



# Collective Action and Urban Poverty Alleviation

Community Organizations and the Struggle  
for Shelter in Manila

Gavin Shatkin

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND URBAN POVERTY  
ALLEVIATION

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Community Organizations and the Struggle  
for Shelter in Manila

GAVIN SHATKIN

*University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, USA*

ASHGATE

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# Preface and Acknowledgements

This book examines the implications of dramatic reforms for decentralization and civil society involvement in politics in the Philippines for the country's urban poor. It specifically focuses on the potential for significant community improvement through an emerging poverty alleviation agenda, centered on self-help in shelter and infrastructure development, that assumes a strong role for community-based collective action through urban community-based organizations (CBOs). In addressing this issue the book aspires to address larger questions concerning the role of community-based collective action in urban planning and policy. The role of collective action has come to be of increasing interest in recent years, as some have proclaimed a global 'associational revolution' that is transforming state-civil society relations. Yet the role of grassroots organizations in this process, and the factors that enhance or impede their capacity and effectiveness, remain little understood.

The book is based on an extensive study of CBOs. Since the wave of protests popularly known as the 'People's Power' revolt ousted the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, the Philippines has witnessed reform that has created a framework for governance that, at least on paper, is one of the most decentralized and participatory in the world. In addition, the organizing infrastructure left over from the popular mobilization against Marcos, and the reentry into mainstream society of hundreds of cadre from the country's waning communist insurgency, has generated a whirlwind of organizing and ideas in civil society. The country has, according to some, more organizations of civil society per capita than any other in the world, and they play a major role in community organizing and political advocacy in urban communities. This study found that there are more than 2000 CBOs operating in Metro Manila alone. However, the country is also characterized by the historical political dominance of local elites, and individual CBOs have faced intense contestation at the local level. The Philippines is therefore an excellent case to illustrate both the possibilities for and obstacles to political change.

The book is based on one of the most extensive studies of CBOs to date. I conducted 11 months of field research in Metro Manila that included: in-depth case studies of CBOs in five informal settlements based on non-participant observation, interviews, and a household survey; a survey of community leaders in 80 informal settlements; and interviews with key actors from government, non-governmental organizations, and academia. The objective of the research was to understand how community-based collective action and state-civil society relations have evolved since the reforms were initiated, and the degree to which CBOs have in fact achieved political voice.

The book concludes that, while CBOs and NGOs have played a critical role in the democratization of local politics in some cases, in other cases they have faced systematic political marginalization. The outcome in a given community, furthermore, is contingent on two contextual factors that shape political opportunity: the relationship of the locality in which organizations operate to the global economy, which shapes the local political economy of land and labor; and the local history of state-civil society relations and the density of networks of NGOs and CBOs. The importance of these findings for the theory and practice of urban politics is twofold. First, the book offers a counterpoint to the celebratory view of civil society that suffuses much current thinking and practice on the role of civil society in development. In addition, it raises questions about the view among many international aid and lending organizations that decentralization and local voluntarism can act as a palliative for all that ails poor communities. This thesis argues, in contrast, that decentralization may actually impede participation, and that local democracy must begin with efforts to address social and political inequities through the use of government resources and powers. More generally, the book endeavors to shift the focus from the conventional view of CBOs and NGOs as primarily playing a role in cost recovery and ensuring government accountability, to a view that sees them as critical agents in a process of democratic consolidation. As such, it is hoped that it will provide a clearer understanding of the political dynamics of local organizing and the challenges that organizations of civil society face.

This project started as a dissertation in the Department of Urban Planning and Policy Development at Rutgers University. Many struggled with me through its completion and the resultant book project. First and foremost I would like to thank the members of my thesis committee. Susan Fainstein, Bob Lake, Salah El-Shakhs, and Michael Schafer. I benefited tremendously from seeing the issues I was dealing with through the varied lenses that they brought to the endeavor. I owe a particularly special debt of gratitude to my advisor, Susan, who has contributed to my intellectual development more than anyone else. Her example has set a benchmark for professionalism, diligence, integrity, and commitment that I will strive the rest of my career to emulate.

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I would also like to thank the Fulbright Program, which provided funding through a Fulbright Fellowship for ten months of field research, and the people at the Philippine-American Educational Foundation (PAEF), which administers the Fulbright Fellowships in the Philippines. Thanks also to the National Science Foundation, which provided a dissertation improvement grant that allowed me to conduct the survey that forms the basis for chapter 6 of this book.

The International Development Planning Review (IDPR) and Urban Studies <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals> both graciously agreed to allow me to reprint some material here that had appeared in those journals. I would also like to thank Val Rose and Carolyn Court at Ashgate, who shepherded me through the process of publishing this book with professionalism and good humor.

Though they are far too young to know it, my children Arjun and Arushi are my most important source of inspiration. And finally, thanks to Sudha, my consultant, confidant, and eternal partner.

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Ann Arbor, Michigan

# List of Abbreviations

- ALPASAN: Alyansa at Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Navotas
- CBO: Community Based Organization
- CMP: Community Mortgage Program
- CODI: Community Organizations Development Institute, Thailand
- COPE: Community Organization of the Philippine Enterprise
- CPP: Communist Part of the Philippines
- CREBA: Construction and Real Estate Builders Association
- HIGC: Housing Insurance Guarantee Corporation
- HUDCC: Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Committee
- ICSI: Institute on the Church and Social Issues
- IRA: Internal Revenue Assessment
- ISO: Institute for Social Order
- KHF: Kristong Hari Foundation
- KPML: Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Maralita ng Lunsod
- LGC: Local Government Code
- LGU: Local Government Unit
- MMA: Metro Manila Authority
- MMC: Metro Manila Commission
- MMDA: Metro Manila Development Authority
- NDF: National Democratci Front
- NGC: National Government Center
- NGCHP: National Government Center Housing Program
- NGO: Non-governmental Agency

NHA: National Housing Authority

NHMFC: National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation

NMMD: Nagkakaisa ng Mamamayanan Maralitang sa Daang Hari

PCUP: Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor

PECCO: Philippine Ecumenical Council on Community Organizing

PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

PT: Partido dos Trabalhadores, Brazil

SAMA-SAMA: Samahang Maralita para sa Makatao at Makatarungang  
Paninirahan

SEC: Securities and Exchange Commission

UCDO: Urban Community Development Organization, Thailand

UDHA: Urban Development and Housing Act

ULR-TF: Urban Land Reform Task Force

UMASAPA: Ugnayan ng mga Maralitang Samahan sa Pasay

UPAO: Urban Poor Affairs Office

ZOTO: Zone One Tondo Organization

*For Sudha*

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## Chapter 1

# Introduction

It is one of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century's most celebrated instances of political change through the exercise of peaceful civil disturbance. On February 26, 1986, following three days of street protest in which hundreds of thousands occupied Metro Manila's streets and public spaces, an authoritarian regime fell and the dictator, President Ferdinand Marcos, fled the country. What followed was a heated contest of ideas regarding how to reshape Philippine politics and society, as business groups, 'people's organizations' representing various sectors, underground left organizations, and elements of the military sought to imprint their agenda on the reform process. Over the ensuing decade, legislation established elected government at the provincial, municipal, and neighborhood level, devolved power and responsibility for critical infrastructure and human services to these levels, and mandated civil society participation in local decision making. New programs were initiated with ambitious objectives for rural and urban land reform. These reforms were embraced by a civil society that was experiencing an infusion of talent as many underground members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which had waged an insurgent war against the government since the early 1970s, left the movement to engage in development work and political organizing. By the mid-1990s the Philippines had, according to some analysts, more non-governmental organizations (NGOs) per capita than any other country in the world working on issues of concern to the rural and urban poor, indigenous people, ethnic minorities, women, and other disenfranchised groups (Clarke 1998).

The significance of the Philippines' experiment with social and political reform during the past two decades extends far beyond the country's borders. The Philippine experience represents a kind of 'ideal type' of reform that has a remarkable resonance across the political spectrum and in a wide range of contexts. Since the late 1980s, in a global context of anti-authoritarian sentiment, declining confidence in the public sector, and the ascendance of social movements, many have come to believe that civic groups and residents can and should play a stronger role in shaping the destiny of communities. Visions regarding what this implies for state-society relations vary widely. The World Bank and many international and bilateral aid organizations argue that a decentralized system of government, a focus on social welfare provision through civil society, and an emphasis on government's role in 'enabling' markets to function efficiently leads to transparency, accountability and the effective provision of services, elements that are necessary to stimulate economic growth in the global economy (World Bank 1991; World Bank 1993; White and Smoke 2005). For those on the political left, its meaning is quite different. In many

countries, and particularly in Asia and Latin America, student activists, liberation theologians, community organizers, and members of the socialist underground have turned from the successful task of democratic transition and converged in the realm of civil society to carry forward their disparate visions of social change. For these movements, the reforms represent an antidote to authoritarianism and a basis for grassroots activism for fundamental social transformation (Mohan and Stokke 2000; Rocamora 2004).

Both of these views assume, almost as an article of faith, that local associations can and should play a key role in representing community interests in dealings with government and the private sector. Yet there is reason to question this assumption. Particularly in a context of severe socioeconomic disparities, the advent of electoral democracy and decentralization do not insure influence in politics for organizations representing the poor. Particularly with the inter-jurisdictional competition for investment that characterizes globalization, many national and local governments have come to view organizations of the poor as obstacles to growth oriented policy and planning at the local level. For these reasons, political reform has often led to what one prominent Filipino political scientist has described as ‘elite democracy’, in which “formal institutions of representative democracy and civil and political rights have been established, but limits to effective citizen participation remain in place” (Rocamora 2004:9). Whether due to the continued assertion of control by central bureaucracies or the monopolization of power by local elites, the obstacles to meaningful civil society power have been considerable, and inequities have persisted.

This book examines the impacts of the Philippine reforms on state-community relations by focusing on one important yet largely unexamined set of organizations—urban community-based organizations (CBOs). Through an in-depth examination of the experiences of these organizations in advocating for low-income communities, and specifically through case studies of five CBOs, the book assesses the potential and pitfalls of a grassroots approach to addressing issues of shelter provision for the poor. Some 40 percent of Metro Manila’s 10.7 million people live in informal settlements, and this number has increased steadily as persistent rural poverty and the concentration of economic opportunity in the capital has fed migration from the countryside. The Marcos era was marked by a number of brutal, large-scale demolitions of informal settlements and, in 1973, the Philippines had gained notoriety by becoming the only country in the world other than South Africa to make illegally settling on urban land a crime punishable by imprisonment (Bello et al 1982). In the post-Marcos era, an extensive network of CBOs and NGOs that emerged to oppose Marcos’ eviction campaigns shifted their attention to efforts to take advantage of political reform by advocating for new programs and legislation to address shelter issues. Yet their efforts have coincided with the globalization of Metro Manila’s economy, and the consequent emergence of a powerful counternarrative of the need to focus on growth-oriented urban redevelopment rather than participatory and redistributive programs like social housing.

The situation of Metro Manila communities is mirrored in other contexts. The United Nations estimates that some 925 million people worldwide reside in ‘slums’, with many of these residing in informal settlements that lack access to secure tenure and basic services (UNCHS 2005). As in the Philippines, CBOs have emerged in many contexts to mobilize residents for collective action and to assert a political voice. Yet, inasmuch as they raise questions about the allocation of urban land, these organizations question the very basis of the urban political economy, and they have consequently encountered strong resistance in the form of large scale eviction campaigns and political marginalization. In some cases, however, CBOs have overcome political opposition, as well as issues of organizational fragility and internal division that frequently confront low-income communities, to assert power in policy and planning. The questions that the book addresses are: How and when do CBOs and NGOs mobilize residents and engage in collective action and political mobilization? How and under what circumstances are communities able to translate political opportunity into meaningful change in policy and planning? And, what impact has CBO mobilization had on urban politics, and by extension on broader processes of change in state-civil society relations? The book also examines the implications of the globalization of Metro Manila’s economy for the answers to these questions.

The remainder of this chapter will review previous studies that have addressed the role of urban CBOs, and will discuss the approach of this book in answering the questions posed above.

### **Perspectives on CBOs and Community Development**

One fundamental underlying question must be borne in mind by those who encourage the urban poor to organize themselves and take responsibility for the community maintenance of assets. Why are the urban rich, who are in a much better position to pay, not asked to do the same? (Marsden and Moser 1990: p. 5)

Marsden and Moser’s question appropriately focuses attention on the discourses surrounding CBOs and participation. Placing urban CBOs in a central role in community improvement and political transformation asks them to undertake a set of tasks that would be daunting for any community. They must first overcome the ‘logic of collective action’ by persuading or coercing residents to commit time and energy to participation when it appears against their interests to do so (Olson 1971). They must attain skills in negotiation with professionals in government and the private sector, and grasp technical details related to infrastructure, housing construction, and other tasks. Leaders must resist the temptation to seek personal profit through their association with politicians, real estate interests, or NGOs, even as they frequently have to deal with the daily insecurity associated with a life of poverty. In the context of globalizing cities experiencing rapid development, they must also overcome (sometimes violent) opposition to community mobilization from landlords, government officials, and real estate actors whose interests are linked to

the rapid escalation of real estate values. And all of these accomplishments must be sustained over periods of years that are required to achieve community change. That such monumental achievements frequently do occur is testament to the capacity for self-transformation that is arguably inherent in the situation of informal settlements. It behooves those in academia and the policy realm who advocate a role for CBOs to understand the conditions that support such success. This section reviews debates on this topic.

This book adopts Akin's (1990) broad and inclusive definition of CBOs as "arrangements and associations formed and located within the local space, or immediate residential surroundings of the actors." This definition may seem ambiguous. It does not differentiate between organizations based on their standing in the community or their relations with outsiders, and could include religious groups, street gangs, sports clubs, youth groups, community-based trade associations, or other entities. However, this seeming ambiguity serves to highlight two central issues that these organizations face. The first is their inherent transience. CBOs often do consist of little more than a handful of residents who, out of a spirit of voluntarism or self-interest, step forward to organize community residents and act as mediators between the community and outside actors. Distinctions between 'formal' or 'informal' organizations may be based on superficial factors, such as whether or not a CBO has filed registration documents with a government agency. In fact, research has demonstrated that CBOs are likely to fluctuate between formal and informal modes of operating, and between periods of activity and dormancy, depending on the threat or occurrence of eviction of the community, changes in leadership or in the local political climate, or other factors (Peattie 1990). The second issue is that, while it is often assumed that CBOs are benevolent entities that represent community interests, they may also embody political agendas, or the self-interested agendas of leaders (de Wit 1989; Nientied et al 1990). A definition of CBOs should acknowledge this instability, adaptability, and vulnerability as a first step towards abandoning unfounded assumptions and understanding them as they exist on the ground.

This book focuses specifically on a significant subset of CBOs, what Berner (1997) has called 'primary organizations'. These are organizations that emerge to deal specifically with the critical issues related to lack of legal land tenure. These include issues of infrastructure and service provision, housing improvement, and negotiations with politicians and private sector actors when evictions are planned. Several studies have found that such organizations play a central role in community maintenance in many contexts, and this study confirms this finding in the context of Metro Manila (Dawson 1992; Desai 1995; Vakil 1999; Mitlin 2001; Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2004).

The current growth of interest in the role of urban CBOs can best be understood in the context of shifts in development theory in the post-World War 2 period (Patel et al 2001). The first wave of modernization theory, infused with vision of the state as an agent of social and economic transformation, fostered a wave of initiatives for infrastructure and housing development during the 1950s and 60s that

positioned national government as a focus of concern for issues of social welfare and collective consumption (Castells 1983). As accelerating rural-urban migration associated with urban development during the 1960s and 70s placed increasing strain on their capacity to meet the needs of burgeoning urban populations, however, national governments increasingly found themselves as the focus of discontent over inadequate shelter, community infrastructure, transportation, and economic opportunity. It was in this context that focus shifted to the possibility of community-based solutions to problems of housing and infrastructure, and the potential for the so-called 'informal sector' to play a positive role in economic development. At the forefront of this conceptual shift was John Turner, who argued based on his observation of the development of informal settlements in Peru during the 1950s and 60s that government was too bureaucratic and inefficient to produce housing and infrastructure that met the needs of the poor, and that rigid government regulations stifled the inherent ability of communities to produce superior solutions to their shelter needs. What government needed to do, Turner argued, was allow informal settlers 'freedom to build' by enabling them to build their own housing through the provision of land, the relaxation of regulations, and the provision of technical assistance (Turner 1976; Turner and Fichter eds. 1976).

