worker. He has to buy expensive and sell cheap. And who can one complain to? What security does one have? For example, if one took out a loan in the bank to plant onions, and the price falls like now, who will solve their problem. That they cannot sell their onions, 'Well then, dump the onions!' That they have nothing to eat, 'What do we care! Why did you plant so many onions in the first place?' You understand, there is nobody. That you lost your onion crop. There is no one to complain to. If you lost it, you lost it! That's why I say these things. It's not that I am against the law, but when I think about these things, all the institutions, none are there to help us. But anyhow, I tell my sons that if one really dedicates oneself, one can make it, at least with one's own land, not having to pay rent. At least here, anything we produce is shared, and there is always something to eat in the house. But farming is always a struggle, because one plants and one never knows. Sometimes you put more in than what you take out, you invest more than what you earn. If in one you lose, in another you make it up, and come out even, and there one goes like the crab, sometimes backwards and other times forwards, but anyway, one is at peace. But there is no security in farming. Agriculture is crooked that way. See here this field of coriander, lush like a bunch of weeds. But then a bucket of rain comes and flattens it out, and the next day the sun shines from early morning on. Then what do you have? A field of rotten coriander. The weather helps but also hurts, and that's how one goes on.

"Take onions. Onions are a very practical plant. You plant the seeds and transplant the seedlings, you water, and fumigate every week or two, and you know that in two and a half months you have onions.

This year everyone thought they would hit it big with onions. Everyone planted onions. But then what happens with prices? There they are now. My brother has a bunch of rotten onions. Buyers buy at 12 colones the kilo and sell at 30 colones. So figure who the farmer worked for and what it cost him. First the investment of buying the seed, preparing the land, planting the seed, caring for it for two months, then transplanting, then continuing with the struggle with water, fertilizers, fumigation. And finally, if there is no market? There is so much onion around that no one wants to buy any more.

"But my line is vegetable farming, coriander, string beans, radishes. I can go to the market and though it may be full of coriander and radishes, I arrive and deliver, here, here, here, here, because I have my clients and they all receive my produce. But farmers also suffer another persecution, because if I go to the market and stand there with my coriander, soon the police is there, and can arrest me. Because I am a farmer, the authorities come and say 'Be so kind as to pick this up.' And if you ignore them, before you know it, they take away your load, put you in a box car, and charge you a fine, as if one were a delinquent. Because that is the way our laws are! There is persecution for the worker. There is no protection for the farmer, not even in prices of fertilizers. Sure, there is talk about lowering the price of fertilizers this year because coffee farmers suffered with low coffee prices. But who are the coffee farmers? Large land owners. Small coffee farmers like me, the government never considers us. The policies that exist are to favor the big guys, the big guys, the big guys. They raised the price of rice almost 100 percent, to help the farmers, they say, but who are the rice growers? Another bunch of millionaires. Who was favored? The big guys.

"So what future can there be? There can be no future for this country. Everyone is abandoning agriculture and going to work in San José, fed up with not being able to make it. Because the truth is that in agriculture, like I say, one is at peace because one sold the merchandise and brought home something to eat. But others, who make heavy investments, and can't sell what they have in the market, get fed up and abandon the countryside. So all this is going to fill up with Gringos, because they come dealing with dollars, that to us seem like a lot, but end up being nothing. Many sell and end up eating the little bit of money they made, or put it in the bank, where in fact it loses value. Those who only think about money, do this and end up with nothing, because money is spent, but the land is constant. They end up without land and without work. Many go to San José to work, and have to depend on a measly salary to survive. Friday comes and they are seeing how to feed the children. That happened to me one year, when I went to work in a factory. I only had five children then. Friday would come, and I couldn't feed the children with what I made. I only lasted one year there. Now I have thirteen children, and with agriculture, there we go like the crab, sometimes forwards, sometimes backwards, but there is always something to eat. I would be lying if I said that here we have suffered hunger. That never, because we plant corn and beans, and there is always something to eat. Those who go work in San José end up giving their salary to the government with social security tax, they end up working for the government, and that is what the government wants, the government takes all.

"I didn't send any of my children to high school. I finished sixth grade, and wanted them to finish sixth grade. Because now they don't teach them anything. My daughter in fifth grade cannot even divide and subtract. That's why I tell my sons to learn how to work properly. One has to be concerned about the future of one's children. One has to raise them properly, and if one teaches them how to work, they can then go and earn a living. Because they all cannot work this piece of land. One is already a bus driver, the other works in construction, one helps my brother in agriculture, these two help me. One does this because it is what one knows how to do, and it is like an addiction that one likes to be groveling in the dirt. I consider it the most honest occupation that exists. But each one goes on looking for what best he can do, and that is how it goes." (Field notes, June 16, 1992).

Conclusion

As a central condition of its critical perspective of sustainable development, CODECE attempted to empower the local community in order to sustain its lifeworld. CODECE employed diverse strategies which included attempts to change legal structures, efforts to transform the local culture, and efforts to create nation-wide networks. In this chapter I reviewed a few examples of how CODECE highlighted the importance of local social and cultural capital as sources of community empowerment, by giving renewed life to traditional campesino cultural practices. With its project of organic farming, CODECE directly

affected only a few small farmers. However, its significant achievement resided in the indirect effects CODECE had in re-introducing organic farming, or the traditional way "our campesinos worked 40 years ago" as an option in the community. With its Agro-Eco Community Tourism project, CODECE helped empower a few individuals by helping them access their own cultural capital as potential sources of income. Here too, CODECE's indirect effect on the local community was significant. Nevertheless, in spite of its achievements in creating greater options, as well as in preventing greater threats, CODECE's impact on local sustainable development was limited.