A number of subsequent studies in other contexts reaffirmed the widespread existence of community-based movements for shelter delivery (Laquian 1971; Perlman 1976; Nelson 1979; Burgess 1982). Many of these studies, however, took issue with Turner's portrayal of CBOs as inherently autonomous of government, democratic in ethos, and effective and equitable in their shelter delivery efforts. They often found that CBOs had ties with politicians or other influential actors, and that popular participation in CBO governance was limited. They nonetheless expressed empathy with the efforts of such organizations to deal with community issues such as land and housing development, infrastructure provision, education, and cultural affairs, in the face of government neglect or outright antipathy.

During the mid-1970s, Turner's vision dovetailed with a new orthodoxy emerging within the World Bank and United Nations. As debt crises engulfed many countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa, and as the nascent process that later became commonly known as globalization took hold, these institutions sought new models of social welfare delivery that fit an agenda of fiscal austerity. The new orthodoxy argued for reduced government expenditure and the use of creative partnerships with the private sector and civil society in order to maximize cost recovery in the achievement of social and developmental goals (Pugh 1997). It focused on two types of solutions to the housing needs of the poor: sites and services programs, in which government provides land and basic services, and sometimes a core housing unit, upon which low-income people build their own housing; and squatter upgrading, in which government engages local residents in a redevelopment initiative that includes, to varying degrees, tenurization of land and improvements in basic infrastructure and housing. CBOs play key roles in both types of programs as agents in fostering

(often quite limited) participation in decision-making and mobilizing community resources to offset program costs.

During the 1980s, however, this orthodoxy shifted yet again. The deepening of global economic integration, and the collapse of socialist economies around the world, coincided with the rise of a neoliberal ideology in the World Bank. The concept of ‘enablement’ emerged, arguing for a further reduction in the role of government in providing basic needs. The enablement model argued that national government should largely limit its role to creating fiscal and legal frameworks which ‘enable’ local government, the private sector, and NGOs and CBOs to pursue their ‘comparative advantage’ in development and social welfare (World Bank 1991; UNCHS 1993; World Bank 1993). Specifically, the new strategy entailed deregulation of markets, and either privatization or the formation of public-private partnerships in the delivery of services. Decentralization was also encouraged as a means to achieve greater government efficiency and accountability through the Tieboutian benefit of interjurisdictional competition for people and investment, which would allow localities to ‘specialize’ in their provision of services, and would provide firms and consumer citizens more choice in where to reside or do business (Tiebout 1956; Kaufmann et al 2006). Decentralization would also allow national governments to conserve scarce resources for investment in trunk infrastructure (including airports, roads, and power plants) that is required to attract international investment.

Under the enablement model, housing programs for the poor were now challenged to pursue the elusive ideal of full cost recovery. This entailed a rather dramatic reformulation of the goals of community-based collective action. Rather than providing input on government projects, CBOs were now framed as playing a wide range of roles in negotiating with outside actors to purchase land using community resources, and mobilizing community financial and human resources to undertake redevelopment with minimal assistance or intervention from government (Pugh 1997). It is in the context of these dramatically increased expectations of the role of CBOs that debates about their efficacy must be understood.

The shift to enablement at the World Bank coincided with an important trend that has had a profound influence on the theory and practice of urban community development—the rise of the ideas of social capital and civil society in development theory. Putnam’s (1993; 2000) influential work in this area argues that social capital is a necessary element in a society’s effort to overcome Olson’s “dilemma of collective action,” which states that collective action towards community and societal goals is inherently difficult to achieve because of the powerful incentive for individuals to free-ride on the participation of others. Putnam argues that when people have a history of engaging in civic and political activities, they develop “norms of reciprocity and networks of social relations” that instill them with a sense of shared purpose with other members of society and confidence in the potential success of efforts at collective action. When governmental institutions are ‘embedded’ in societies with strong civic traditions, a horizontal social order, and norms of reciprocal exchange, they

come under pressure to be accountable from civic groups and engaged citizens, and hence are more effective, efficient, and accountable. In a comparative examination of northern and southern Italy, Putnam (1993) concludes that the relative political stability and economic dynamism of the former is attributable to a history of active civic engagement dating back to the formation of city-states in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Putnam's work has influenced thinking on urban community development in two ways. First, his focus on the role of grassroots civic participation in development has reinforced the idea embodied in the concept of enablement that local collective action in a decentralized, democratic political framework leads to greater political accountability and developmental outcomes. Second, despite the fact that Putnam is quite pessimistic about the prospects for social capital formation in developing countries, many development theorists have interpreted his ideas as elevating community based collective action and participation in planning from a simple matter of good development practice to a prerequisite for positive social change. Many international aid and lending organizations now argue that associationalism in a decentralized, market oriented political context creates the necessary conditions for the formation of the building blocks of civil society, and hence democratization and social and economic progress (George and Sabelli 1994). Under the rubric of 'good governance', this idea has been operationalized in the lending and practices of these organizations, for example in the World Bank's requirement that countries formulate 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers' (PRSPs) that incorporate popular participation as a condition for certain lending (Mohan and Stokke 2000).

A comprehensive review of the debates that have emerged in the literature on enablement, social capital and urban development is not necessary or possible here. Rather, I will focus on three critiques of Putnam's work, and of the idea of enablement, that are particularly relevant to the current discussion of the role of urban CBOs. The first concerns the assumption by many analysts that civil society is necessarily benevolent, and that associationalism implies the presence of social capital (Portes and Landolt 1996; Abu-Lughod 1998; Storper 1998). In fact, many have argued that the networks of social relations described by Putnam can be oppressive and exclusionary and thus may not constitute a suitable basis for the construction of a more effective and benevolent state (Giddens 1998; Abu-Lughod 1998). Abu-Lughod (1998) further argues that some manifestations of civil society do not represent interests that many urban planners and policy-makers would generally support, such as equity, tolerance, and social justice. With respect to urban CBOs, research has documented that their decision-making often excludes certain groups, notably women and renters, members of marginal ethnic, religious or linguistic groups, or others (Berner 1997; Mitlin 2001).<sup>1</sup>

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1 By renters, here I refer to households that are renting a housing unit, be it a standalone structure or a room or rooms in a larger structure, from other residents of an informal settlement. Such rental arrangements are common in informal settlements in many parts of the world.

Second, the assertion that social capital can only emerge from a deep history of associationalism that lies in the roots of a society, and that it can therefore only be constructed through a centuries-long process of trust-building, has also proven controversial. Some have argued that social distrust may have more recent, or even contemporary causes in histories of colonialism, slavery, displacement and disenfranchisement, and other forms of domination both by groups within a society and by one society over another (Mitlin 2001). Indeed Tarrow (1996), in a re-interpretation of Putnam's classic case studies of northern and southern Italy, notes that the latter functioned for many centuries as a colony of the former. He argues that this relationship may have shaped the formation of social (dis)trust in ways that Putnam largely disregards. To these observations I add the argument that globalization is another contemporary factor that may shape the development of social trust in a society. Integration into the global economy does provide opportunity for many, particularly those with access to resources and education. However, it also leads to economic displacement, downward pressure on wages for low-skilled workers, pressures for conversion of land to higher value uses, and the formation of new political orders that emphasize a scaling back of the social welfare services and, in some cases, a marginalization of low-income groups in political processes. If such social inequities can inhibit the formation of social capital formation, this implies a rethinking of the prioritization of social capital as central to development processes. Putnam's focus on social inequalities in a society's deeper past may serve to divert attention from contemporary social inequalities and hierarchies, and therefore from the possibility that social capital might be built through efforts to address some of these contemporary issues.

Third, some have argued that the enablement framework disregards the dynamics of power in localities, and overestimates the potential for participation by CBOs. Particularly in the context of globalization, pressures and incentives to attract corporate investment and upper income people has led in many cases not to more competitive and efficient government, but rather to the empowerment of elite economic actors at the expense of community groups. In the Philippines, numerous studies have demonstrated how local political leaders, motivated by vested interests in local land development and economic growth, systematically undermine efforts at independent community and labor organizing through intimidation, cooptation and violence (Lacaba ed 1995; Sidel 1999; Kelly 2001).

The argument set forth in this book draws on all of these critiques. I argue, first of all, that societies cannot be characterized as either inherently containing or inherently lacking a capacity to produce community-based collective action. Rather, both historical and contemporary trends in a society's political, social and economic development shape perceptions of social justice or political opportunity, and therefore people's behavior with regards to collective action. These trends are in turn shaped by the society's relations with external forces, and specifically by the contemporary context of global economic integration and its attendant political and cultural changes. Second, CBOs cannot be seen as either inherently benevolent or

inherently malignant—their accountability, inclusiveness and capacity are a product of a variety of factors related to forces external and internal to communities. Finally, local governments are not necessarily more accountable or effective in dealings with low-income communities. Their response to community-based collective action is shaped by the incentives to cooperate or oppose community interests in the local political economy, which again is shaped by the national context and the locality's position in the global economy. Understanding the potential and reality of collective action therefore requires an historically and globally informed analysis of the actors shaping communities in a particular context.

The book further argues that community-based collective action has a strong spatial component. The next section develops this argument with reference to the literature on globalization and urban spatial change.

### **Globalization and Community-based Collective Action**

A growing literature has elucidated the relationship between the globalization of cities, spatial change, and social and political inequality (Wilson 1997; Sassen 1998; Smith 2002). While much of this literature is based on the experience of cities in the United States, Europe and Japan, many of its central observations are applicable to developing countries as well. Its fundamental insight is that urban development in market economies is inherently uneven. Globalization itself represents efforts by capital to take advantage of technological innovations in telecommunications and transportation to lower the cost of production by seeking cheaper land, labor and natural resources in increasingly peripheral locations, while simultaneously attempting to maximize the exchange value of goods and services by expanding markets (Sassen 1998; Marcuse and Kempen 2000b). Scott et al (2001) point to the emergence of what they call 'global city-regions' as the logical outcome of these impulses under the technological advances that have marked the global era. As new technologies have facilitated the movement of goods, people, and information, manufacturing facilities have decentralized as corporations have sought cheaper land and labor in suburban sites both in the developed and developing countries. In contrast, many corporate office functions have become increasingly centralized in the central business districts of a few major cities. They favor such sites because they have concentrations of financial and business service companies that corporations require to coordinate international trade and investment, and to deal with the complex financial and legal arrangements (for example those associated with the outsourcing of production, and with mergers and acquisitions) that characterize contemporary business (Sassen 1991).

The development of global city-regions in Asia has been shaped by the unique space economies of cities in the region. Much academic attention has focused on the development of 'extended metropolitan regions' (EMRs) around primate cities in Asia, as manufacturing investors have favored greenfield sites close to the infrastructure concentrated in central cities (Ginsburg et al eds, 1991). McGee

(1991) has coined the term *desakota* to describe the combination of industrial, residential, and agricultural land uses that have emerged in rice-growing regions surrounding Asia's globalizing cities. He argues that these regions are magnets for export-oriented manufacturing investment, and have been one key to the success of Asian economies. As peripheral regions in metropolitan areas have industrialized, multinational corporate headquarters and business service firms have concentrated in central cities.

Researchers have posited that these trends have exacerbated inequalities in large cities in several ways (Sassen 1998; Scott et al 2001). First, they have increased investment in commercial and office real estate in central business districts, leading to inflated land prices. In addition, global cities are generally characterized by a polarization of incomes between low-wage service sector and manufacturing jobs and high-paying professional positions. The poor have consequently been forced to compete with an increasingly wealthy professional class for limited residential and commercial real estate close to the city center. These trends have resulted in urban redevelopment, gentrification, and displacement of the poor. Smith (2002) argues that this leads to what he has termed a 'crisis of social reproduction' that he argues is common to all globalizing cities. Specifically, there is "a fundamental geographical contradiction between the dramatically increased land values that accompany the centralization of capital in the core....and the marginal, exurban locations where workers are forced to live due to the pitiful wages on which capital centralization in built" (Smith 2002 p. 435-436). In developing countries, the manifestations of this contradiction include the proliferation of informal settlements as the sole form of shelter available to many, the large-scale displacement of low-income residents from central city locations, extremely long commutes, and crisis levels of air pollution caused by traffic congestion. It has been estimated, for example, that 3 million people were displaced by urban redevelopment projects in Seoul during the 1980s, and that high-rise development displaced 100,000 people within a 15-kilometer radius of the center of Bangkok between 1984 and 1988 (Douglass 2000).

Understanding the impacts of global economic integration on cities' sociospatial and political development provides important insights into the potential for CBOs to influence local politics. The realm of urban politics in rapidly growing cities strongly favors the interests of large landowners, developers, elite families, and corporations, whose interests are served by the commodification of urban space. The economic interests and social networks of these actors naturally span the city scale, and, with the globalization of urban economies, they are increasingly resolute in using their influence to shape urban development. City officials are often quite receptive to such influence, as rising land prices bring the potential both for increased revenue, and for rent-seeking. CBOs working in low-income settlements constitute a potential impediment to this endeavor inasmuch as they compete for access to centrally located land. Thus CBOs face considerable obstacles to influencing government. These obstacles are readily apparent in case study research on CBOs (Nientied et al 1990; Eckstein 1990).

Less well-understood is the implications of a political climate of threat and exclusion on communities' propensity for collective action. In the atmosphere of fear and distrust that may be fostered by such a hostile political climate, the social capital that development theorists treasure may be scarce, and community residents may be skeptical regarding the prospects for success in organizing efforts. In addition, where informal settlements are under threat, residents may be more transient or less inclined to become invested in the community either financially or emotionally. Hence there may be an interactive relationship between the socioeconomic and political environment in which CBOs function, and the dynamic of organizing in communities.

An attempt to understand the circumstances contributing to community-based collective action must therefore look beyond the scale of a community and its immediate environs to understand the interactive effect between change at four spatial scales. The first is the global scale. The position of the nation and locality in the global economy has significant implications for the influence of economic interests in the political realm, the nature and intensity of land development pressures, the relative autonomy of the national government in relations with multinational corporations and other governments, and other factors. The second level of analysis is national. Specifically, the political context for participation is influenced by such factors as the history of economic and political development of nations, experiences with colonial rule, and class, ethnic, and gender relations. These factors have implications for the type of political culture that develops and the potential for social mobilization. The third level of analysis is the metropolitan region. Specifically, whether communities are located in the center of the city or on the urban fringe, among other factors, will affect the types of development pressures that they experience. Where development pressures are intense and land values are high, local politicians are more likely to encounter economically and politically powerful landowners and businesspeople whose interests lie in redevelopment and this will shape their interactions with informal settlers. The fourth and final level of analysis is the community itself. Specifically, the history of a community's development, the socioeconomic, linguistic, cultural, and ethnic makeup of the area, and the relationship of community residents and CBO leaders to politicians, NGOs, and other powerful local actors will all influence the nature of social relations within the community, and the extent of CBO agency.

Employing this framework, the book examines four hypotheses. The first is that the amount of political space for CBO participation in governance is strongly affected by two factors in the local political economy: the nature of relations between the state, the for-profit private sector, and communities; and the relative fiscal capacity of local governments to address the demands of community groups. Both of these factors are in turn shaped by the particular constellation of interests around land development in the locality. These interests are in turn shaped by the location of the locality within the broader metropolitan region and the global economy.

The second hypothesis is that residents are more likely to participate in CBOs where they have a sense of identity based on social networks within the locality, and that consequently CBOs are likely to be stronger. Such a community identity facilitates the development of consensus among residents, thereby making CBOs more effective in making decisions, in engaging residents in collective action, and in dealing with government. A community identity may arise from ethnic, linguistic, religious, or kinship ties. It may also arise from experiences with collective action, most notably in response to the threat of eviction, which again is likely to be related to the locality's relation to the metropolitan and global economies.

The third hypothesis is that both the extent of social networks in the community and the political and socioeconomic context in which CBOs operate strongly influence the strategies that CBOs pursue in engaging in collective action. Specifically, I hypothesize that there are three distinct forms of community identity that strongly impact on the nature of community organizing: a defensive identity that is based on the perception of a hostile environment for the community; a dependent identity which sees the community as dependent on local economic and political interests; and a transformative identity that sees the community as having agency, or the potential for agency, in the local political economy. This categorization is adapted from Castells (1997), and is useful in understanding the variety of ways that CBOs perceive their role. The nature of community identity also helps in understanding when and why collective action occurs, and what form it takes (e.g., direct action, self-help, political mobilization, or others).

The fourth and final hypothesis states that the two most important roles of NGOs and CBO coalitions are in cross-fertilizing experiences in community organizing between localities, thereby providing motivation and incentive for collective action, and in organizing communities beyond the community level to bring about socioeconomic and political change.