Along with the growing acceptance among mainstream and critical sectors alike, that sustainable development is a desirable goal, there has been a growing consensus that organized civil society, and especially NGOs, are the most important new social actors to promote processes of sustainable development. NGOs have increasingly become the interlocutors between international development agencies and the State, on one hand, and the local communities, on the other. Often NGOs have even taken over areas and activities relinquished by the State, many times through the encouragement of such powerful international institutions as the World Bank and the IMF. Yet, in the case of CODECE, which was a fully committed community organization with a critical perspective of sustainable development, and with over ten years of collective effort, its capacity to establish comprehensive processes for the sustainable development of the local rural communities was limited. Moreover, despite all the efforts of CODECE, the conditions which threatened the lifeworld of campesinos around the Mountains of Escazú when the Association was born, still loomed over the future of the local communities.

Undeniably, CODECE played an important role in stemming or retarding local environmental threats, in creating a widespread awareness regarding the need to establish a harmonious and respectful relationship with Nature, and in opening new productive opportunities for members of the local community. Nevertheless, it cannot be expected that CODECE, or any NGO, for that matter, has the capacity to firmly establish processes of sustainable development. There is a danger in promoting NGOs as the "reconcilers" between the State and the community, or between "lifeworld colonizers" and the "lifeworld colonized". This may, in fact, be a way of dissipating massive social action in response to persistent and growing contradictions, and a way of perpetuating a mainstream hegemony. Not only is it impossible for NGOs to transform society merely through "projects", NGOs can neither be expected to fully carry the voice of the local communities. Sustainable development is not something that can be done to communities, but rather, is something the communities carry out themselves.

Ultimately, in the case of San Antonio de Escazú, it was the local campesinos who expressed what their "present and future needs" were for their sustainable development. It was also the local campesinos who already had sustained their lifeworld for centuries, despite great adversities, and who had the elements to recreate the concept of sustainable development in their own image, that is, express the measures which have permitted them to persist till the present, and demand those elements which they need to maintain their lifeworld for the "future generations". The final importance of this, is that the campesino lifeworld has much to contribute to an ever evolving critical concept of sustainable development, such as that which CODECE hoped to promote.

Campesinos have subsisted for centuries, outliving feudal systems, empires, dictatorships, and persisting into our current global Capitalist market system. Moreover, campesinos, or peasants, comprise 70 percent of the global population. Campesinos are living proof of what has been till now a sustainable way of life. A post-critical perspective of sustainable development, must not only guarantee the sustainability of campesinos as such, but must do so by incorporating the values campesinos uphold as important for a life which will sustain them. Finally, it is clear that much of the campesino lifeworld is critical of a Capitalist dominated global system. This, surely is what most needs to change in order to sustain a campesino lifeworld. This is what needs to change in order for sustainable development to be a global possibility.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

Introduction

By the time I began extended fieldwork for this dissertation in 1992, sustainable development had become the dominant development paradigm in Costa Rica. With the celebration of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development that year, sustainable development was adopted as the desired goal in the international agreement "Agenda 21" by over 170 signatory nations. Sustainable development was a paradigm that purported to reconcile efforts of economic growth with environmental protection, the interests of the State and business sectors with those of civil society, and the needs of the present with those of the future. As such, it was difficult to be against sustainable development. In Costa Rica this paradigm took hold of diverse sectors, including the State, the business sector, as well as civil society, made up of NGOs and grassroots organizations.

Despite the widespread acceptance of sustainable development as the favored goal, I found that what diverse sectors understood as sustainable development differed considerably. In Costa Rica I distinguished two major perspectives: the mainstream perspective, held mostly by the State and the business sector; and the critical perspective, promoted by a more Left-leaning group of NGOs and grassroots organizations. The mainstream perspective held economic growth to be the necessary and critical condition of sustainable development, as well as the ultimate goal. It viewed environmental protection and the participation of civil society to be among the means to achieve this goal, as well as some of the beneficial outcomes of economic growth (WCED 1987; UNCED 1992). In contrast, the critical perspective placed local community empowerment at the center of its thesis of sustainable development (COPROALDE 1993), with environmental protection and economic growth radiating out as complementary effects of community empowerment and mobilization.

Despite its conciliatory tone, I found that sustainable development was a contested terrain, both in ideological, as well as in practical terms. In this struggle, I took sides with the critical perspective, studying the efforts of a community organization, CODECE, in my home town of Escazú, Costa Rica, to implement its conception of sustainable development. During a ten year period, I was able to analyze the nature of this struggle, and identify some options that contributed to advancing a critical perspective and practice of sustainable development.

Diluting Differences

The struggle for sustainable development between mainstream and critical perspectives revealed that despite its conciliatory stance, this ideology was fraught with contradictions. In fact, it was sustainable development's fundamental concern for reconciling differences, which emerged as a major threat to the empowerment of local communities and their efforts to sustain their lifeworld.

One of the major sources of social mobilization is the construction of an identity by the affirmation of difference (Cohen 1985; Cohen and Arato 1992; Epstein 1990), most often created out of conflictual roles and positions (Escobar and Alvarez 1992a). The thesis that sustainable development brought together previously contending interests, made critical efforts of distinction that much more difficult. It was easier to counter development with conservation, as many social movements did prior to the advent of sustainable development (Escobar 1995:216), than to construct an identity of difference within a shared rubric. As a loyal, but frustrated member of CODECE once exclaimed, "If CODECE has a reason to exist, it is to protect these mountains. It should concentrate on that instead of dedicating so much time to other things!" It was those "other things" which formed part of CODECE's strategy to promote local sustainable development, that tended to dissolve its difference from mainstream sectors.

The conciliatory stance of the ideology of sustainable development also legitimized and favored a tendency among mainstream actors to appropriate critical discourse and practice as their own, in order to

advance mainstream interests. This appropriation across the critical/mainstream divide also blurred the differences between them. At the same time, this diluted the critical perspective, and dissipated critical practice, when critical efforts had then to be redirected to re-appropriate the products of their labor and redefine their difference.