### **The Metro Manila Context**

Metro Manila provides an excellent venue to study community organizing in informal settlements and the contradictions that CBOs face. It is the capital of the Philippines and its largest urban agglomeration, with a population of 10.7 million people (NSO 2003). As the country has experienced a rapid increase in investment in recent years, particularly in export-oriented industry, Metro Manila's place as the country's primary economic, social and political center has remained unchallenged. While Metro Manila contains only about 13 percent of the Philippine population, it accounts for about a third of gross national product, and more than two fifths of manufacturing value added (NSO 1998). It sits at the center of a rapidly urbanizing and industrializing region which is popularly referred to as CALABARZON, referring to Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon, five provinces to the south and west of Metro Manila. Including Metro Manila, this larger region has a population

of about 20 million, and accounts for close to three fifths of manufacturing value added (NSO 2003). As a consequence of the gradual economic expansion it has experienced, Metro Manila has continued to be the main destination of migrants from rural areas and the population has more than doubled in the past 25 years, growing at an annual rate of about 200,000 people during that period. While there have been some attempts to decentralize urban development by investing in other urban centers, the government has primarily responded to this growth by increasing investment in infrastructure in Metro Manila and CALABARZON (PADCO 1992; Solon 1996; Kelly 2000).

The combination of commercial, residential, and industrial development, major infrastructure projects, and speculation in urban land has exacerbated the shortage of affordable land for housing in the city. Consequently, the number of people living in informal settlements has risen steadily in the past twenty years, from approximately 1.7 million in 1981 to 4 million today (Ramos-Jiminez and Chiong-Javier 1988). It is in this context that the government has pursued a strategy for low-income housing that emphasizes decentralized governance and the role of civil society. There are numerous NGOs working in informal settlements in Metro Manila, and more than 2000 CBOs operate in the city's communities (SEC 1999). In 1991, the passage of the Local Government Code, which devolved significant responsibilities for policy-making and planning to local government, led to the fragmentation of Metro Manila's governance in 17 cities and municipalities that make up the Metro area. Thus Metro Manila, more than most other cities, embodies the ideal of the enablement model, with a highly decentralized and democratic system of governance, a concentration of organizations of civil society, and a market-oriented system of land delivery.

The post-Marcos period has also been one of optimism and high expectations for residents of informal settlements and the CBOs and NGOs that worked with them. During the 1986 presidential elections, Corazon Aquino agreed to legalize the land tenure of residents of two of the largest settlements in Metro Manila if she were elected (Karaos 1995). Following her ascension to the presidency, hundreds of thousands of people staked a claim to plots of land throughout the city in the hope that they too would be given the opportunity to stay. CBOs and NGOs began to channel their efforts towards initiating community-based shelter improvement programs, which were a major housing thrust of the new government, and lobbying for legislation for urban land reform, protection of the rights of informal settlers, increased funding for low-cost housing, and other issues.

Despite the optimism initially created by the reforms, however, the new political order that has emerged in the Philippines, and the place of civil society within it, have proven fraught with contradictions. While the anti-authoritarian movement succeeded in overthrowing Marcos and establishing a democratic regime, major social welfare initiatives such as rural and urban land reform have faced stiff resistance (Rocamora 1995). In addition, some commentators have noted the return to influence in many localities of elite political families, and have predicted

the reemergence of the patronage politics that characterized the pre-Marcos era (Anderson 1988). The current context of urban governance and its implications for CBOs will be examined in some depth in Chapter 2.

### **Methodology of the Study**

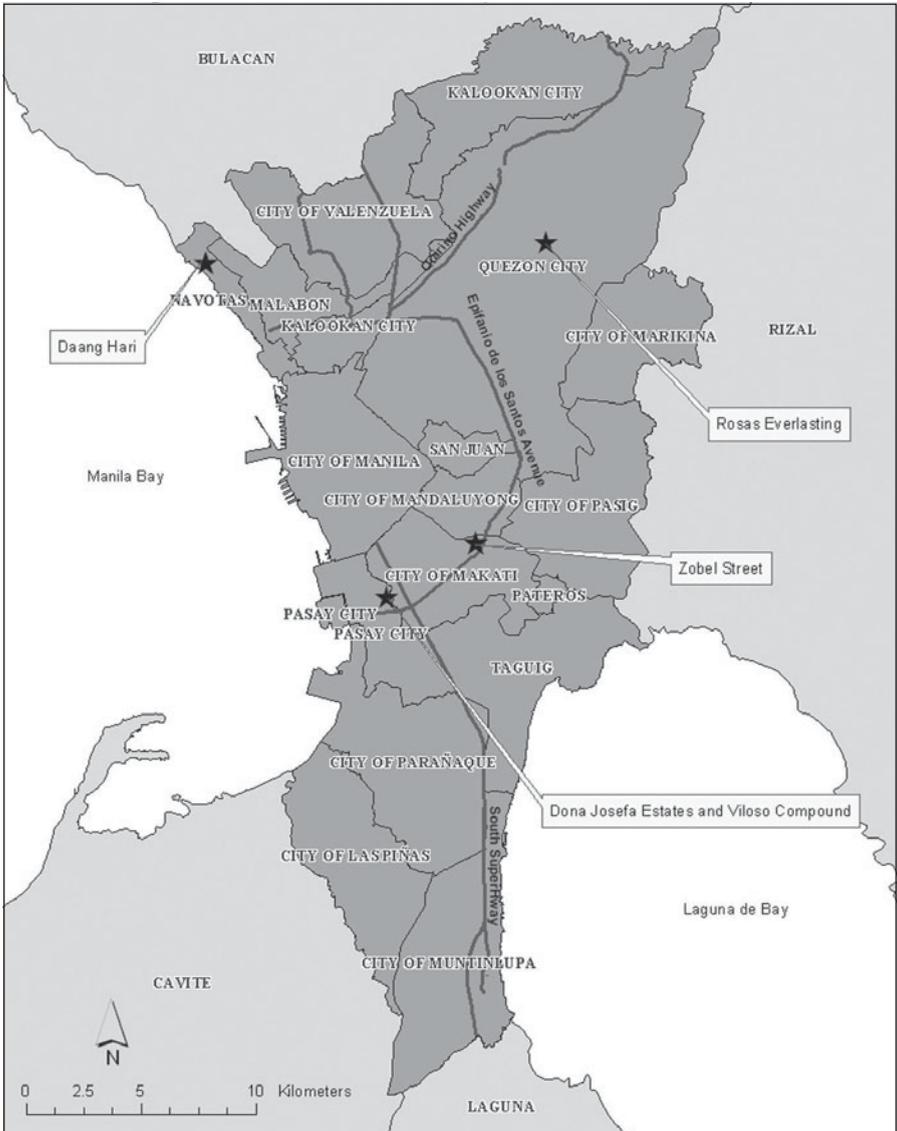
The hypotheses examined in this project imply a need to pay attention to both to the micro level of community organizing and the internal dynamics of CBOs, and the macro level of the metropolitan, national, and global forces that shape local politics. It also requires attention to the variations in the experiences of CBOs based on their particular location in the urban political economy. For this reason I use three methods. The first is comparative case studies of five CBOs that have followed different strategies in attempting to improve shelter, with different outcomes for state-community relations. The case studies are intended to address the questions: Why are some CBOs politically active while others are generally passive? Why do some CBOs attempt to engage governments in community improvement efforts while others do not? Why are some local governments more receptive to CBO participation than others? The second method is a survey of leaders of 80 randomly sampled informal settlements in Metro Manila. The survey asks about the characteristics of the community, community leaders' interactions with and impressions of government agencies and NGOs, the institutional structure, funding, and activities of the CBOs, and the characteristics of their leadership. This survey is intended to provide a bird's eye view of the situation of community organizing in Metro Manila in order to determine how representative the case studies examined here and elsewhere are of the overall situation of informal settlements and CBOs in the Metro area. Finally, I conducted interviews with actors in local and national government, NGOs and CBOs, and academia in an effort to get a broader picture of perspectives and debates on urbanization and civil society participation in Metro Manila.

The field research was conducted between 1998 and 2000 in three phases. In the first phase I attempted to gain an overview of the situation of community organizing in Metro Manila. There is a remarkable variety of NGOs that work with informal settlers, and an equally diverse range of local government approaches to dealing with the issue. I interviewed people in academia, government and NGOs regarding the historical background of informal settlements and community organizing in Metro Manila, recent socioeconomic, political and spatial change in Metro Manila, and the impacts of these changes on the relationship between community organizations and government. During this time I also gathered what data were available on the extent of community organizing in the city, including data from surveys, lists of CBOs registered with the government, and literature on the activities of NGOs and federations of CBOs. I also conducted site visits to 18 urban poor communities, and held in-depth interviews with representatives of community organizations. Specifically, I asked respondents about the history of the settlement and the CBO,

levels of participation in CBO activities, major issues the communities faced, and relations with local government agencies, NGOs, and CBO coalitions. These research tasks helped to frame the informal and formal survey questionnaires for the case studies.

The second, and main phase of the research consisted of the case studies, which were identified during my community visits. The five CBOs are located in three cities and one municipality in Metro Manila (Figure 1.1). The case study areas were chosen to represent a variety of organizing strategies and political orientations of CBOs, based on the types of organizing observed in the first phase of research. The five case studies are:

- Dona Josefa Estates and Viloso Compound, two communities in the city of Pasay that have organized to engage in a government sponsored improvement program. In the past eight years, these two communities have legalized their land tenure and undertaken efforts to improve access to infrastructure and services.
- Daang Hari, a community in Navotas that is a member of a socialist federation of CBOs. The CBO in Daang Hari has been involved in a variety of political protests, including a movement to reverse the outcome of a local election.
- Rosas-Everlasting, a community in Quezon City that has been organized by an NGO that practices a model of organizing inspired by Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation. The community is located in a large agglomeration of informal settlements that has witnessed a successful movement to legalize land tenure in the area.
- Zobel Street, an 'unorganized' community in Makati, was chosen to represent an area that has neither been influenced by NGOs or CBO federations, nor participated in any government sponsored community improvement projects



**Figure 1.1: Location of the Case Study Communities in Metro Manila**

Source: Metro Manila Development Authority (2005)

The methodology for the case studies was intended to understand how and why CBOs employed the strategies in organizing and relations with outside actors that they did. I reviewed contemporary and historical reports and documents of the CBOs, government agencies, aid organizations, and NGOs working in the settlements. I

conducted semi-structured interviews with the staff of the CBOs in the areas, community residents, local government officials, national government officials, representatives of NGOs and aid organizations, and academics knowledgeable of CBO activities. I conducted a formal sample survey of households in the five communities, asking about household demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, household residents' perceptions of the CBO and of local politics, and social networks among residents. Finally, where possible, I observed the activities of the CBOs.

The third and final phase of the research consisted of a survey of community leaders in 80 randomly sampled informal settlements in Metro Manila. This survey was designed to provide information on a number of fundamental questions that have not been addressed in previous research. What percentage of communities actually have a CBO? How are leaders of CBOs chosen? What types of activities do these organizations undertake? What percent receive assistance from NGOs and government, and how helpful do they find such assistance? And, how do they perceive their political environment? As will be detailed in Chapter 6, the settlements were sampled in a way that was intended to capture the impacts of differences in socioeconomic and political context on the activities of the CBO.

In designing the questionnaires and in my interpretation of the data, I have tried to remain aware of and sensitive to the fact that surveys and interviews are inherently prone to bias. When discussing their behavior in collective activities, people can naturally be expected to want to paint themselves in a positive light. Resident discussions of their perceptions of the efficacy of CBOs may have been colored by their personal relationships with community leaders. More generally, people's answers to my questions most certainly reflected their perceptions of me and my intentions. I have attempted to deal with these issues in several ways. First, I employed Tagalog-speaking research assistants to conduct the survey, taking care to find individuals who were comfortable in these settings. In fact several of the research assistants were themselves residents of informal settlements. Second, I have tried to triangulate my findings through a combination of surveys, interviews, and accounts from other sources. Finally, I have tried to be cautious in interpreting the data.

## **Outline of the Book**

The remainder of the book follows much the same sequential logic of the research itself—it begins with an examination of issues in urbanization and their implications for CBOs, then engages in an in-depth examination of the case studies, and reviews the findings of the sample survey of CBOs before finishing with conclusions.

Chapter 2 outlines the potentials and pitfalls of recent political reforms in the Philippines, and explores their origin both in the roots of the Philippines' historical development as a colony of Spain and the United States, and in the impact of current global economic forces. The chapter argues that decentralization reflects the interests of a variety of politically powerful social groups, including not only organizations

of civil society, but also local political families who have ruled the country for over a century, and international and domestic business interests. The chapter reveals a number of factors that continue to inhibit meaningful civil society participation, including the lack of local government capacity in many cities and municipalities, and the existence of powerful economic interests at the local level that compete with civil society organizations for influence.

Chapter 3 examines the history of community organizing in the Philippines. It traces the roots of current community organizing to anti-Marcos activism. It analyzes the role of professional NGOs and church-based organizations, federations of CBOs, and national and local government agencies. It then discusses CBO mobilization in the five case study communities, placing emphasis on the ways that the variations in political contexts in different localities has led to differing outcomes for state-community relations.

Chapter 4 examines the relationship between social trust and participation in CBOs through an analysis of data from a survey of 276 households in the five case study communities. Specifically, it finds a correlation between participation in CBOs and the extent of social ties within the community and trust in the community organization. It further relates these variables to the political and social environment in the locality, and specifically the relative existence of opportunity for partnership between civil society and the local state. It examines the implications of these findings for contemporary theories of social capital and development.

Chapter 5 analyzes the relationship between the political orientations of informal settlers and their participation in collective action through an analysis of political relations in the Philippines, presentation of data from interviews with community leaders and residents, and sample survey questions regarding the political beliefs of informal settlers. In contrast to views that see CBOs-government relations as either inherently clientelistic or cooperative, the chapter finds that CBOs form either transformative, defensive or dependent identities, depending on the particular context in which CBOs are operating.

Chapter 6 reports on the survey of leaders of 80 randomly sampled CBOs in two cities in Metro Manila—Manila and Quezon City. The survey provides insights into the extent of community organizing and relations between CBOs and government in Metro Manila, and the impacts of the influence of professional NGOs. In addition, the survey results reveal significant differences in community organizing between the two cities, thus providing further validation of this study's findings regarding the impact of contextual factors on community mobilization.

Chapter 7 concludes the book with a discussion of the findings and their implications for shelter delivery policies in developing countries.

## Chapter 2

# Obstacles to Empowerment: Local Politics and Community Organizing in Metro Manila

The experience of CBOs and NGOs working on housing issues in the aftermath of the 1998 presidential elections reveals much about state-civil society relations in the post-Marcos Philippines. The results of the elections initially appeared to provide a boost for the cause of informal settlers, adding to perceptions of a breakthrough in relations between government and communities that had emerged with the passage of landmark urban land reform legislation in 1995. The new president, Joseph “Erap” Estrada, was a former actor and political populist who had based his campaign on the slogan “Erap para sa mahirap” (Erap for the poor). Upon taking office, he appointed several respected former NGO representatives to cabinet positions. Among them was Karina David, a former community organizer and NGO head who was appointed presidential advisor on housing and chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Committee (HUDCC), the body responsible for implementing the government’s housing program.

David set about reversing the spending patterns of the previous administration, which had allocated only 20 percent of the housing budget to low-income housing and the rest on moderate-income housing. She also sought to expand the role of NGOs and CBOs in housing delivery, and to more effectively enforce implementation of the new urban land reform law, the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1995, which had been passed after lobbying by NGOs. Her tenure, however, was marked by conflict. The Construction and Real Estate Builders Association (CREBA) lobbied against her efforts to cut government financing of moderate-income housing, which is mostly built by private developers. Local governments chafed at HUDCC’s efforts to enforce compliance with regulations for setting aside land for relocation of informal settlements. David’s campaign to reduce graft in government housing programs won her enemies in the bureaucracy. In October of 1999 she resigned as chair of the HUDCC after President Estrada, reacting to the controversy generated by her administration, appointed a private sector representative to replace her as presidential housing advisor.

Karina David’s experience highlights the paradox facing NGOs and CBOs in Metro Manila. On one hand, these organizations have grown both in number and in the magnitude of their activities. The city’s housing movement is one of the strongest and most well-organized in Southeast Asia. Recent legislation has institutionalized

a role for CBOs and NGOs in government, and has outlined a government housing program that, in theory, has the potential to significantly expand housing opportunities for low-income people. Government agencies have increasingly recruited personnel from NGOs, to the extent that the acronym is jokingly claimed to stand for 'next government official.' In practice, however, NGOs and CBOs often face considerable obstacles from political and economic interests to participating in government, and much of the recent legislation has only been partially implemented.

In this chapter, I will attempt to explain some of the factors that have led to the current state of government-civil society relations with reference to the issue of housing. Specifically, the chapter will address two questions: First, why have reforms for decentralization and participation in housing programs taken place, and what interests have shaped these reforms? Second, why do CBOs and NGOs continue to face obstacles to local political participation? With regard to the first question, I will argue that the reforms reflect three phenomena in contemporary Philippine politics. The first is the resurgence of the historical influence of local economic actors who comprise a powerful lobby for local political autonomy and reduced national involvement in urban development (Hutchcroft 1991; McCoy 1993; Sidel 1999; Eaton 2003). The second is the development of strong community-based movements for social change, which is largely a legacy of the Marcos dictatorship (Ruland 1984; Karaos 1995; Siliman and Noble 1998). The third is the impact of economic globalization, which has generated social and political changes that have created pressures for decentralization and citizen participation in government.

With regard to the second question, I will argue that the influence of the housing movement has been limited by the presence of a powerful counterforce in the form of local growth-oriented coalitions whose interests lie in the rapid escalation of property values that has accompanied the globalization of Metro Manila's economy. The political influence of landowning interests, and the powerful incentives for local officials to pursue outside investment, has fostered intense opposition to measures that would moderate speculative investment in land and property, and consequently to the political empowerment of groups who favor such measures.

The chapter will begin with a discussion of the causes behind the current housing crisis in Metro Manila, and recent government initiatives to address this issue. Next, it will discuss the historical factors that have shaped the contemporary political economy of the Philippines, and how this has affected access to shelter for the urban poor. Finally, it will discuss the social and political impacts of globalization on land and housing markets in Metro Manila.

### **Urban Politics, Land Markets, and Civil Society Participation**

At the root of the lack of adequate housing for low-income urban residents in developing countries is the highly political issue of urban land allocation. In rapidly growing cities in developing countries, the limited supply of centrally located land, and the growing demand on the urban land supply resulting from industrial, commercial,

and residential development, causes land prices to rise exponentially. This situation is exacerbated by land speculation. Evers (1984) has argued that, as economic elites in developing countries have limited capacity to profit from industrial production due to the technological dominance of transnational corporations, urban land ownership becomes their primary means of economic advancement. At the same time, low-income residents require urban land in order to be close to employment opportunities. They are therefore forced to occupy crowded and substandard housing, and to find alternative sources of shelter by illegally occupying privately or publicly owned land. Lacking security of tenure, these informal settlers must call upon what meager political resources they have to defend and improve their shelter.

Governments face a paradox in dealing with informal settlements. They must maintain the sanctity of land markets in order to facilitate urban development and maintain the political support of landowners. Yet the urban economy is also dependent on the presence of informal settlers, whose willingness to work for low wages drives economic growth. The result is what Berner and Korff (1995) call the 'metropolitan dilemma', in which governments must meet these contradictory demands. Governments usually resolve this dilemma through a process of political bargaining with private landowners and informal settlers. Thus government relations with informal communities must be understood in the context of the political influence of economic actors in urban development, and the intense competition and conflict that characterizes urban land markets.

In Metro Manila, the story of the housing movement is one of the clash of two transformative social forces—a civil society sector empowered by its success in overthrowing a dictator and its newfound political influence, and a set of powerful political and economic actors bent on realizing, and profiting from, the globalization of Metro Manila's economy. This clash has resulted in a schizophrenic response from government, which has passed urban land reform legislation and created innovative new housing programs that have been systematically undermined by many actors both in government agencies and the private sector who have employed legal obstacles, loopholes, and non-compliance. The response of NGOs and CBOs to this circumstance has also been divided, as some have placed their stock in creating change from within the system by attempting to improve compliance with existing laws and develop better legislation, while others have chosen to pursue their agenda through more subversive approaches.

The housing situation among low-income residents of Metro Manila is generally poorer than in Southeast Asian countries with similar income levels. Studies indicate that, while Metro Manila residents pay approximately the same percentage of their income for housing as people in other cities in the region, the quality of their housing tends to be poorer. A study conducted in 1991 found that more than 80 percent of families in Metro Manila occupied dwellings of two rooms or less, and that the average number of occupants per room was 3.5 (Strassmann and Blunt 1994). Per capita floor areas are significantly lower than in most other cities in the region, such as Bangkok or Jakarta (Angel and Mayo 1995). Metro Manila also has a large number of informal settlers. Studies indicate that the lowest cost legal market rate

housing is accessible to only 40 to 50 percent of the population (Urban Research Consortium 1998). The Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP), a national government agency dealing with issues of urban poverty, estimated in the late 1990s that the number of informal settlers in Metro Manila stood at approximately 3.7 million, or 37 percent of the city's population. However, some academics and advocates working on housing issues argue that the actual figure exceeds half of the city's population (Berner 1996; Racelis 1998). Government estimates of the percentage of Metro Manila residents living in informal settlements have grown consistently over the past several decades, from 14.9 percent of the population in 1973, to 25.5 percent in 1982, to 30.6 percent in 1990, to the most recent estimate of 37 percent (Pernia 1977; Ramos-Jiminez and Chiong-Javier 1988; PADCO 1992).

Analysts have pointed to two key factors that have contributed to Metro Manila's housing crisis. The first is the concentration of urban landownership and speculative investment by landowners. While documentation on this phenomenon is scarce, a study conducted in the early 1980s found that 44 percent of landowners in Metro Manila held 300 square meters of urban land or more, and some held plots large enough for 5000 home lots (Mendiola 1983). Land speculation is encouraged by the existing property tax structure—property tax rates generally range from 0.3 to 0.6 percent of assessed values (Strassman and Blunt 1994). Efforts to raise property taxes and improve collection have faced intense opposition from both large landowners and middle class homeowners.

The second factor is rapid urban development. The Metro area's population has risen from slightly less than 5 million in 1975 to close to about 10.7 million in 2005 (NSO 2003). Lacking the means or will to either control urban growth or to properly plan for it, the government has primarily responded by undertaking large scale infrastructure development projects, including multi-lane toll roads and a light rail transit system. Major transportation nodes have attracted large commercial developments, driving up land values. Land along roads leading out of the city has also become a target for development. This has led to leapfrog development and the rapid conversion of agricultural land to urban uses. In the period since World War Two, areas surrounding the old urban core in the city of Manila, including Caloocan city and southern Quezon City to the north, Mandaluyong to the west, and Makati and Pasay to the south, have been transformed from urban periphery to densely built-up urban centers. More recently, a 'third ring' of rapidly developing cities and municipalities has emerged, spurred by a combination of industrialization, the proliferation of informal settlements, and the development of residential areas for middle class people wishing to escape the noise and pollution of the inner-city. Between 1975 and 2000, the population of Valenzuela more than tripled, Muntinlupa quadrupled, and the populations of Taguig and Las Pinas grew almost six times (NSO 2003). The northern parts of Caloocan and Quezon City also grew extremely rapidly. Currently the most explosive growth is in the CALABARZON region surrounding Metro Manila, as parts of Laguna, Cavite and Rizal have emerged as major industrial centers and bedroom communities for commuters to Metro Manila.

The result of this rapid growth has been spiraling land prices (Urban Research Consortium 1998).

It is in this context of an emergent housing crisis that the recent housing reforms have taken place. While these reforms have been influenced by the agenda of institutionalized civil society influence and participatory planning that NGOs and CBOs have fought hard to achieve, they also reflect the national government's lack of resources and political will to address the key issues that lead to the lack of adequate housing for the poor (Sajor 2003). During the Marcos era, housing projects usually entailed a significant role for national government agencies in land acquisition, planning, financing, and the introduction of services, while CBOs were relegated to a minor role in some aspects of program implementation. Government initiatives since 1986 have resembled the 'enablement' strategy favored by the World Bank, with government agencies largely limiting their role to providing modestly subsidized financing for improvement projects, while CBOs conduct much of the project planning and implementation, negotiate land acquisition, organize self-help labor, and assist in cost recovery, primarily through collection of repayment of loans (Urban Research Consortium 1998; Berner 2000).

The precedent for reforms for decentralization and participation was set in the Constitution of 1987, which declares that the "State shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms" for people and their organizations in decision-making (Busto no date). The constitution also calls for the promulgation of legislation to assure political autonomy of local governments. This was accomplished with the passage of the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991, which devolved responsibility for planning and the provision of most basic services to local government units (LGUs). The LGC has significant implications for low-income communities, as it delegates responsibility for land use planning and the implementation of housing programs to local governments (Nolledo 1992). LGUs have also been granted powers of eminent domain, and the authority to convert land from agricultural to urban uses. By the late 1990s, the reallocation of functions had led to the transfer of 70,000 personnel from the national government to LGUs (Clarke 1998). In order to finance these new tasks, local governments are allocated 40 percent of national government revenue, and have also been granted expanded powers to raise revenue through taxes, fees, and charges.

The LGC also gave substance to the mandate in the 1987 constitution for a greater role for civil society in urban governance. Specifically, it creates local government councils at the city and municipal levels, and barangay development councils at the barangay (neighborhood or village) level. Local development councils are responsible for formulating socioeconomic development plans and policies, and public investment plans, while barangay development councils are responsible for mobilizing participation by local populations in implementing these plans, and monitoring and evaluating the progress of implementation. The law states that NGOs and POs are to make up no less than 25 percent of both barangay and local development councils (Nolledo 1992).

The governance of Metro Manila has also seen dramatic change. The Metro area consists of 14 cities and 3 municipalities, each of which is guaranteed autonomy under the LGC. The national government therefore has no authority to impose Metro-level governance. Prior to 1986, the Metro area had been governed by the Metro Manila Commission (MMC), a powerful entity that had been established by Marcos to coordinate urban development (Bello et al 1982). During the Aquino administration, the MMC was replaced with the Metro Manila Authority (MMA), an anemic and largely irrelevant body that was run by a council of mayors with a chairperson that served a six-month term (Berner 1996; Naerssen et al 1996). The MMA has since been replaced by the slightly more powerful Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), but substantial authority still remains with city and municipal governments despite efforts by recent chairpersons to assert a stronger role.

Many have argued that the provisions for CBO and NGO participation, and the devolution of authority to local government, have led to better and more responsive policy-making (Viloria 1992; Rood 1997; Brillantes 1998). However, actual experiences of civil society participation have varied. LGUs maintain authority over the accreditation of NGOs and POs for participation in local and barangay development councils, and Clarke (1998) found that standards for accreditation vary widely throughout the country. Some organizations have been denied accreditation based on their ideological positions, and the process has in many cases favored organizations with political connections. In Metro Manila, the composition of local and barangay development councils varies: in some cities and municipalities organizations working with informal settlers have gained seats on these councils, while in others they have been dominated by elite organizations such as the Rotarians and the Lions Club. Furthermore, the failure of many local governments to comply with national government regulations concerning the provision of low-income housing and the rights of informal settlers in cases of eviction indicate political resistance to cooperation with CBOs (Racelis 1998; Berner 2000).

In addition, the lack of a strong Metro-level planning entity creates obstacles to the formation of coherent policies to address problems related to housing and environmental management. There is no entity with the capacity to direct urban growth, or to plan for the efficient location of industrial, commercial, or residential land uses. In addition, in the absence of Metro level planning, local governments have little incentive to encourage the development of low-income housing within their jurisdictions through such measures as on-site improvement projects or in-city relocation for informal settlements. Legalizing informal settlement uses up land that could be allocated to higher-value uses. In the case of Metro Manila, it could also lead to the in-migration from elsewhere in Metro Manila of informal settlers hoping to benefit from such programs. Thus many city and municipal governments have adopted the expedient of purchasing land in provinces surrounding Metro Manila when it is necessary to relocate informal settlers—a solution that leaves affected families far from job opportunities.

The most significant government legislation concerning urban housing in the post-Marcos era has been Republic Act 7279 of 1995, otherwise known as the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA). UDHA was passed following an intense lobbying effort by NGOs and CBOs, and was seen as a major victory for informal settlers (Karaos et al 1995). It sets out an explicit set of conditions that must be met in order for a demolition to occur, and stipulates that adequate provisions for relocation must be provided by developers of projects that result in the dislocation of informal settlements. It also requires developers of subdivisions to set aside 20 percent of project costs to develop low-income housing.

The bill further outlines a housing program that emphasizes the role of local governments and CBOs. Specifically, LGUs are mandated to conduct a comprehensive inventory of land uses, and identify vacant land that might be used for socialized housing. LGUs are also supposed to register potential beneficiaries of socialized housing projects, which include all informal settlers who were residing in their current houses prior to the establishment of the Act (PHILSSA 1998). The law calls for the expansion of the Community Mortgage Program (CMP), which entails CBOs taking loans from the National Home Mortgage Financing Corporation (NHMFC) to purchase land, usually from private owners, at market prices (Berner 2000). Communities must then reblock the community and reallocate plots in order to comply with subdivision regulations. NGOs, and less frequently local and national government agencies, play key roles in organizing community residents, assisting in negotiations with local governments and landowners, providing technical assistance in reblocking and housing development, and acting as 'originators' of loans, meaning that they share some responsibility for repayment. By 2005 the CMP had resulted in the construction of more than 150,000 houses (UNCHS 2005). The repayment rate has been around 75 percent, which is significantly higher than for most middle-income government housing projects (NHMFC 1998; Porio et al 2004).

Several obstacles to the implementation of UDHA have emerged. Local governments have often been slow to compile lists of informal settlers in their jurisdictions, and to identify land that could be allocated for resettlement of informal settlers. This problem has been particularly prevalent in Metro Manila, where such land is a particularly valuable commodity. In addition, developers have often disregarded the provision for setting aside part of project costs for socialized housing (Racelis 1998). Perhaps the most controversial aspect of UDHA has been the provision for the rights of informal settlers in cases of eviction, which have frequently been ignored. One NGO recorded 105 demolitions affecting 20,116 families between July of 1992 and December of 1995, and found that only 43 percent of affected families were provided with relocation (Karaos 1995). Where a relocation site is provided, it is often too far from sources of employment or schools. Finally, the effectiveness of the CMP has been limited by the high cost of land in many parts of the city, which has rendered such projects unfeasible due to the high cost of amortization. Consequently, CMP projects have benefited less than 5 percent of the country's informal settlers. In addition, some projects have resulted

in the displacement of poorer residents, as they have been unable to afford to make payments on their loans (Berner 2000).

In sum, NGO and CBO capacity to translate the reforms into meaningful influence has been limited by two factors. The first is that the reforms have not addressed one of the main causes of Metro Manila's housing crisis—the dearth of affordable land. Speculation by investors hoping to capitalize on the real estate boom, and the proliferation of land-hungry infrastructure projects, has rendered urban land beyond the reach of most of the urban poor. Second, due to the decentralization of Metro Manila governance, individual cities and municipalities do not have an economic incentive to accommodate informal settlers inside their jurisdictions. Lured by the siren call of globalization-led growth, local governments have largely adopted the private sector's perspective that land is too precious a commodity to use for socialized housing, a group that in their view is an impediment to the kind of urban development that is attractive to global capital.

The remainder of this section will explore two questions that emerge from the above analysis. First, why did the Philippine government undertake the reforms in the housing sector, despite the highly political nature of the issue of urban land allocation? Second, what factors in Philippine politics have led to the persistence of obstacles to CBO participation?

### **Historical Foundations of Contemporary Urban Politics in the Philippines**

Fundamental to any analysis of the recent political reforms in the Philippines is an understanding of the peculiarities of Philippine political culture. A central theme in the literature on Philippine politics is the pervasive influence of economic interests on both local and national government, and particularly the political influence of wealthy families. Prior to Marcos' ascension to power, the Philippine economy was largely controlled by wealthy rural landowning families who also dominated local politics, and exercised considerable influence on national level economic policy and foreign affairs through representation in the congress (Caoili 1988). Today, family-owned enterprises continue to constitute a large part of the economy, as indicated by the fact that more than 90 percent of the largest 1000 corporations in the Philippines are not publicly listed (McCoy 1993). In the political realm, influential families have passed political power down through the generations. One study indicated that 169 of the 200 House Representatives elected in the first post-Marcos elections, held in 1987, were either from pre-martial law political families or were related to these families by marriage (Anderson 1988).