The search for a common middle ground, and ways to mediate differences, also made the ideology of sustainable development emphasize the importance of NGOs and other forms of organized civil society as "an efficient alternative to public agencies in the delivery of programmes and projects" (WCED 1987:328). The mediation of NGOs between the State and international cooperation agencies, on the one hand, and local communities on the other, placed this oftentimes critical sector in an ambiguous position, further compromising its critical edge. Most importantly, however, by accepting this role at the hub of sustainable development activities, and the power this offered them to promote their critical perspectives, members of this critical sector unwittingly became accomplices to diluting the differences between State/corporate structures and local communities, or what Luke (1989:220) has distinguished as "lifeworld colonizers" and "lifeworld colonized". The proliferation of NGOs, and other such instances of mediation between these sectors, threatened to dissolve the mobilization potential of local communities to determine their own means and ends of local sustainable development.

Social and Cultural Capital: Means of Empowerment

Despite these "homogenizing" tendencies of sustainable development, CODECE, nevertheless, labored to maintain its difference from a mainstream perspective, and to empower the local community to implement a critical perspective of sustainable development. In reviewing the literature that dealt with social movements, Cohen (1985) emphasized two major paradigms that explicated social mobilization: the "resource mobilization" approach, and the "identity-orientation" approach. The first stressed strategic considerations, collective action, and interest mobilization, while the second emphasized issues of consciousness, ideology, and solidarity. Some authors (Marx Ferree and Miller 1985; Buechler 1993) called for integrating these two approaches, and others (Epstein 1990) suggested drawing on an even wider range of perspectives. To this end, I focused on empowerment as a core concept which integrated both the resource mobilization approach and the identity-orientation approach to social mobilization. By empowerment, I mean obtaining the capacity to transform the world in desired ways. This capacity may derive from the rational-materialist sources of power of the resource-mobilization approach, as well as from the more "irrational"-ideological sources of the identity-orientation approach. In bringing these two approaches together, I made use of Bourdieu's (1986) concept of forms of capital, and although he did not specifically address their potential for social mobilization, he did identify them as sources of power.

Bourdieu (1986) concentrated on highlighting the importance of other forms of capital besides economic, namely, social and cultural capital. He defined social capital as the potential benefits derived from "social connections", from forming part of a "network of relationships", or "membership in a group" (1986:243-248). His definition of cultural capital included "embodied", or individually held "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body", such as skills or knowledge; "objectified" cultural goods, such as books, tools, or works of art; and officially sanctioned "institutionalized" cultural capital, such as academic titles or legal dispositions, which conferred authority to individuals anointed by these institutions (1986:243-248).

Bourdieu's focus on these forms of capital as "accumulated labor-time" (1986:253) was to highlight their convertibility to economic capital, demonstrating, hence, their value. However, in this study I privileged social and cultural capital, in contrast to economic capital. I did this for several reasons. First, I found that social mobilization was often achieved without recourse to economic capital, thus, empowerment for mobilization had to come from another source. I searched for this source of power in the social and cultural capital available to the people. Secondly, I hoped to contribute to a critical perspective of sustainable development by affirming a difference with the mainstream perspective that privileged economic capital as the means and end of sustainable development. Thirdly, I repeatedly encountered cases, even among critical sectors, where an undue emphasis on economic capital, in fact, contributed to disempowerment and social demobilization. Finally, I focused on social and cultural capital as sources of empowerment, because these were often the only forms of capital that the campesinos around the Mountains of Escazú did have access to.

Like other authors before me, who emphasized the importance of social capital (Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993a; Putnam 1993b; Putnam 1995; Evans 1995; Portes 1998; Sampson 1998) and cultural capital (Hirabayashi 1993; Wikan 1995) in processes of community development, in this study I confirmed their significance. CODECE generated social capital by its mere existence, providing a space of "mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu 1986:248), whereby social mobilization for collective interests became possible. Through CODECE, the local community reforested significant areas, but also countered important threats of construction in the Mountains of Escazú. By generating cultural capital in the community, through legal and environmental education, CODECE empowered the people to denounce environmental infractions, and protect their own natural environment. By joining COPROALDE, and helping to create CONAO, both national networks of organizations, CODECE expanded the scope of its "group membership", making greater use of social capital to serve its needs of local sustainable development. By using this social capital, CODECE was able to strengthen and generate local projects of sustainable development, such as organic farming, and agro-eco community tourism. By generating cultural capital in the form of new symbols of group identity, such as the "communal forest" in the Mountains of Escazú, CODECE continued to generate group membership, and mobilize this social capital for further efforts of local sustainable development.

However, while I did confirm the importance of social and cultural capital for local community empowerment, I also found that these forms of capital were not the exclusive property of critical sectors of society, such as CODECE. Nor were social and cultural capital employed only by the elite classes to maintain their class privileges, as Bourdieu (1986:249) suggested. I did however, discover factors which conditioned the accessibility and use of social and cultural capital for local empowerment and local sustainable development. Like economic capital, social and cultural capital are not evenly distributed in the social landscape. Furthermore, like economic capital, social and cultural capital have the capacity to reproduce themselves. These two conditions contributed to a tendency for social and cultural capital to strengthen the class differences underlying their production.

When CODECE attempted to appropriate the institutionalized cultural capital of the legal system by transforming its contents and mechanisms for greater accessibility by the local community, these efforts were countered by the ruling class, whose mainstream interests of privileging economic growth over local empowerment the legal system sustained. Making use of their own social and cultural capital, this class diffused CODECE's efforts, not by opposition, but rather by appropriating CODECE's efforts of social and cultural capital production. When CODECE attempted to present a Bill of Law for the communal management of the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú, the Legislative Assembly welcomed CODECE's petition, only to file it away indefinitely and not question the status quo of the contents or mechanisms of the legal system. When CODECE sought to establish a Regulation Plan for the county of Escazú, in which the interests of all the local sectors would be democratically represented, again CODECE's efforts were diffused by mainstream interests. Not by confrontation, but indeed, by requesting CODECE to participate in the design and implementation of the Regulation Plan, its efforts were appropriated by the dominant sectors to sustain mainstream interests. After ten years laboring to design and implement a democratic and representative Regulation Plan for Escazú, CODECE only contributed to legitimizing a Plan that further disempowered rural sectors, deepening existing class differences and inequities.

In contrast, when CODECE embarked on creating a communal forest in the Mountains of Escazú, many people identified with this objective, joining the ranks of the Association. Its numerous studies in the mountains, and ability to attract members of the local community to its cause, also ignited the interest of mainstream sectors, who attempted to appropriate this capital for their own interests. The van Wilpes sought to appropriate the cultural, or informational capital CODECE had generated with its diverse studies of the Mountains of Escazú, as well as the social capital the Association had created around the concept of a communal forest, to serve their own private real estate interests in the mountains. The Riva Foundation, also sought to appropriate CODECE's social and cultural capital by establishing "agreements of collaboration" between the two organizations, in order to use CODECE's "reputation" to obtain international financing for the Riva Foundation's private forest reserve and eco-tourism projects.

These attempts at appropriation of CODECE's social and cultural capital by mainstream interests, however, were not successful, contrasting significantly with the previous examples. In the cases where CODECE fell victim to mainstream appropriation of its labor, the Association's efforts were directed at modifying social and cultural capital sustained by mainstream interests. Here, CODECE's efforts were

easily incorporated to help maintain and even strengthen the status quo, along with its class differences. But where CODECE generated its own social and cultural capital, as with the communal forest project, it was better able to halt mainstream appropriation of its labor. In fact, as Rosaldo (1989:217) pointed out, when he emphasized the importance of "borrowing and lending" across boundaries, CODECE was, indeed, able to "borrow" for its own critical interests, the information and "connections" supplied by mainstream sectors during mainstream attempts at appropriation.

These different cases point to an important condition of social and cultural capital, indeed of any capital, that impinges on their capacity to empower, or conversely, to disempower. Where a particular form of capital is generated explains much about its use as a source of local empowerment. When capital is externally generated, it is less accessible, less appropriable, and less useful as a source of local empowerment. On the other hand, locally generated capital is already in local hands to be exercised as a means of empowerment. This, however, was not the only factor which conditioned the empowering capacity of social and cultural capital.

The Contradictions of Economic Capital

An area which has received little analysis, despite important calls to study the negative aspects of social capital, especially, (Putnam 1993:42; Woolcock 1998:59; Portes 1998:15), are the contradictions that may emerge between different forms of capital. In this study I paid particular attention to the contradictions that emerged between economic capital and social capital. I did this first, to unmask the fallacies of the "economic calculus" (Amin 1992) of the mainstream perspective, which viewed economic growth as fundamental for sustainable development, and the financing of projects, as instrumental (WCED 1987; UNCED 1992). Second, I hoped to expose an area where I suspected the "co-optation of the very groups that [were] creating a new dance of politics" (Visvanathan 1991:384) was occurring, namely in financing critical sectors of civil society to execute projects for sustainable development. Finally, with this, I hoped to highlight important differences that exist between the mainstream and critical perspectives of sustainable development.

I encountered various instances where economic capital came into contradiction with social capital, resulting in the disempowering and demobilization of critical sectors. Once CODECE obtained international financing, and was able to rent its own office and hire paid staff, it joined the ranks of NGOs, moving away from its previous identity as community organization, even though it continually reaffirmed is communal nature. Social scientists (Putnam 1993a) have already recognized that "trust" and "horizontal ties" are important aspects of social capital in its capacity to promote community development. When CODECE became an NGO, that is, when it received external financing, subtle instances of "verticalization" of the social ties in the Association began to occur. Some members of CODECE were now paid, while others volunteered their work. Paid staff dedicated considerably more time to the Association, unwittingly becoming centers of the social networks that crisscrossed CODECE, and thus, becoming privy to more information. This concentration of social and cultural capital further accentuated the verticalization of ties. This became evident in the Assemblies where the general membership of the Association continually had to defer to the "office staff" for "informed" opinions and ultimately for decision-making. The result was a weakening of membership participation.

In addition to contributing to the verticalization of social relations within CODECE, international financing also brought about a verticalization of ties between the Association and the rest of the community. While economic capital did enable CODECE to harness more information and legal expertise, raising its profile and authority within the community, it also raised the Association above the horizontal social ties it previously had as a community organization. With CODECE's new found expertise and aura of authority, members of the community delegated responsibility for local environmental issues to the Association. Both with the internal verticalization of social ties, as with the external ones, a final outcome was the disempowerment of the wider community.

But economic capital had disempowering effects not only through the verticalization of social ties. When CODECE joined COPROALDE, a network of organizations with projects of "alternative" development, and shared in the substantial external financing the network received, another manifestation of economic capital's capacity to disempower became evident. Once COPROALDE obtained external

financing for a project of sustainable development, it was bound to execute the activities laid out in the project within an allotted time. Despite internal or contextual changes that might occur, requiring changes in COPROALDE's focus or strategy, the execution of the contracted activities took precedence. Only by assiduously carrying out what had been agreed upon by COPROALDE and the cooperation agency, could the network continue to receive financing for its economic sustainability. Thus COPROALDE embarked on a frenzied effort to execute its project, to the point of forgoing more strategically important and pressing activities. This "credit peonage" COPROALDE fell into, forced its members, including CODECE, into an unreflective and rigid "activism" which "burned them out" and, at least temporarily, demobilized them.