While the Philippines has undergone significant socioeconomic and political change in recent decades, the legacy of the influence of local, family-based economic interests continues to affect state-community relations in several ways. First, family-based politics has permeated Philippine political culture, and continues to manifest itself in both rural and urban areas. In Metro Manila, many mayoral candidates in recent elections have been related to former local politicians. In the most recent

mayoral elections, in which several mayors were ineligible to run for reelection due to term-limit laws, many sponsored their wives or children as mayoral candidates. This pattern of politics is familiar to many voters, who often vote out of a sense of loyalty or nostalgia for old political families (TWSC 1988). Second, influential families continue to hold local and national level political positions, and constitute a powerful lobby for decentralization and local political autonomy.

The origins of family-based political power in the Philippines can be traced to early Spanish colonial times. Following the Spanish occupation of Manila in 1571, the colonial government gave land grants in rural areas of the country to religious orders. These 'friar estates' were initially intended to provide food for Manila, which was emerging as a key entrepot in the trans-Pacific galleon trade between the Philippines and Acapulco, Mexico (McAndrews 1994). During the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, the annual galleon shipments gradually declined in importance. At the same time, rapid industrialization in Europe and North America brought increased demand for tropical agricultural products. The export of agricultural commodities such as sugar, abaca, tobacco, and coffee became increasingly important to the Philippine economy. As a consequence, agricultural land became increasingly valuable, and wealthy Filipinos, particularly mestizo Chinese, began to accumulate land either by leasing it from the friar estates or engaging in money-lending to small cultivators. This rural elite soon came to dominate agricultural production and trade.

The end of Spanish colonial rule and the arrival of the Americans in 1898 brought major changes that consolidated the political and economic influence of rural landowning families. First, the Philippines now had access to a wealthy and expanding market for its agricultural products. The dominance of agricultural exports in the Philippine economy was reinforced by the introduction of cheap American manufactured imports, which dealt a severe blow to local industry. Second, hoping to diminish the influence of the Spanish religious orders, the Americans soon undertook a program that allowed Filipino farmers to purchase the land they tilled. While this was nominally intended to be a land reform initiative that would result in a redistribution of land to small farmers, in fact it resulted in the further consolidation of land in the hands of rural landowning elites, as they used their superior financial resources to accumulate land. Third, the Americans undertook the development of a parliamentary democracy in the country, holding elections for municipal office in 1901, for provincial governors in 1902, for the Philippine Assembly in 1907, and for Commonwealth president in 1935 (Sidel 1999). Elected city and provincial officials gained power over local law enforcement, taxation, and public works, while national level officials gained influence over the apportionment of national government funds and loans by the national bank, the appointment of officials, the awarding of contracts, and other powers. Political office therefore held considerable potential for personal economic advancement, and many landowning families took advantage of their economic position to achieve political power. Thus the stage was set for 'cacique democracy,' in which family-based political dynasties in localities perpetuated their power in a democratic system through a combination of patronage and violence (McCoy 1993). Many contemporary political figures are from large

landowning families that amassed wealth from agricultural landholdings and trading during the 19th century, and later gained electoral office.

The influence of local political bosses extended to national politics as well, as national political candidates depended on local intermediaries to deliver votes. During the colonial and immediate post-colonial period, their main political concerns were with the continuation of preferential treatment of Philippine agricultural products in the American market, and obtaining pork-barrel funds from the national government. Their concern with maintaining hegemony in their areas made them a powerful coalition against attempts to centralize rule in the Philippines.

The dominance of traditional landed, rural-based elite in the Congress resulted in more attention being paid to local, particularistic legislation compared with national programs such as, for example, the issue of balanced agricultural and industrial development, or income and property tax legislation. Congress enacted local autonomy laws, created new towns and cities, subdivided provinces and increased pork barrel appropriations in order to satisfy local supporters. (Caoili 1988)

After the Philippines achieved independence in 1945, the economic and political order gradually shifted, and the political influence of the rural elite declined. The country experienced industrial growth, and agriculture was gradually relegated to a secondary position in the economy. In addition, urbanization brought the growth of new classes—industrial labor, the middle class, the intelligensia, and the bureaucracy—who affected the political climate. As a result, the political influence of the rural elite weakened. In addition, the rural elite themselves changed, as many began to invest in the growing economy of Metro Manila and other urban centers. These changes set the stage for the emergence of Marcos' authoritarian regime, which brought about important long-term changes in Philippine politics.

### **Martial Law and the Urban Poor Movement**

Ferdinand Marcos reigned as president of the Philippines between 1966 and 1986. During the last 14 years, he ruled over an authoritarian regime that was characterized by an extraordinary degree of centralization of power in the Marcos family. A fundamental transformation occurred in Philippine politics during this period. Two aspects of this transformation are particularly salient to the current discussion. First, Marcos' rule broke the hegemony of rural landowning families in Philippine politics, and redirected the country's economy towards a model of development based on export-oriented industrialization, thereby permanently shifting the economic base in the country. Thus, while many have pointed to the reemergence of local political families during the period since 1986 as evidence of a return of the pre-Marcos status quo, in fact the structure of power in the country has changed significantly (Magno 1993; Rocamora 1994). While rural landowning families retain some degree of influence, other groups have an enhanced political voice, including both foreign and domestic export-oriented economic interests, international aid

and lending organizations, a growing middle class, and government technocrats. Second, Marcos' rule led to the development of a strong network of NGOs and POs, as the political left and church organizations mobilized communities to oppose authoritarian rule and develop a grassroots development agenda as an alternative to the Marcos regime's top-down model of development planning. This was also a time of rapid urbanization, and the growth of informal settlements and widespread community organizing gave rise to the city's housing movement.

Marcos' strategy for gaining power was based on an acute understanding of the patronage style of politics in the Philippines. Philippine presidents had traditionally relied on the political machines maintained by local politicians during elections, and therefore had to curry favor with these politicians upon gaining office. Marcos used two strategies to overcome this dependence. First, he created a direct link between himself and the electorate by sponsoring organizations such as youth groups, and engaging in aggressive campaign spending, thereby minimizing the need for local intermediaries. Second, upon gaining power, Marcos strengthened and coopted the military and police forces and used them to forcibly seize control of the assets of the rural elite and pass them on to loyalists in an effort to consolidate his power (Anderson 1988).

Citing the threat posed by communist and Muslim separatist movements, Marcos declared martial law in September of 1972. He then undertook a number of measures designed to legitimize his rule and to move the country towards an export-oriented industrial economy (Thompson 1996). In order to attract foreign investment, he moved to improve the security situation in the country, introduced tax and duty concessions, and suppressed labor organizing. Marcos also recruited competent technocrats to key government positions. These measures led to an increase in foreign investment and consolidated international acceptance for the new regime, which allowed the government to obtain critical loans from the IMF and World Bank.

While these measures led to a degree of economic development, opposition to authoritarian rule gradually mounted. This was manifest particularly in the growth of the communist insurgency—the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, grew from 350 troops under arms in 1972 to 8000 in 1980 (Thompson 1996). In order to counter leftist community organizing, Marcos created the barangay system, a system of neighborhood or village level administrative units that were designed to control mobilization at the neighborhood and village levels (Naerssen 1989). Barangay level government was used to legitimize Marcos' rule by providing a grassroots organizational base that would ratify the constitution, and that would mediate between the regime and communities in implementing development schemes and resolving local conflicts.

The Marcos government also implemented reforms in the administration of Metro Manila. In 1975, Marcos issued a presidential decree forming the Metro Manila Commission (MMC), which consolidated seventeen cities and municipalities under a unified authority responsible for planning and policy-making (Caoili 1988). The stated purpose of this move was to rationalize the planning process in the Metro area

by creating a single entity to govern what had been a fragmented collection of rapidly growing cities and municipalities. Marcos' wife, Imelda, was appointed Governor of Metro Manila, and she proceeded to undertake a spate of capital improvement and monumental building projects. These changes were designed to project the image of a modern, world-class metropolis. Developments included the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Folk Arts Theatre, and the Philippine International Convention Center (Pinches 1994; Lico 2003). These buildings were the venue for a number of prestigious international events, including the 1974 Miss Universe Pageant, and the 1976 International Monetary Fund and World Bank Conference.

Informal settlements constituted a major obstacle to Marcos' vision for the development of Metro Manila, and created an image problem for his regime. The population of such settlements had expanded from approximately 700,000 people in 1968 to 1.7 million in 1980, and by the latter date the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) had made progress in organizing efforts in some of these settlements (Hollnsteiner 1972; Honculada 1985; Ramos-Jiminez et al 1986). The Marcos' responded by adopting a resolutely anti-urban poor agenda. In 1973, Marcos issued Presidential Decree (PD) 772, which made illegally occupying land a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment, and the pace of evictions was accelerated (Naerssen 1989). During the preparations for the Miss Universe Pageant, an estimated 100,000 people were evicted, and during the IMF and World Bank conference 60,000 people were evicted, in order to beautify the city. In all, it has been estimated that 400,000 people were evicted between 1973 and 1980 (Pinches 1994).

The resolutely hostile stance of the government, and the threat of eviction, galvanized organizing efforts in many informal settlements. Prior to the early 1970s, community organizing efforts had been small-scale, and had focused on minor local improvements. However, the early 1970s saw the beginning of more formal organizing efforts, and the emergence of large CBO federations that attempted to scale up the political impact of their activities. These efforts were often backed by organizations aligned with the National Democratic Front (NDF), a front organization for the CPP. Church organizations inspired by liberation theology also played a key role. The first of the large CBO federations was the Zone One Tondo Temporary Organization (ZOTTO), a coalition of 20 organizations that formed in 1970 to deal with the threat of eviction to the 4500 residents of Tondo Foreshore, which at the time was the largest informal settlement in Southeast Asia. The 'temporary' was dropped from the name in 1971, and the organization came to be known as ZOTO. The formation of ZOTO coincided with the formation of the Philippine Ecumenical Council on Community Organizing (PECCO), an organization of clergy and laypeople who were involved in organizing efforts. With the assistance of Herbert White, a Presbyterian minister who had worked with Saul Alinsky, a prominent American organizer and the founder of the Industrial Areas Foundation, PECCO established a training program for community organizers based on Alinsky style organizing methods (Carroll 1998). In the Alinsky method, organizers initially engage community residents in identifying problems in their communities, and train community residents to address these issues (Alinsky 1971). As residents gradually

tackle progressively more serious problems, they come to confront the larger issue of their lack of tenure security, and the socioeconomic and political obstacles to accessing legal housing. Thus politicized, they go on to more confrontational and political activities.

ZOTO experienced several major successes, including an audience with the Pope during his visit to the Philippines in 1971 that embarrassed the Marcos regime, and a series of mass actions that highlighted their cause (Honculada 1985). In 1974, ZOTO merged with groups from other parts of Metro Manila to form Ugnayan, an umbrella organization. Ugnayan experienced several significant breakthroughs, including organizing a meeting with President Marcos at which they negotiated a stop on demolitions in Tondo, and enlisting the support of the World Bank in developing a major in-city relocation project.

However, the movement experienced gradual decline due to government repression and ideological conflicts. The Marcos government became increasingly fearful of the potential for urban insurgency, and the mid to late 1970s witnessed an increase in arrests and the torture of some leaders. Meanwhile, ZOTO and PECCO experienced a split that paralleled the political cleavages within the national-level anti-authoritarian movement. On one side of the ideological divide were the 'social democrats,' who generally favored an agenda of democratization, local autonomy, and modest social and economic reform. On the other were the 'national democrats,' who generally backed the communist insurgency and focused on a broad political agenda based on opposition to authoritarianism and American imperialism (Karaos 1995; Siliman and Noble 1998). The Marcos regime capitalized on this divide by making a series of offers to legalize the tenure of residents of Tondo. Each offer was rejected by the Ugnayan leadership, which was strongly influenced by the national democratic movement, and had taken a stand of demanding comprehensive land reform. Karaos (1995) has argued that Ugnayan's inflexibility caused the organization to lose much of its following among community residents, who were attracted by Marcos' proposals and did not fully accept the organization's political stances. However, the housing movement experienced another surge of activity in the early 1980s, in response to a massive campaign of evictions initiated by MMC chair Imelda Marcos. CBOs were also to later play a key role in the anti-authoritarian movement.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, President Marcos' rule gradually weakened. The communist insurgency controlled large parts of the countryside, and also made inroads in low-income urban communities. The middle class was also increasingly offended with the arrogance and corruption of the Marcos family. Prominent local political families who had seen their economic assets and political power stripped from them by the Marcos family also wished to see the end of the authoritarian regime, and in some cases formed alliances with local leaders of the New People's Army. A further source of opposition came from local and multinational companies. By the late 1970s, the extreme corruption of the Marcoses and their cronies had led to a soaring budget deficit and economic stagnation. Foreign debt increased from \$2.7 billion in 1972 to \$26.3 billion in 1985, and foreign debt as a percentage of GDP

increased from 32.6 percent to 81.7 percent during this period (Thompson 1995). Labor unrest and a worsening security situation due to the growing communist insurgency further limited economic opportunities.

The 1983 assassination of widely respected political opposition leader Benigno Aquino finally brought the anti-authoritarian movement to a head. Thus a broad alliance of disparate interests—urban and rural poor, urban professionals, socialists, church-based organizations, corporate interests, and old political families—emerged to oppose authoritarian rule. Following their triumph in the ‘People’s Power’ uprising, each of them also brought a distinct set of interests to bear on the formation of the post-Marcos political order.

### **CBOs and the State in the Post-Marcos Era**

Since the end of the Marcos era, analyses of Philippine politics have been dominated by two discourses. According to the first discourse, the recent reforms represent the culmination of the efforts of the Filipino people to throw off the shackles of authoritarianism, and embark on a bold new experiment in localized, democratic rule (Karaos et al 1995; Brillantes 2003). In this view, grassroots ‘people’s organizations’ and NGOs constitute a powerful and largely progressive social force. Proof of the political influence of organizations of civil society lies in their numerous victories in assisting disadvantaged groups, and in their successful efforts to lobby for political reforms, including the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), and UDHA. Further evidence of civil society influence lies in the growing number of prominent NGO leaders who have attained high positions in government. The second discourse holds that the recent reforms have largely constituted a return to the pre-Marcos political order, in which economically powerful political families manipulated political processes and ran local governments largely as fiefdoms (Rocamora 1995; Sidel 1999; Hutchcroft 1998). Evidence for this perspective can be found in the return to power of pre-Marcos political families in some areas, and in the continuing prevalence of graft in the Philippine government. In this view, while electoral democracy has been restored, and the potential for political participation of NGOs and CBOs exists on paper, decentralization has returned political influence to local patrons who have extensive experience in coopting and repressing political participation by the poor

Each of these discourses contains elements of truth. Organizations of civil society certainly have a greater voice in government than in the pre-Marcos era, yet this role has been muted by the political power of economic interests. Yet neither of these discourses captures the complexity of the political changes that have occurred in the post-Marcos era. I would argue that three political trends have shaped Philippine politics, and the relationship between the Philippine state and civil society, in recent years. These trends reflect both the legacy of the anti-Marcos movement, and the economic pressures facing the Philippine government as it attempts to repay its foreign debt.

The first trend is the predominance of themes of democratization and decentralization in political discourses. The reasons for this trend have already been discussed. By the mid-1980s, the Marcos regime had done something to offend nearly every segment of Philippine society, and political reforms were widely regarded as necessary to overcome what were seen by many as the inherent shortcomings of centralization and authoritarianism. The popular distrust of centralization extends to the governance of Metro Manila, where critics of proposals to enhance the authority of Metro level government frequently evoke the unpopular tenure of Imelda Marcos as head of the Metro Manila Commission. In addition, the reemergence of local political machines has also affected reform. Some commentators speculate that several of the legislators who backed the LGC, including Jovito Salonga, who at the time was Senate President, and Ramon Mitra, who was Speaker of the House, did so because they needed the support of local politicians for planned campaigns for president. Senator Aquilino Pimentel, who drafted the legislation, was himself planning to run for president at one time.

Yet the reassertion of local political interest does not imply a total return to pre-Marcos politics. There have been significant changes in state-civil society relations in recent years. The rhetoric of popular empowerment, born of the anti-authoritarian movement, has become an integral part of Philippine political discourse. This has engendered a new type of activism and political awareness that was not as prevalent in the pre-Marcos model of patronage politics. In addition, because agriculture has declined in economic importance, the rural landowning elite no longer exercise national-level political dominance. Finally, the growth of organizations of civil society and political reforms have allowed for more direct participation by people in government, thereby partially offsetting the influence of economic interests—this is the second major trend that has shaped contemporary Philippine politics.