The undue importance given to economic capital contributed to a more permanent demobilization of a critical sector of civil society in the case of CONAO, the National Council of NGOs and grassroots organizations. After hundreds of hours of labor-time dedicated by CODECE and many others, to create a national council of organizations with a critical perspective of sustainable development, CONAO succumbed to an over emphasis on economic capital and the debilitating effects this had. Created to access international financing provided by the Bilateral Agreement for Sustainable Development between Costa Rica and the Netherlands, but also to serve as a representative body for social mobilization, CONAO dangled the "carrot" of international financing in front of national NGOs and grassroots organizations, in order to attract them into its fold. When financing arrived, the numerous organizations of CONAO had to compete against each other over the finite pie. The zero-sum game these organizations fell into resulted in animosity among previously friendly organizations. Unable to forego the lure of economic capital, and fully value the social and cultural capital it had generated, instead of employing these for mobilization and social transformation, CONAO continued to focus on international financing as its main source of power. Ultimately, when the pie of international cooperation aid diminished, competition over a shrinking pie further engendered enmity among the organizations, resulting finally in the demobilization of the most progressive sector of Costa Rican civil society.

NGOs and the Community

Fals Borda (1992:315) presents Third World scholars and social movements "a practical and theoretical challenge" to "continue to reinvent power in our own terms... if the independent social and political movements of today are not to waste away... but are, instead, to continue their vigorous, fruitful existence as leading actors in historical developments." In this study, I took up this challenge. I found that locally generated, as opposed to externally derived, forms of capital, better served the goal of reinventing power "in our own terms". When CODECE focused on highlighting the importance of local knowledge and local organization as sources of empowerment, this had measurable effects on the life quality of the communities around the Mountains of Escazú. By reviving traditional agricultural practices that formed part of today's organic farming, CODECE opened the possibility for local farmers to sustain their lifeworld without having to endure the scourge of pesticide intoxication. It also opened the possibility for farmers to improve their economic situation by accessing a growing market for organic products. Most importantly, it ignited an interest among some young farmers, to sustain their campesino lifeworld into the next generation. When CODECE stressed the importance of local knowledge and traditions, such as mask-making, local cooking, sugar making, ox-cart driving, music playing, knowledge of the local geography and local flora and fauna, these were appropriated by the local community, and further generated as economic enterprises, in the context of a growing tourism industry. Instead of becoming bellboys and maids in foreign owned hotels, they sustained the campesino value of being owners of their own labor and production.

By placing local empowerment at the center of its thesis, the critical perspective of sustainable development pursues the means by which local communities can express their local values, can take hold and make use of their local knowledge, can determine what of their lifeworld they seek to sustain, and can decide by what means they wish to sustain it. The thesis of local empowerment, ultimately acknowledges the importance of local values, local definitions, and local practices in determining the scope and direction of local sustainable development. In the town of San Antonio de Escazú local campesino values included an attachment to the land, a love of farming, an integrated family unit, a view of community as a "chain" of mutual help, pride in being independent of a consumer society "where even food has to be bought", satisfaction in not being subject to the overseers and time constraints of salaried employment, a relative

unattachment to economic capital accumulation ("it's a matter of turning money around and continue eating"), and a keen interest in continuing to be "at peace". These were the local values that not only sustained campesinos in their lifeworld, but were values of their lifeworld they wished to sustain. These were the elements that comprised a local definition of sustainable development.

An emphasis on local empowerment ultimately places the measures and means of sustainable development in the hands of the local community. This, then, raises the question as to the role of critical NGOs in promoting local sustainable development. The importance of NGOs in this process has been widely accepted by both mainstream, as well as critical perspectives. The economistic mainstream argument views NGOs as an efficient means of bypassing a cumbersome and costly State apparatus for the delivery of programs and projects to the local communities. The critical perspective, often coming from the NGOs themselves, considers their proximity with the grassroots as the best bet in achieving local community empowerment. In this study, I found that despite their oftentimes communal nature, NGOs must take care to be continually on guard against temptations to "represent" the community, or to mediate between the community and State/corporate structures, or to hope to bring sustainable development to the community through projects. Sustainable development is not something done to communities through projects, but rather is a process generated and lived by the communities, themselves.

CODECE best served processes of local empowerment, first, when it stimulated the generation of local cultural capital, by providing information which then created local awareness, and second, when it formed part of the local social capital, by becoming a "space" of local discussion, of local identity, and of local mobilization. Indeed, an important role NGOs can play in promoting local sustainable development, is to provide the community with cultural and social capital, or "information" and "connections" (Bourdieu 1986:243), as means of further accessing diverse sources of capital for empowerment. As "spaces" of dense social networks involved in exchanges of cultural capital, as well as economic capital, NGOs, such as CODECE, must struggle to became a local source of empowerment, avoiding the many pitfalls which continually seem to provoke the contrary process of community disempowerment.

Final Recommendations

In my attempt to take up the challenge extended by Third World scholar, Fals Borda (1992:315), and "reinvent power in our own terms," I also came across ways in which we are susceptible to losing power. By "we" I mean local communities, grassroots organizations, NGOs, social movements, civil society, or "the people" concerned with achieving sustainable development on our own terms. It is in these two areas -the opportunities for empowerment, and the threats of disempowerment- where I focus my final recommendations.

Some of the threats of disempowerment, not limited to the field of sustainable development, but possibly intensified there, derive from the continual appropriation of labor and meaning across the critical/mainstream divide. Because sustainable development is an ideology of reconciliation, it poses a greater danger of erasing important differences. It is often through differences that discrete identities are constructed, and it is only through identification that social mobilization is achieved. For this reason, it is important constantly to maintain a critical awareness of the shifting mainstream discourse and practice of sustainable development, in order not to allow others ultimately to define one's present and future needs. By this, I am not necessarily recommending to maintain an adversarial attitude, but rather, to maintain clarity over what one's needs really are.

A lack of clarity in this regard may engender other threats of disempowerment. When grassroots organizations or NGOs, for example, confuse means with ends and focus their attention on obtaining funding to carry out their work, this can result in an "activism" that does not respond to real needs, but rather, to future funding. Falling into this "credit peonage" relationship is a common source of disempowerment. While economic capital is needed to carry out much necessary work, the fear of losing future funding should not lead one to execute unnecessary activities, but rather to search out ways of reducing this economic dependence.

Other ways in which NGOs, in particular, tend to confuse means with ends, is by privileging the empowerment of the institution over that of the community it serves. While it is important to empower organized civil society to carry out its work, there is a danger that these organizations rise above and become

less accessible to the communities they serve. This may occur by organizations accumulating either economic capital, information, or "connections", and unwittingly establishing a hierarchy where the community continually defers to the higher authority of the organization, and in so doing, relinquishes its own power. To counter this "failure of success" it is important that organized civil society continually struggle to make itself an accessible and appropriable resource for the community.

Finally, within the ideology of sustainable development there is a subtle, but significant threat of popular disempowerment. The over emphasis given to NGOs as "an efficient alternative to public agencies in the delivery of programmes and projects" (WCED 1987:328), may lead international development agencies, national States, and even the NGOs themselves to substitute the sustainable development of these organizations, for that of the local communities. In order for the part not to be confused for the whole, it is important that NGOs constantly focus their attention on facilitating community empowerment, and on demanding that sustainable development be a community process based on locally defined needs. Otherwise, organized civil society and NGOs will find that through their own mediation they contribute to the muffling of local voices and to the weakening of local social mobilization for sustainable development.

Along with these threats, however, the dominance of the ideology of sustainable development, as well as the protagonist role acquired by organized civil society in this area, also offer significant opportunities for local empowerment in order to improve local lifeworlds in desired ways. The official recognition of sustainable development as the desired goal, opens the gate for local definitions of present and future needs to be recognized and accommodated into the concept of sustainable development. Although, it is easy to criticize and discard sustainable development as vague and as serving mainstream interests, it is a concept that local communities and organized civil society must fight to keep and demand that its profound implications of respect for local empowerment be honored.

In this study I emphasized a critical/mainstream divide within the ideology of sustainable development, often coterminous with a confrontation between "lifeworld colonized" and "lifeworld colonizers" (Luke 1989:220). It is important to note, however, that none of these categories is monolithic. As Rosaldo (1989:217) pointed out, there is a continual "borrowing and lending" across boundaries. Moreover, the boundaries themselves are often difficult to determine. While this blurring may have demobilizing effects, as noted above, it also offers one of the most significant opportunities for local sustainable development. Because there are many interests that traverse these boundaries, important "connections" may be established across class lines. This social capital, along with the cultural capital embodied in these individuals, are important resources to be used to promote local sustainable development. Because NGOs, themselves, may cross class lines (as in the case of CODECE), they are in a unique position to generate exchange among otherwise disassociated sectors of the community. Exchange of labor-time and information among a wider network of social relations fortifies the sense of "community" and local empowerment for social mobilization.

Finally, while the threats of NGOs assuming a mediating role between local communities and the State are significant, their cross-boundary links and intermediate positionality are also important assets that must be carefully employed. NGOs have the opportunity to improve the links between local sustainable development and the global conditions that impinge on the local context. Their participation in "decision-making bodies," while often as observers, allows them to insist on the need to advance conditions for local empowerment, and the need to respect locally defined needs. From this mediating role, NGOs also have the responsibility to make the information exchanged in these "decision-making bodies" accessible and appropriable to the local communities they serve. Ultimately, NGOs must struggle to form part of the local communities they serve. They must find ways to make their institutional social and cultural capital accessible and appropriable by the community. Organized civil society must not replace the community, but must augment it.

The Prospects of Sustainable Development

After participating in and analyzing a decade-long effort of a community organization to promote a process of sustainable development in the mostly rural communities around the Mountains of Escazú, the question remains whether these local communities can indeed sustain their lifeworld against the threats of local, national and global economic, social, cultural, and ideological forces that tend to destroy local

communities by myriad means. This study sought to contribute to reinventing power "in our own terms." I pointed out the possibilities for empowerment offered by social and cultural capital, as well as pointing out some of their pitfalls. I showed how, by using social and cultural capital for empowerment, CODECE and the local community were able to prevent destructive actions in the Mountains of Escazú, and work to improve local living conditions. The results were not spectacular, but the farming community was still able to "turn the money around and continue eating". But was this enough, and were the means of appropriating social and cultural capital for empowerment sufficient to confront these threats?

Sustainable development as a dominant ideology has not, in spite of its dominance, brought critical sectors to accept the mainstream perspective. As Mouffe (1988:91) has pointed out, "hegemony is never established conclusively." The critical perspective is present in the social landscape as an alternative to mainstream ideology and practice. Besides its many efforts in support of local empowerment, this perspective opens an important path to local efforts of sustainable development. Through its thesis of local empowerment to express local definitions of sustainable development, the concept itself becomes multiple and diverse, instead of monolithic and global. By local appropriation of this concept, and a consistent effort at expressing this view, the critical perspective offers the opportunity to reject externally imposed, ready-made definitions, to accept the value of local definitions, and to recognize the need for facilitating local expression of these measures and means of sustainable development.

The use of social and cultural capital may surely not be enough to confront all the forces that threaten the sustainability of local communities, but social and cultural capital are sources of power that we can use. Furthermore, they are sources of power that we must use, in order to continually redefine the hegemonic concepts that go against the sustainability of local communities. We must employ them in mobilizing against lifeworld colonizers and their State/corporate machinery. Social and cultural capital are also the sources of power that we must employ, in order to continually reproduce these forms of capital, thereby generating greater, more accessible, and more appropriable forms of this very capital, to further enrich and empower our communities.

This study is located within a critical perspective which looks at local empowerment as the fundamental means and end of sustainable development. In this sense I tried to locate sources of empowerment, and found them in the often ignored social and cultural capitals embedded in the local communities. Although I agree with Escobar (1995:197) that ultimately sustainable development cannot be achieved unless the "economic framework" undergoes "substantial reform," instead of focusing on economic capital, I focused on social and cultural capitals as the more locally accessible sources of power to be employed in transforming the economic framework, as well as other unsustainable conditions of the lived context.