The growing role of civil society in governance is one of the most remarkable occurrences in recent Philippine history, and is a notable example of the increased role of civil society worldwide. The number of accredited NGOs operating in the country increased 160 percent between 1986 and 1996, from 27,100 to 70,200 (Clarke 1998). Several factors have contributed to this phenomenon. First, in the volatile situation following the fall of Marcos, the Aquino government saw popular participation in government as a means to defuse the threat of communist insurgency. Increased government-civil society cooperation has lured many former leaders of the communist movement into NGO work, and thereby forestalled further organizing gains by militant organizations. Second, organizations of civil society were critical allies of leaders of the anti-authoritarian movement, and continued to form an important part of their political base in the post-Marcos era. This was particularly true during the Aquino administration. Finally, the political scientist Gerard Clarke (1998) has argued that the national government has used the NGO sector as an ally in efforts to undermine the corruption and patronage of local politicians. Specifically, he argues that the central government during the Aquino and Ramos administrations has supported NGO development efforts in order to circumvent traditional pork-barrel mechanisms for the delivery of basic services, and to legitimize the central

government at the expense of local government. The Aquino government used NGOs to legitimate the new government and consolidate central rule, while Ramos made attacks on local graft a personal crusade. It is not certain, however, whether this is a long-term trend or a distinctive characteristic of these two administrations. Indeed, as already noted the Estrada government initially made overtures at NGOs as part of his populist agenda before shifting his allegiance to business interests who he discovered were more capable of financing his patronage machine.

The third political trend is the retreat of the central government from social welfare roles. Cuts in social welfare programs are part of the current government's emphasis on fiscal austerity, as it attempts to repay the large debt it inherited from the Marcos regime. Overall, public expenditure declined from 7.3 percent of GDP in 1983 to 4.6 percent in 1990 (Moser and McIlwaine 1997). By the early 2000s the country faced a fiscal crisis that placed severe strains on the government's ability to provide the most basic of services (Bello 2004). Under such circumstances, NGOs funded by foundations and international organizations are potentially valuable partners in addressing social welfare issues.

Thus the post-Marcos era has been characterized by increased political mobilization of various sectors of Philippine society, the reassertion of local economic and political interests, and a decrease in state resources available for development initiatives. With regard to the issue of housing for the poor, state-civil society relations have also been affected by socioeconomic changes brought about by globalization. Specifically, the Philippines' accelerated integration into the global economy as an exporter of manufactured goods has intensified competition over urban land, often pitting low value uses such as housing for the poor against higher value commercial and industrial uses. Thus organizations of the urban poor have often found themselves in competition with corporate interests for political influence. This is the topic of the next section.

### **The Social and Political Impacts of Globalization**

Eager to make up ground lost to the rapidly growing economies of neighboring Southeast Asian countries during the Marcos years, the Philippine government has worked assiduously to project an image of the Philippines as the next in line in the region to achieve 'tiger' status. The government has taken measures to further open the country to global commerce, liberalize the banking industry, and deregulate key industries in order to encourage investment. These changes have paid off. As the security situation in the country improved, Philippine exports grew from \$5.72 billion to \$35.21 billion between 1987 and 2002, about a fourfold increase in real terms (NSO 2003). The country's transformation from a primarily agricultural economy to an industrial economy continued during this period, as the share of manufacturing exports rose from 63.6 percent of total exports in 1987 to 88.6 percent in 2002. Of particular note has been the growth in exports of electrical components, from \$1.1

billion in 1987 to 18.6 billion in 2002, indicating that the country is moving towards more high-tech manufacturing.

While growth has spread to areas outside Metro Manila to a modest degree, the most pronounced spatial impact of export-oriented growth has been the intensified primacy of Metro Manila and its surrounding provinces, notably the CALABARZON region (PADCO 1992). Metro Manila's share of gross national product rose from 28.7 percent in 1984 to 35.9 percent in 2002 (NSO 1997; NSO 2003). Metro Manila and the growth region of Southern Luzon (which includes the industrializing provinces of Laguna and Cavite) account for about half of national gross domestic product and fully 58.8 percent of manufacturing value added. Economic growth has enhanced Metro Manila's role as a center for producer services—the command and control center of the Philippines—while contributing to massive industrial growth on its fringe.

This growth has brought with it changing development pressures on urban land. One study found that the share of industrial land uses in Metro Manila increased from 4.9 percent in 1985 to 8.5 percent in 1994 (Urban Research Consortium 1998). Much of this development has taken place in cities and municipalities on the urban fringe, most notably in Valenzuela, Quezon City, Taguig, and Paranaque (Figure 2.2). There has also been a significant increase in the share of commercial land uses in Metro Manila—from 3.8 percent in 1985 to 6.1 in 1994 (Urban Research Consortium 1998). Commercial space development has mainly taken the form of malls and high-rise office facilities. Particularly noteworthy in the Metro Manila context is the existence of large-scale developments carried out by a single developer and containing retail, office and industrial space. The oldest and most prominent of these is the Makati central business district, developed by Ayala Land Inc. A largely undeveloped marsh until the end of World War Two, Makati is now one of the premier business centers in Asia. In the mid-1990s it was home of 84 percent of private commercial banks in the Philippines, as well as 9 of the country's 10 largest insurance firms, and 48 of its 56 embassies (Gloria 1995). More recently, several other major developments have emerged to challenge the Makati CBD's dominance. These include: the Ortigas district in Mandaluyong, which was developed in the 1970s and is currently home to the headquarters of the Asian Development Bank and several other prominent corporate headquarters and government buildings; Fort Bonifacio Global City, which is being developed by Ayala Land to eventually accommodate 250,000 residents and 500,000 daytime users; and several smaller developments (Liss-Katz 1998). Developers have also sought to capitalize on the expansion of the urban region to the south towards Cavite and Laguna by developing megaprojects there and on the southern fringes of Metro Manila—these include Ayala Alabang, Filinvest Corporate City, and Ayala South.

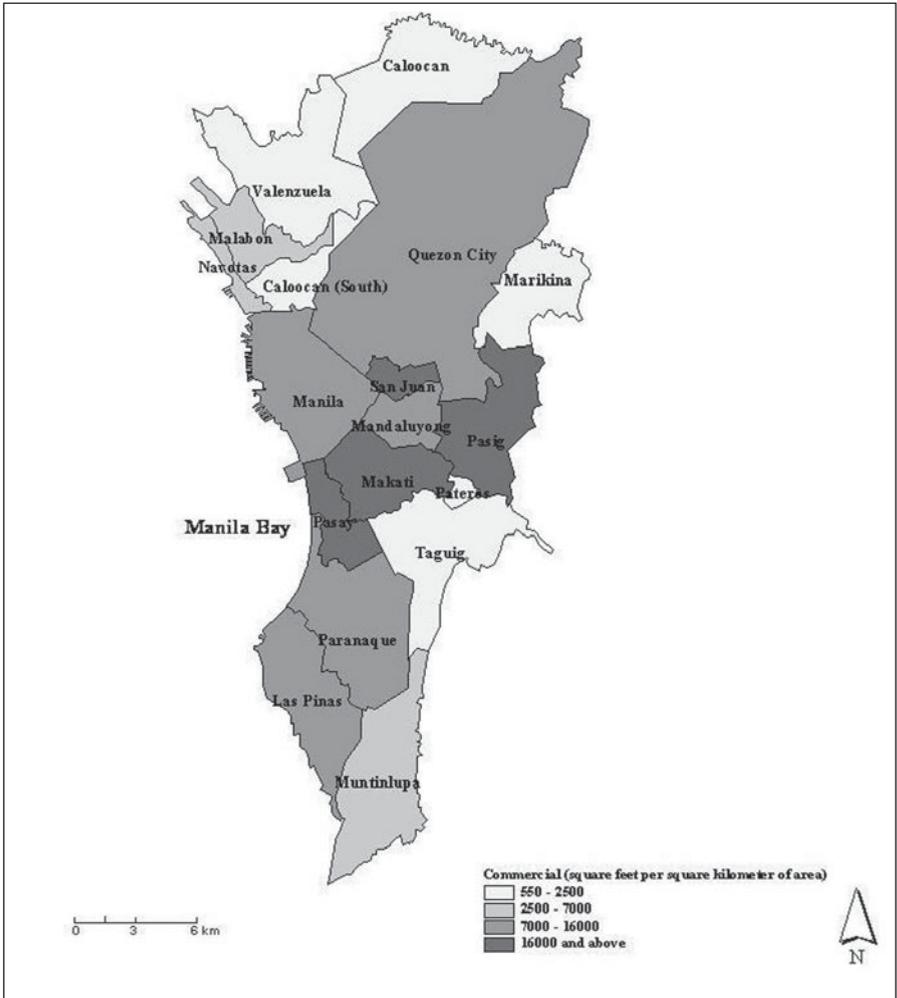
As in some other Asian megacities, malls have become a ubiquitous feature in Metro Manila life. The demand for mall development seems endless, as the lack of public space and congestion on roads leaving the city render these establishments one of the few forms of recreation available to most people (Connell 1999). Commercial space development has occurred mostly in central city areas, most notably in Makati,

but has also been prominent in Mandaluyong, southern Quezon City, and Manila (Figure 2.1).

The rapid pace of real estate development in Metro Manila presents an opportunity for city and municipal governments. Saddled with responsibility for a variety of services as a result of decentralization, local governments are under pressure to generate revenue through property and business taxes. Each of these sources of revenue now represents a larger proportion of local government budgets in Metro Manila than the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), the sum provided by the national government to all cities and municipalities. Local government officials also often have a vested interest in encouraging local economic development, both because influential businesspeople make powerful political allies, and because officials themselves often come from families with real estate interests. Thus city and municipal governments have increasingly competed to attract investment in the form of commercial development, industrial development, high-value residential development, and development of institutions such as colleges, hospitals, or government offices.

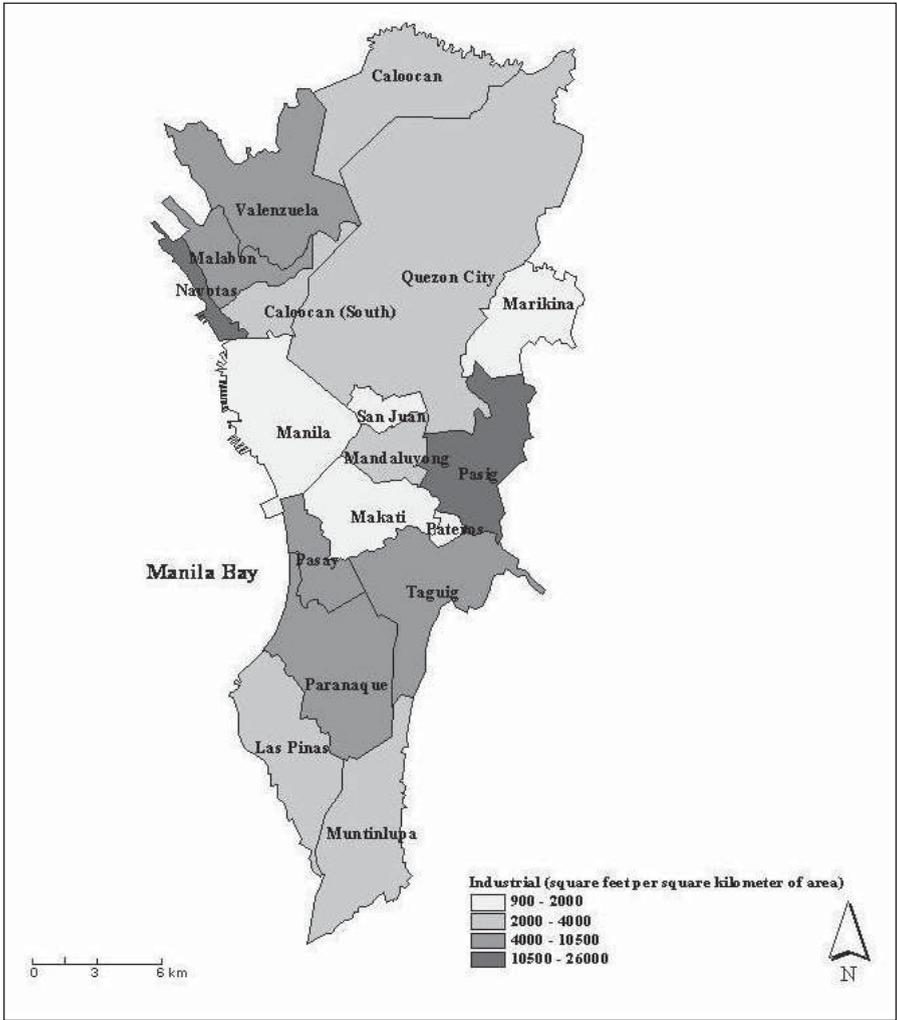
The imperative of local economic development for local governments, and the consequent competition among them to attract investment, has two major consequences for relations between local governments and organizations of the urban poor. First, local governments may be inclined to discourage participation by organizations representing the urban poor, as they may see the interests of such organizations as conflicting with the objective of local economic development. Local governments must often choose between the interests of investors and the urban poor, as the latter often occupy developable land, or land that would be required for infrastructure improvements such as road improvement. The second consequence is that, because of variations in the ability of localities to attract investment, there is a disparity in their ability to generate revenues. Inner-city areas and large population centers are prime targets for investment in retail and business office development, which generate a great deal of revenue. Areas on the urban fringe, and those that do not have adequate transport links, have greater difficulty in attracting such investment. In 1997, revenue collection by Metro Manila local governments ranged from 486 pesos per capita in Malabon, to 7656 pesos per capita in Makati (Figure 2.3). Cities with especially low revenue are likely to lack basic capacities in planning and program development and implementation, thereby reducing their responsiveness to their constituents.

Thus, to some degree, economic change associated with globalization has weakened the ability of CBOs to influence government. Rapid urbanization has intensified development pressures, while uneven access to resources among cities has weakened the capacity of some city and municipal governments.



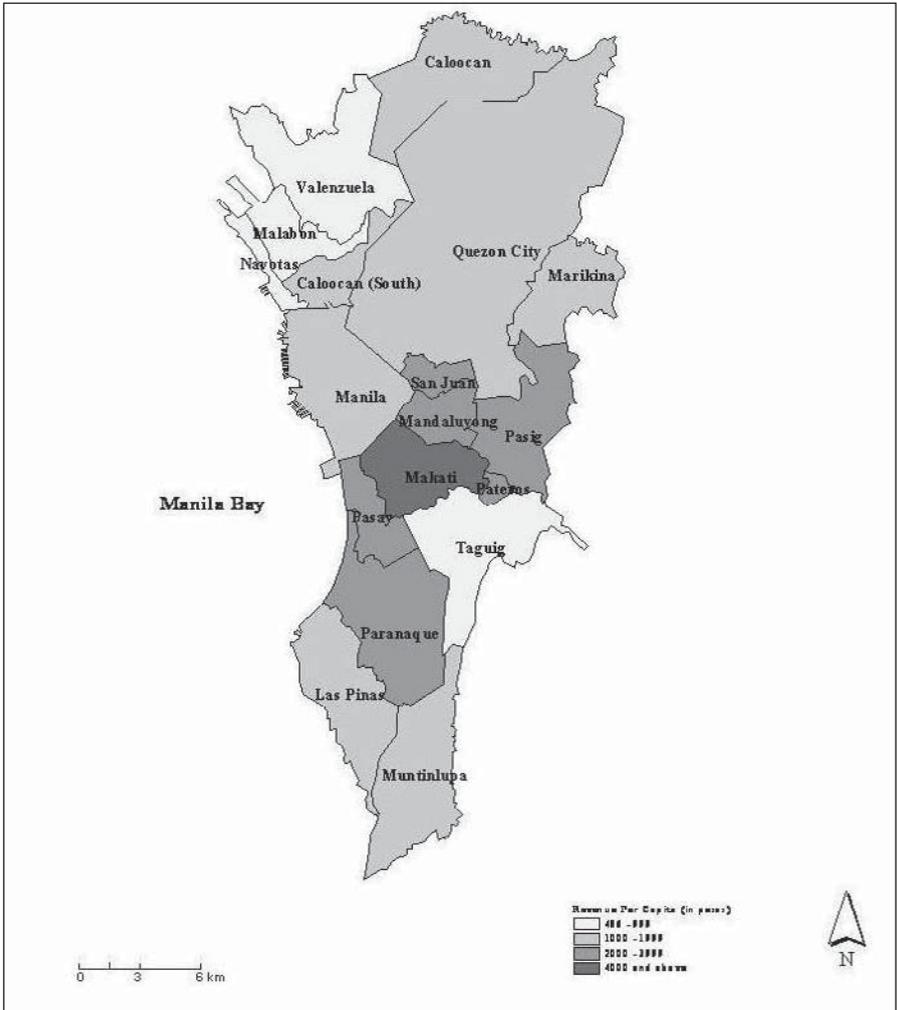
**Figure 2.1: Development of Commercial Space by City and Municipality in Metro Manila, 1990-1997 (square feet per square kilometer of land area)**

Source: National Statistics Office 1998.



**Figure 2.2: Development of Industrial Space by City and Municipality in Metro Manila, 1990-1997 (square feet per square kilometer of land area)**

Source: National Statistics Office 1998.



**Figure 2.3: Revenue Per Capita for Cities and Municipalities of Metro Manila,1997 (in pesos)**

Source: Department of Finance 1998.

**Conclusion**

In much of the literature on urban development, reforms for decentralization and civil society participation in urban governance are represented rather simplistically as a transformation from a top-down to a bottom-up model of planning. Democratization is often represented as an evolutionary phenomenon resulting from popular movements against authoritarian and centralized decision-making systems. In this chapter, I have argued that the reality of these reforms is somewhat more complex—a variety of actors have an interest in decentralization, and have attempted to shape the outcome of reforms to their agendas. I have further argued that recent trends in the reform of urban government, and the actual potential for civil society participation created by these changes, must be understood in the context of economic globalization, and of the particularities of historical and social factors in localities.

In the case of the Philippines, decentralization has been implemented in the context of a political culture in which powerful landowning families have traditionally dominated local politics. As a result, CBOs and NGOs have often had to confront entrenched local interests that have attempted to thwart civil society participation in government. In addition, the growing role of the Philippines in the global economy as an exporter of industrial products, and the consequent increase in investment in Metro Manila, has led to developmental pressure on urban land. This has exacerbated the conflict of interests between local governments and organizations representing the interests of the urban poor. Local governments have often excluded organizations of civil society from participation, and such organizations have themselves often exhibited limited capacity to influence government.

## Chapter 3

# Community-Based Organizations and the State: Five Case Studies

The efforts of CBOs to exercise influence in political decision-making processes have been marked by both successes and failures. In studies of state-CBO relations, therefore, the theoretical positions of researchers have often been colored by the case studies they choose to focus on, and vice-versa. Thus advocates of policy changes for decentralization and participation, most notably those working for international aid and lending organizations that support such initiatives, tend to focus on 'best practices' of state-CBO collaboration. Schubeler (1996), for example, examines a variety of successes in participation, most notably the Kampung Improvement Program in Indonesia, and the Orangi Pilot Project in Pakistan, and argues that these cases demonstrate the potential for CBOs and government to find common goals and work together. Conversely, political economists who are skeptical of the ability of CBOs to overcome entrenched political and economic interests focus on the numerous failures in community participation. Thus Desai (1995) examines the case of Bombay (currently Mumbai), and finds that formal mechanisms for community participation developed by the city government are subverted by patron-client links that have long defined state-community relations. She concludes that "the very idea of participation is the language of planners, bureaucrats, developers, and other state-aligned elites" who manipulate community organizations through patronage, while continuing to monopolize meaningful policy and program decision-making.

The experiences of CBOs in the Philippines in the wake of the recent reforms have provided a wealth of data for case studies of both successes and failures, and scholars of the housing movement are increasingly polarized between the two perspectives described above. Many communities have benefited from the Community Mortgage Program (CMP), and, more impressively, many federations of CBOs have gained representation in local government decision-making bodies (Aberia 1997; Angeles 1998; Porio et al 2004). However, there are also numerous cases of the return to dominance of local 'traditional politicians' who rule through patronage and fear, and who fiercely resist participation by the urban poor (Eaton 2003).

It is increasingly apparent that there is a need to move beyond the simple question of whether or not CBOs have the potential to influence policy and planning. Specifically, research needs to begin to address two questions: First, under what circumstances, and to what degree, are CBOs able to exercise political influence? Second, what factors enhance and constrain the capacity of CBOs to have such influence? Reforms for decentralization, and economic changes brought about by

globalization, have wrought complex socioeconomic, political, and spatial changes that have generated significantly different results in different contexts. Furthermore, CBOs vary in their capacity to organize based on local historical and social factors. Comparing CBOs in different circumstances will therefore provide valuable insights into the overall impact of reforms at the metro, regional, and national level that might not be apparent in specific case studies. In other words, understanding the outcomes of individual battles may not give an accurate idea of the overall tide of the 'war' for CBO representation in political processes.

This chapter will undertake such a comparative analysis of five CBOs in three cities (Makati, Quezon City, and Pasay), and one municipality (Navotas) in Metro Manila. It identifies four major factors in local political economies that have led to distinctly different outcomes in state-community relations. These factors are the intensity of land development pressures in the locality, the local government's access to sources of revenue, the relationship between powerful economic actors and local government, and the strength of community organizing in the locality. The chapter will begin with an examination of the various actors involved in the community organizing system. It will specifically discuss the influence of NGOs and CBO federations on community organizing efforts and it will argue that such organizations play three main roles in enhancing CBO capacity: they lend CBOs political legitimacy; they provide technical assistance and sometimes funding for community organizing efforts; and they increase awareness by community residents of the potential for community organizing. The conclusion will examine case studies of the five communities, discussing how community organizing has been shaped by the contextual factors mentioned above.

### **The Structure of the Community Organizing System in Metro Manila**

The housing movement in the Philippines is more active than in any other Southeast Asian country. Numerous non-governmental organizations and federations of CBOs work on housing issues, and a substantial majority of communities have some form of organization. Much of this community organizing infrastructure emerged out of the anti-authoritarian movement (Lane 1990). Since the end of the Marcos era, however, CBOs and their allies in NGOs and CBO federations have had to reorient their efforts to deal with the challenges presented by political reform, most notably the shift in power from central to local governments. Organizations working with the urban poor have debated whether to enter the mainstream by engaging in government sponsored projects and attempting to penetrate state decision-making systems, or to maintain a role as external antagonists and advocates for political reform. They have also debated how to deal with entrenched interests in local government. This section first summarizes the state of community organizing in Metro Manila today and then discusses the main actors in community development—NGOs, CBO federations, and local and national government agencies.

Approximately 2000 CBOs in informal settlements are registered with the Home Insurance Guarantee Corporation (HIGC), a national government agency that administers housing finance programs (HIGC 1999). One survey of 86 communities located along the Pasig River indicated that 76 percent of these communities had some form of organization (UPA-DAMPA 1999). However, many of these organizations had no set organizational structure or programs, and only 27 percent of the communities surveyed had had contact with NGOs or CBO federations.

CBOs differ significantly in their organizational composition, stability, and level of activity. Essentially, CBOs in Manila have three levels of capacity. At the first level, a community does not have a formally organized CBO that has been legitimized through elections of leaders. Rather, the organization consists of a set of informal leaders who act as intermediaries between the government and the community in matters such as the delivery of infrastructure and services, and in times of eviction. These local leaders also coordinate residents to undertake minor community improvements through self-help efforts. Leaders are often people who are perceived to have some degree of political influence, such as local businesspeople, civil servants, or elected officials such as barangay councilors. Organizations at this first level of capacity also often act as channels of influence for local politicians. Informal leaders often have political ties to barangay and city or municipal elected officials, who may request their assistance in mobilizing the vote within the community in exchange for government assistance in local improvements or personal favors.

At the second level of organizational development, the CBO has a set of elected leaders and may also have drafted a set of by-laws to govern the functions of the CBO. The 'formalization' of the CBO in this manner usually occurs in response to some perceived external threat or opportunity that provides an incentive to engage in more organized and consistent collective action. This may take the form of the news of an imminent demolition, or the initiation of a new government program to improve communities. CBO federations and NGOs can play a critical role in the formalization of CBOs by highlighting the threat of demolition, and the existing opportunities for improvement, in order to spur communities to organize. CBOs generally formalize their organizational structure in order to legitimize their leaders both within the community and in relations with NGO and government, to register with government agencies, to avail themselves of government projects, and to scale up the activities of the organization. The formalization of the organizational structure does not, however, automatically result in any increase in the efficiency or effectiveness of the CBO. Organizational structures are often loosely interpreted, by-laws may be forgotten or even lost, and organizational activities may remain modest.

The third level of organizational development is characterized by the increased stability of the CBO and consistency in its activities. The CBO engages in a defined set of improvement projects and holds regular elections. Its organizational structure and elected leadership function largely as intended, and the organization has established relations with outside actors, be they government agencies or NGOs. Several factors may lead CBOs to experience such an increase in capacity. One critical element seems to be the consistent intervention of an NGO, CBO federation,

or government agency, which provides benefits that act as an incentive to maintain collective action. A notable example of this is the CMP—organizations must achieve stability in their leadership and in participation by residents in the project in order to legalize their tenure. Long term NGO or government assistance for some other type of project, such as microlending or service delivery, may also increase organizational stability. Stabilization may also come about with the emergence of a strong, stable, well-respected leadership that has the time, resources and capacity to develop long-term projects.

NGOs and CBO federations have a significant impact on the political orientations and development strategies of CBOs and on their organizational development. NGOs are an important source of funding and technical assistance. CBO ‘federations,’ which are often organized with the assistance of NGOs, represent the interests of member communities in dealings with national and city level government and often undertake considerable community organizing efforts. In addition, some government agencies, most notably the PCUP, employ community organizers to engage in outreach to communities. All of these organizations provide critical resources to CBOs, and also play a role in defining CBO leaders’ perception of their political environment and the benefits of organizing.

CBO federations and NGOs vary widely in their political orientations and organizing strategies. These variations can be traced to cleavages in the political left dating back to the Marcos era, and specifically to the split that occurred in the mid-1970s between the national democrats and the social democrats. As noted in the previous chapter, the social democrats trace their roots to the largely church-based efforts at community organizing that began in the early 1970s, and most notably the training in Alinsky-style organizing provided by the Philippine Ecumenical Council on Community Organizing (PECCO) (Honculada 1985). Today, social democratic organizations vary widely in their political philosophies, but they generally espouse the need for political reforms for equity, democracy, and local autonomy. Their organizing strategy generally stresses participatory democracy and community self-help. In Metro Manila, these organizations have organized communities to participate in the CMP and other community-based improvement projects, to engage in political campaigns for legislative change, and to organize CBO participation in local government. The more radical groups espouse Alinsky-style organizing tactics, with their emphasis on empowerment and confrontation.

NGOs and CBO federations that espouse a national democratic philosophy see community organizing as a means to achieve the long-term objective of the transition to socialism. During the Marcos era, national democrats generally rallied around the CPP, with its strategy of Maoist insurrection. Since 1986, however, many in the movement have argued for greater engagement in the political arena, and the movement has divided into two main groups, which are popularly known as the reaffirmists and rejectionists (Rocamora 1994). The ‘reaffirmists’ stress the primacy of the rural insurgency that has driven the movement since the early 1970s and shun aboveground organizing. The ‘rejectionists’ believe the socialist transition can be accomplished through aboveground, issue-based organizing and participation

in political processes. NGOs and CBO federations that espouse a rejectionist philosophy frequently align with socialist labor unions and political parties.

The political reforms of the post-Marcos era have led to a shift in the organizing emphases of NGOs and CBO federations. Many NGOs and CBO federations have moved away from confrontational political activism and towards providing funding, technical assistance and community organizing for improvement projects, advocating for policy and program change, and engaging in political bargaining. Social democratic organizations in particular have increasingly focused on the CMP, engaging in community improvement and economic development programs, and other types of activities. Rejectionist national democratic organizations have also adopted more pragmatic positions in dealing with government. Many have focused on negotiating with government agencies and private actors over the terms of relocation for settlements faced with evictions. This strategy has allowed them to provide these communities with tangible benefits, while avoiding the taint of collaboration with government. Many organizations have also focused on lobbying for the formation of urban poor affairs offices in local governments as principal agents in implementing the UDHA. They have also organized to exercise influence on local development councils. The change towards more cooperative strategies has come about as a result of a variety of pressures. Funders that had previously accepted that much of their funding would go towards political activities with nonquantifiable outcomes have increasingly demanded the establishment of benchmarks. In addition, many residents of informal communities have been attracted by government programs promising tenure legalization and community improvement.

The remainder of this section will briefly describe the roles of NGOs, CBO federations, and local and national government agencies in the community development system.

### *Professional Non-Governmental and Church-Based Organizations*

The role of NGOs in the anti-authoritarian movement and their increased role in social welfare provision in recent years have accorded them a high degree of popular legitimacy. As they have become key actors in development, however, politicians have increasingly used such organizations to further their own political ambitions, and economic actors have used NGOs for financial gain. Karina David, former HUDCC chair and head of a major coalition of NGOs, has developed a typology of NGOs that captures the highly political nature of the sector. Her typology includes business-organized NGOs (BONGOs), government run or inspired NGOs (GRINGOs), fly-by night NGOs (COME N' GOs), philanthropic NGOs (FUNDANGOs), and development, justice, and advocacy NGOs (DJANGOs), among others (Clarke 1998).

NGOs generally specialize in one of three types of activities—project planning and management, community organizing, and advocacy. Project-oriented NGOs provide training, financing, and technical assistance to CBOs to conduct specific improvement projects. Improvement projects may include tenure legalization, infrastructure development, housing improvement, child-care, health care, livelihood,

or other projects. Such organizations may also engage in some degree of community organizing to facilitate project implementation.

Among NGOs that focus on project planning and management, the most prominent current activity is the organization of CMP loans for the legalization of tenure and community improvement. By April 1998, 56 NGOs had been involved in the Community Mortgage Program (CMP), acting as originator for 265 CMP loans throughout the Philippines, or 44 percent of the total (NHMFC 1998). Although NGOs are often touted as being more effective at community organizing than government, communities organized by NGOs in fact have a lower repayment rate on their CMP loans (72.9 percent) than those organized by national government agencies (81.8 percent), or local government units (79.1 percent) (NHMFC 1998). This indicates that some NGOs that engage in CMP organizing are either corrupt or do not have the capacity to undertake such projects. Stories abound of graft in the processing of loans, and of NGOs that attempt to profit from CMP projects by using the low-cost government loans for for-profit subdivision developments. In addition, some within the NGO network argue that well-intentioned NGOs sometimes do not exert enough effort in bringing communities to consensus on the projects, or in walking them through the process of developing and implementing subdivision plans or loan repayment. The more active organizations tend to have higher repayment rates. These include the Foundation for the Development of the Urban Poor (29 projects with a 92.5 percent repayment rate), the Center for Community Assistance and Development (26 projects with an 88.9 percent repayment rate), and the Mondragon Property Foundation (15 projects with an 82.4 percent repayment rate).

NGOs that focus on political advocacy lobby for legislation affecting informal settlers and provide legal assistance and advocacy for specific communities. Many advocacy NGOs are based at Ateneo de Manila University, a Jesuit-run institution in Quezon City. One such organization is the Institute for Church and Social Issues (ICSI), which conducts research on a variety of social issues. It also provides an institutional base for the Urban Land Reform Task Force (ULR-TF), one of the main CBO federations working on legislative reform in the housing sector. Another Ateneo-based organization is SALIGAN, an organization that provides legal assistance to CBOs in dealing with government and with internal conflicts in CBOs. One issue that the organization has concentrated on is launching legal challenges to local government interpretations of UDHA, particularly where local governments have failed to provide communities with relocation assistance in the case of eviction.

Organizing NGOs focus on providing training and technical assistance in community organizing to CBOs, federations, and NGOs. Among the oldest of these organizations is the Community Organization of the Philippine Enterprise (COPE), which was formed in 1977 by proponents of Alinsky-style organizing following the dissolution of PECCO. In the late 1970s, COPE community organizers played a critical role in the formation of CBOs in many parts of the National Government Center (NGC), an area of 360 hectares in northeastern Quezon City that is home to more than 300,000 informal settlers. Their efforts led to the formation of Samahang Maralita para sa Makatao at Makatarungang Paninirahan (SAMA-SAMA), which was to become

one of the largest CBO federations in the city. COPE has also developed an affiliate organization, CO-TRAIN, which trains community organizers. Another organization that provides technical assistance in community organizing is the Kristong Hari (Christ the King) Foundation (KHF), which has been instrumental in the establishment of three separate CBO federations in the National Government Center that have in recent years challenged SAMA-SAMA. It was founded by Father Joel Tabora, a former parish priest of a barangay in the National Government Center.

The competition among organizing NGOs in the NGC is indicative of the factionalization of the NGO sector. Far from presenting a unified front in their dealings with state actors, NGOs in the Philippines have a tendency to factionalize based on issues of political orientation and organizing strategy. The split between KHF and COPE, for example, concerns the issue of how best to negotiate with the national government in resolving the situation in the NGC. COPE staff see the KHF as too conciliatory in its dealings with government agencies, while many in KHF see COPE as excessively stubborn and obstructionist and blame the lack of progress in the NGC on SAMA-SAMA's hard-line stands.