Ultimately, effective sustainable development may only be achieved when a great part of the local community is involved in the process. Within the local communities lie vast reservoirs of power in the form of social and cultural capitals which can be wielded, and in so doing multiplied, to transform the lived context in sustainable ways. But this brings us to a final question which must be addressed: Does the local community exist? By community I mean a sustained collective identity and a sustained social network through which material and symbolic exchange is maintained. As I implied earlier on, a vibrant community is coterminous with a critical perspective of sustainable development. It is not only the goal, but is also the means of sustainable development. So, do local communities exist? They do, but they are weakened, disempowered, and declining. Yet they possess important sources of capital for empowerment to be directed at their own sustainable development.

Around the Mountains of Escazú campesinos still form the most persistent community - disempowered and in decline- but a community, nonetheless. It is through the exercise of their "community-ness" that I find the greatest hope for local sustainable development. Local campesino ideologies and practices have not only allowed them to persist into the third millennium, but continue to offer important critiques to the dominant economic system. To ask if sustainable development around the Mountains of Escazú is possible, is not to ask whether economic growth can be reconciled with environmental protection, but rather, to ask whether or not the local campesino communities can persist. Through their empowerment to maintain their lifeworld, local sustainable development around the Mountains of Escazú is yet possible.

APPENDIX A: TIMELINE

1502	Spanish arrive to Costa Rica which has a population of approximately 27,000, and forest covers 99 percent of the land
1821	Costa Rica gains independence from Spain
1824	Escazú is given title of "Village"
1840s	Costa Rica begins to export coffee to England
1900	Population of Costa Rica is over 300,000 and forest covers 86.5 percent of the land
1920	Escazú is officially declared a "City"
1931	Communist Party is formed in Costa Rica
1945	The United Nations and the Bretton Woods organizations (IMF and World Bank) are created
1948	Costa Rican Civil War and the National Liberation Party (PLN) is created
1950	Forest covers 66.5 percent of Costa Rican territory
1958	The Country Club is established in Escazú
1963	Small farmers with less than one hectare number over 50,000 in Costa Rica
1969	Forestry Law No. 4465 of Costa Rica establishes the creation of National Parks and other protected areas such as Protection Zones
1969	San Antonio de Escazú has population of under 5,500
1970	Massive student protests against Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) in Costa Rica
1971	Romano Sancho helps form the Costa Rican Socialist Party
1972	Publication of "The Limits to Growth" by the Club of Rome, and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment celebrated in Stockholm
1973	Small farmers with less than one hectare number less than 11,000 in Costa Rica
1976	The Mountains of Escazú are declared a Protection Zone
1978	Romano and others create the Party Movimiento de Trabajadores (MT) 11 de Abril
1979	Victory of Sandinistas in the Nicaraguan Revolution

1980	"World Conservation Strategy" is published by UICN, WWF and UNEP coining the term "Sustainable Development"
1981	A hectare of land in San Antonio de Escazú costs US$ 10,000
1982	Romano goes to live in San Antonio de Escazú
1983	Protection Zone of Mountains of Escazú are expanded by Decree; Paulina comes to live with Romano in San Antonio de Escazú; Romano helps create the Farmers Cooperative COOPASAE in San Antonio de Escazú
1985	55 Protected areas cover 17.4 percent of the land in Costa Rica, and forests cover 33 percent of the national territory
1985-01	Father Revilla begins to bulldoze the mountain La Cruz
1985-02	Romano and others in COOPASAE create CODECE: "Committee for the Defense of the Mountains of Escazú" and stop Revilla
1986	CODECE files its first law suits against environmental infractions
1987	CODECE presents Bill of Law for community participation in the administration of the Protection Zone of the Mountains of Escazú
1987	Publication of "Our Common Future" where sustainable development is defined
1988	CODECE changes its name and is registered officially as the Association for the Defense of Natural Resources
1988-05	COPROALDE is formed
1988-06	CODECE begins reforestation program to recover watershed of the Agres and Londres Rivers
1988-07	CODECE begins Biological inventory of Mountains of Escazú with help from UCR Biology students, one of whom is Javier Sanchez
1989-07	I meet Romano at Seminar on Environment and Community Action
1989-11	Inter-American Foundation (IAF) funds Legal Office for CODECE
1990	65 Protected areas cover 20.31 percent of the land nationally
1990-01	CODECE organizes six month course on environmental law
1991	CODECE organizes workshops with bird catchers, hunters and farmers of San Antonio
1992-01	CODECE begins organic farming project with local farmers
1992-02	CODECE changes its name to Association for the Conservation and Development of the Mountains of Escazú
1992-04	I begin long term field work in Escazú

1992-06	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or "Earth Summit" is held in Rio de Janeiro, where Agenda 21 is agreed upon by consensus
1992-06	Bilateral Agreement for Sustainable Development (BASD) letter of intent is singed by foreign Ministers of Costa Rica and Holland
1992-08	CODECE joins COPROALDE
1992-08	Gerardo Burro (farmer) begins to make masks
1992-10	CODECE presents Community Forest project to Rotary Club
1992-11	Opus Dei begins project to construct in Protection Zone
1992-12	COPROALDE gets two year financing from German cooperation agency, Bread for the World
1993	Paulina becomes part time Executive Secretary of COPROALDE
1993	Regulation Plan becomes priority work for CODECE
1993	Tourism industry becomes largest earner of foreign currency in Costa Rica
1993-01	First meeting of NGOs to discuss participation in the BASD
1993-02	Romano leaves the presidency of CODECE and Rodolfo León is elected President
1993-03	Second forum of NGOs to discuss participation in BASD
1993-04	NGOs begin process of creating organized base of participation in BASD
1993-06	First National Assembly of NGOs and grassroots organizations is held with participation of 187 organizations and representatives are elected
1993-11	Rodolfo León renounces presidency
1994-01	Second General Assembly of NGOs and grassroots organizations is held with participation of 300 organizations and CONAO is created
1994-03	BASD is ratified
1994-03	CODECE opens restaurant and Romano assumes its administration
1994-03	Javier Sanchez becomes Director of CODECE
1994-12	BASD finances US$ 142,000 project for COPROALDE
1995	A hectare of land in San Antonio costs US$ 100,000
1995	Nixon González begins organic farming in San Antonio de Escazú
1995-02	Amalia León becomes president of CODECE

1995-02	I become coordinator of COPROALDE
1995-03	Fundecooperacion is created
1995-08	Paulina goes to graduate school in the USA
1996	CONAO receives 200 projects and approves 30
1996	CODECE presents agro-eco community tourism project to BASD (through CONAO) and it is approved
1996-05	COPROALDE presents Second Phase of Project to BASD (through CONAO) and it never is approved (or rejected)
1996-06	Legislative Assembly modifies Article 50 of the Constitution to make environmental health a human right
1996-08	Romano goes to the USA with the children to be with Paulina
1996-12	The Directive Junta of CODECE closes down the Association's restaurant
1997	The Municipal government ask CODECE to recommend sociologist to Regulation Plan Commission, and Amalia León is appointed
1997	CONAO agglomerates 700 NGOs and grassroots organizations
1997	Holland grants INBio 14 million dollars reducing funds of the BASD
1997	Population in San Antonio de Escazú is approximately 16,000
1997	Population of Costa Rica is over 3.5 million
1997-01	I become member of the Directive Junta of CODECE
1997-12	COPROALDE names Indigenous and Campesino Production Systems one of its four work areas
1997-12	I leave COPROALDE as Coordinator
1998-04	Publication of the Regulation Plan for Escazú in the Gazette
1999	Doña Estéfana is elected President of CODECE

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FOOTNOTES

(Romano Sancho, political activist, community organizer and farmer; Rodolfo León, local farmer and community leader; Julio Jiménez, Municipality employee and part time farmer; Francisco Mejía (Pito), teacher; Paulina Chaverri, university graduate in history; Luis Fernando Chacón, graphic artist; and Mario Sandí, local farmer and manager of the farmers' cooperative).

This physiological metaphor Romano employs has the meaning of antagonists.

Foundations, unlike Associations, are required by law in Costa Rica to have one representative of the Executive Branch and one representative of the Municipal government on the Directive Board. This allows greater State control over the activities of foundations.

According to several elder farmers I interviewed who knew Jorge Zeledón, he accumulated land through usurious practices with local small farmers, and other unscrupulous methods, such as obtaining signatures from drunken farmers, and by having his peons claim homesteads in the moutains, which they then turned over to Zeledón for a pittance.

These physical resources, unlike social and cultural capital which increase when used, resemble more a finite pie, where the piece that goes to one, is taken away from the other.

In 1989 the members of COPROALDE were: CEDECO (Corporación Educativa para el Desarrollo Costarricense); EL PRODUCTOR (Servicios Técnicos y Profesionales El Productor); TEPROCA (Taller Experimental de Producción y Comercialización Agrícola Alternativa; CICDAA (Consultoría de Investigación y Capacitación para un Desarrollo Agrario Alternativo); CECADE (Centro de Capacitación para el Desarrollo); and EconoAgro El Sembrador.

During this period two other organizations also joined COPROALDE: CENAP (Centro Nacional de Acción Pastoral), and GUILOMBE (Fundación Güilombé para la Communicación y la Agricultura Biológica). In contrast, three of the original members left COPROALDE: CICDAA, CECADE and Econoagro El Sembrador. Soon after, COPROALDE promoted the creation of an organization of its beneficiaries, ANAPAO (Asociación Nacional de Pequeños Agricultores Orgánicos), which became the seventh member of the network.

The participants of the NGO meeting were:

Organization	Person
ACECAN	James Siu
ACJ	Fernando Lara
ADEHUCO	Julio Acuña
AECO	Jaime Bustamante
AECO	Jorge Polimeni
AECO	Oscar Fallas
APDE	José Luis Castillo
ASEPROLA	Mariano Sainz
CECADE	Alexander Loynaz
CECADE	William Reuben
CEDECO	Wilberth Jiménez
CODECE	Felipe Montoya
Colectivo Pancha Carrasco	Lily Quesada
Colectivo Pancha Carrasco	Tita Escalante
Coordinadora de Barrios	Mario Céspedes
COPROALDE	Paulina Chaverri
FECON	Isabel MacDonald
Fundación Güilombé	Cileke Comanne
Fundación Güilombé	Javier Bogantes
ICAL	Victor Vega
JUNAFORCA	Franklin Rodríguez
Universidad Nacional-ECA	Eduardo Mora
VECINOS	Juan Manuel Castro

At this point CONAO was made up of the 170 organizations that participated in the National Assembly. These included individual grassroots organizations and NGOs, such as AECO, CODECE, and CECADE, as well as networks of organizations, such as COPROALDE and others.

Economists might try to counter my argument of the subtractable nature of economic capital, pointing out the obvious fact that economic capital, too, may be invested and reproduced, virutally ad infinitum. However, this refers to the "end-products" of investing economic capital, and not to the initial amount, which is finite and not immediately reproducible. Social and cultural capitals, in contrast, are not immediately subtractable. In presenting a friend to others, I don't lose that friend. By giving out information to others, I am not suddenly deprived of it.

In January of 1999, by chance I ran into Jorge Coronado who had been the Secretary General of CONAO during most of its existence. I asked him about the fate of CONAO and he recounted how in CONAO's last National Assembly in 1998, its membership had completely changed, taken up, ironically, by large mainstream NGOs in line with State policies and the business sector.

See chapter 9.

For instance, following Gerardo Burro's example, other people in Escazú also began to partake of their town's tradition, making payazos, themselves.

On a very personal note, for example, my work in CODECE inspired me to set up the MILPA Foundation in Escazú, for the recovery and protection of heirloom seeds and related local knowledge.