### *Federations of Community-Based Organizations*

CBO federations represent a large number of informal settlements in their dealings with local or national government. They differ from advocacy NGOs in drawing their membership directly from the communities that they represent. NGOs, however, are often critical to their formation and organizational stability, providing them with resources, training and guidance. In some cases NGO advisors essentially represent a surrogate leadership of these organizations. Federations play a critical role in the community organizing system because they can represent communities on government committees and because community organizers from these federations often have greater credibility in communities than NGO staff because they are from informal settlements.

It is useful to differentiate between CBO federations that operate at different geographical levels, specifically the national, city or municipal, and local levels. National level federations generally focus on advocacy for their member organizations and political lobbying. They are usually aligned with several city, municipal, or local level federations. Several national federations exist. Among the more successful has been the Urban Land Reform Task Force (ULR-TF). While the organization calls itself a CBO federation, it was originally organized by a group of NGO workers, and much of its leadership and administration is based at ICSI. The ULR-TF's greatest accomplishment has been its successful lobbying effort for UDHA. The organization enlisted 250 community leaders in the lobbying effort, and also obtained support from NGOs based at Ateneo de Manila in an intensive behind-the-scenes campaign, during which these organizations were able to significantly affect the content of the bill. ULR-TF also mobilized hundreds of its members to pack the Congress at a critical point in the deliberations for the bill (Racelis 1998; Karaos et al 1995). ULR-TF also played a central role in efforts to repeal Presidential Decree

772, a Marcos era law making illegal land occupation a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment. It also backed the formation of Atikahin Kilusan Ordinariongtao (AKO), a political party claiming to represent the urban poor that had one of its members elected to the Congress in the party list elections of 1998 and 2001.

The most prominent national democratic federation is the Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Maralita ng Lunsod (KPML). KPML was organized in 1986 as an effort by CBOs aligned with 'rejectionist' national democratic leaders to move into above-ground organizing. This organization operates in 17 areas and claims to represent 332 communities in and around Metro Manila. It is aligned with several local federations, including what remains of Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO). The organization trains leaders of member CBOs in community organizing and leadership. Its community organizers, who are also residents of informal settlements, assist communities that are faced with the threat of demolition in forming organizations and lobbying for a settlement. The organization has played a prominent role in a number of recent cases in which CBOs have successfully blocked an eviction, or negotiated agreements for the relocation of evicted families.

City and municipal level federations exist in most parts of Metro Manila. These organizations generally lobby for CBO participation in local government or to protest local government policies. Many such federations have organized to lobby for the establishment of urban poor affairs offices (UPAOs) in local governments and for CBO participation in them.

Local federations of CBOs generally organize in large agglomerations of informal settlements, in order to deal with a common threat to the people in that area. The most prominent local federations operating today are located in the National Government Center. These organizations will be discussed in the case study section. Numerous local federations exist, including one that represents communities threatened with dislocation by a government effort to clean up the Pasig River.

### *National and Local Government Agencies*

As much of the responsibility for the implementation of community improvement programs has shifted to local governments, national government agencies have increasingly been relegated to a role in setting housing policy, overseeing the implementation of this policy, and financing some programs. Some of the main national government agencies responsible for housing are listed below (Urban Research Consortium 1998):

- *The Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Committee (HUDCC)* is the primary organization responsible for formulating and implementing the government's housing program, and coordinating the efforts of the various agencies that deal with housing.
- *The National Housing Authority (NHA)* is the sole government agency to undertake direct shelter production. Its housing is targeted at the poorest 30 percent of the population. It also provides assistance to local governments in

implementing resettlement, sites and services, and upgrading projects.

- *The National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC)* is the main government home mortgage institution. It provides financing for the CMP.
- *The Home Insurance Guarantee Corporation (HIGC)* provides guarantees, loan insurance, and other incentives for developers to undertake low- and middle-income mass housing. It also registers and regulates 'homeowners associations,' many of which are CBOs in informal settlements that hope to legalize tenure.
- *The Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP)* was created by President Aquino to conduct research and community organizing in informal settlements.

At the level of local government, there has been a great deal of variation in the development of organizational structures for shelter improvement. In some cases urban poor affairs offices (UPAOs) have been established and are actively engaging in developing programs and projects. NGOs and CBOs have in some cases gained a considerable degree of influence in these offices. In other cases UPAOs are nonfunctional, or do not incorporate participation from civil society. Some local governments have yet to form UPAOs and have largely ignored their mandated responsibilities under UDHA. Local governments also differ significantly in the extent of their funding commitment to housing delivery. These differences in local government reactions to their new roles are dealt with in greater detail in the case studies of five communities presented in the next section.

### **CBOs and the State in the Case Study Communities**

The remainder of this chapter will examine the five case study CBOs. It will contrast the stark differences in state-CBO relations in the areas under study, and attempt to identify the factors that led to these differences. Specifically, I argue that four major factors in local political economies strongly influence the degree to which CBOs and NGOs are able to influence local governments.

The first factor is the intensity of land development pressures in the locality. Vacant land is scarce in many parts of Metro Manila, and in many places an influx of investment that has driven up land prices, encouraging speculators to acquire what land is available. In such contexts, the political and economic costs to local governments of enhancing access to land for the poor and encouraging their political participation are great. Local governments therefore often discourage participation by urban poor groups. CBOs are likely to have more influence where land is less expensive, where land ownership is in conflict, or where much of the vacant land is publicly owned (unless this land is needed for important public projects). This is most likely to be on the urban fringe.

The second factor is the local government's access to sources of revenue, and specifically business and property taxes. The amount of investment coming into

localities has a direct bearing on property values and business revenues and therefore on local government revenue. Local governments that lack financial resources, e.g. where there are limitations in revenue-generating capacity due to a lack of investment, will be less able to establish programs to legalize and improve informal settlements. This would seem to contradict the argument above that local governments in areas with high land values are less likely to encourage participation. Indeed, high land values have a contradictory impact on state-community relations, as will be apparent in the case studies.

The third factor is the nature of the local economic base and the relationship between powerful economic actors and local government. Where local officials have a strong vested interest in local economic development, either because of their direct involvement in the local economy or because of ties to local economic interests, they will be less likely to be responsive to the interests of residents of informal settlements. Specifically, in many cities political leaders come from families that have a significant stake in local real estate markets or that own local businesses.

The final factor is the strength of community organizing in the locality. This is affected by a number of factors, including the presence of NGOs, the history of community organizing, and past relations between communities and local governments.

### *Daang Hari (Municipality of Navotas)*

The first case study is of Nagkakaisa ng Mamamayanan Maralitang sa Daang Hari (NMMMD), a CBO in the municipality of Navotas. Navotas is something of a relic in Metro Manila. While other cities have undergone dramatic economic, demographic, social, and political change as a result of urbanization related to industrial and commercial investment, Navotas' economy remained dependent throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century on fishing and related industries, such as canning, shipping, and the production of fish sauce (a staple in the Philippine diet). The continued importance of these industries has strongly affected politics in the municipality, which is dominated by a handful of families that own the major fishing, shipping, canning, food processing, and shipbuilding companies. Relations between this political and economic elite and informal communities have traditionally been marked by patronage politics. However, increased developmental pressures in recent years have led to a deterioration of state-community relations, as the municipal government has backed a major development that would displace a large number of informal settlers. In addition, radical community organizers have organized many of the municipality's poor communities. As a result, CBOs have become increasingly assertive in dealings with local government.

The municipality lies on a narrow strip of land on Manila Bay, and is bordered to the south and west respectively by the heavily urbanized cities of Manila and Caloocan. It is estimated that 70 percent of Navotas residents work either in fishing or related industries, or in services that support these industries (TWSC 1988). As Metro Manila has grown, so has the market for fish and fish products, and job opportunities in the fishing industry have acted as a magnet for a steady stream of

migrants from rural areas, mostly from the Visayan islands in the central part of the country. As most of the land in the municipality was developed by the middle of the century, many of these migrants have settled in informal settlements built on stilts along Manila Bay. The presence of these densely populated settlements gives the city an astounding population density of more than 88,000 people per square kilometer, or about six times the Metro Manila average (NSO 2003). The total population of the municipality is 230,403.

Because of the continued importance of fishing in the municipality's economy, the composition of the local elite has been fairly stable, and as a result there has been intergenerational political competition among elite families. In the mayoral elections of 1988, the first after Marcos' rule, all three candidates were sons of former mayors of Navotas (TWSC 1988). The eventual victor in the contest, Felipe del Rosario Jr., came from a prominent family that grew wealthy from the fishing industry and that has been influential in local politics since the early part of the century. He was also the director of the Inter-Island Deep Sea Fishing Association of the Philippines, a group representing major fishing magnates in the municipality, who were allegedly instrumental in financing his campaign. In the 1998 elections, del Rosario had reached his term limit, and his wife ran for mayor and was initially declared the winner. However, allegations of fraud in the elections eventually resulted in her losing her position to "Efren Bautista", a local entrepreneur who had made a fortune in dry docking, shipping and the restaurant business (TWSC 1988).

NMMD represents one of the bayside communities in the barangay of Daang Hari. The community is known to residents as Tabing Dagat Daang Hari (Daang Hari Shore), but will be referred to here as Daang Hari for the sake of brevity. The area was first settled in the early 1960s, when migrants from the Visayan island arrived in Navotas to take up jobs in the local fishing industry. As the population grew, the settlement expanded out onto the bay, and a network of wooden pathways was built incrementally by the residents to link the houses to each other and to the shore. Today, the area consists of approximately 180 houses built primarily of wood and corrugated iron. Houses are generally quite small, consisting of between one and three rooms that must accommodate one or more families.

NMMD has operated in the area since 1982 and is a member of a municipality-wide CBO federation, *Alyansa at Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Navotas (ALPASAN)*, and KPML, a national democratic CBO federation. Since its formation, NMMD has undertaken basic community improvement projects, cooperated with NGOs in implementing livelihood and community improvement programs in the area, and coordinated with other CBOs in Navotas to deal with the local government. NMMD officers take credit for persuading the local government to extend a water pipe to the entrance to the community in 1982. The pipe is considered the property of NMMD, which sells 10-liter containers to residents for the affordable price of one peso. Much of the money from the sale of the water goes to the maintenance of the pathways, which are a constant source of concern. Injuries have resulted from people falling through the rotting planks, and infants have occasionally fallen into the bay and drowned. However, the CBO has been unable to address other major

problems. The community has no access to sewage or sanitation systems. Most residents resort to throwing their waste into the water, and toilet facilities consist of holes cut into the bottom of the houses. The resulting pollution is a serious health concern, as the water beneath the community is a place for recreational swimming, particularly for children, and also a source of fish to supplement the diet of the residents. Other concerns include typhoons, which frequently pass through Metro Manila and often destroy several houses in the community, and the possibility of fire. Because the housing materials are extremely combustible, and there are only two narrow exits in this community of about 1000 people, a major fire would have devastating consequences.



**Figure 3.1: Tabing Dagat Daang Hari**

(Photo: Author)

Perhaps the most pressing issue, however, is the threat of eviction. Since the 1960s the local government has talked of creating a landfill on the bay, on which it would develop commercial and office space to meet demand from neighboring Manila and Calocan, both of which are built out. Recently, the local government has pursued this idea more actively and has worked with Henry Sy, a prominent real estate developer and owner of a chain of department stores, to develop a 48 billion peso (\$1.26 billion) proposal for such a project. While the environmental impact assessment for the project found that there would be no significant social impact, ALPASAN believes the project will likely displace many of the 26,000 families that

it estimates reside along the Bay (Gaia South Incorporated 1996). Residents along the bay were unaware of the proposed project until a British student doing dissertation research in the area came across the environmental impact assessment and brought it to ALPASAN's attention. Since then, consultation between the communities and local government on the project has been minimal, although ALPASAN has made considerable effort to establish a dialogue.

This lack of consultation reflects a general lack of local government initiative to incorporate civil society participation in government. Mayoral candidates undertake a spate of minor improvement projects and vote buying in informal settlements in election years, but no long-term mechanisms for participation exist. There is no urban poor affairs office in the municipality, and civil society representation on the local development council is dominated by elite organizations. This situation is partially attributable to the fact that Navotas has the second lowest revenue collection for a local government in Metro Manila, thereby restricting its ability to plan for alternative housing solutions for the urban poor. This low revenue is due to the fact that fishing is classified as an agricultural activity, and is therefore exempt from taxation.

As conditions in the shoreline communities have deteriorated due to crowding, and the threat of eviction has increased, community organizers and political activists have capitalized on the increasing disgruntlement by organizing many of the shoreline communities. During the Marcos era, Navotas communities were strongly influenced by the national democratic movement, and organizers from the CPP made significant headway in local communities. Today, most CBOs remain affiliated with the national democratic movement. There are two main reasons for the influence of national democratic organizations. First, the lack of channels for community participation in government, and the lack of community improvement programs, has fostered cynicism in the communities regarding the potential for state-community cooperation. Second, the communities have been influenced by the history of labor organizing amongst employees of the large fishing and shipbuilding companies. Many of these workers are residents of informal communities, and carry the organizing skills and political ideologies of their unions back to the communities.

In sum, CBOs exercise very little political influence in Navotas local government. Resource constraints on local government have limited their interaction with informal communities, and the limited availability of land in the municipality has created an obstacle to possibilities for in-city relocation. In addition, the densely populated neighboring cities of Caloocan and Manila have generated demand for office and commercial space, creating pressures for the proposed reclamation project. In exercising control over urban development, local politicians have attempted to maintain their clientelist relationship with informal settlers.

*Rosas-Everlasting (Quezon City)*

State-community relations in Quezon City are considerably more cooperative than in Navotas. Informal settlements are relatively well organized and have powerful allies in local universities and the city's large NGO community. Channels for NGO and CBO consultation with government exist in the local development councils, as well as a number of other committees. The city government operates an active urban poor affairs office that is the most prolific originator of Community Mortgage Program loans in the city and has conducted outreach efforts in many communities in an attempt to initiate improvement programs. Nevertheless, the impact of these programs has been limited due to lack of adequate funding—by the late 1990s the CMP projects had benefited less than 4000 households, or about 2.5 percent of the city's informal settlers. Thus, while CBOs have venues for dialogue with local government, their influence has yet to extend to the budgeting process, and their impact has thus been limited.

Several factors have contributed to the relatively benign response of Quezon City government to the situation of informal settlers. First, considerable vacant land exists in the city, which occupies approximately one-quarter of Metro Manila's land area, making it by far the largest city in the metro area. While Quezon City also has the largest population among Metro Manila cities, with about 2 million people, much of its land is on the urban fringe and remains vacant. It is therefore economically and politically feasible for the local government to relocate at least some informal settlers within the city. Many of the CMP projects organized by the city government have involved communities relocating to these fringe areas.

The second factor is the presence of a large number of very active NGOs and CBO federations in the city. Quezon City is the educational center of the Philippines, containing some of its most prestigious universities, including the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University. The universities have long been hotbeds of political activity, and activist academics have established a number of NGOs and CBO federations. These organizations have been critical in providing Quezon City CBOs with funding, technical assistance, and community organizing. In addition, the city was declared the capital of the Philippines in 1948, and since that time a number of government offices, including the Congress, the Supreme Court, the National Housing Authority and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Committee, have relocated there. The existence of these offices has made the city a center of political activity and NGO activism.

The third factor affecting state-CBO relations is the existence of a large population of informal settlers, often in large agglomerations. The existence of vacant land on the urban fringe, and the growth of unskilled jobs in the city's burgeoning economy, have attracted informal settlers. Consequently more than half the city's population, or over one million people, reside in such settlements. Agglomerations have developed along major roads on the urban fringe, which have been built as part of

government plans for urban expansion. Informal settlers are therefore an important block of votes, and this has assured that their views are taken seriously by at least some members of the city council, as well as by members of Congress. The mayor is also careful to cultivate a pro-poor image.

The largest agglomeration of informal settlements is in the National Government Center (NGC), a block of land in northeastern Quezon City that was set aside in the 1960s as the future center of government. Government plans called for the relocation of 27 government offices to the NGC in a planned development to include parks and monuments (Berner 1997). These plans were delayed due to lack of funding, and gradually informal settlers began to fill the area. In the late 1970s, COPE began to organize the communities in the NGC to resist evictions and to negotiate for legalization of tenure. This led to the formation of SAMA-SAMA, which achieved its greatest accomplishment in 1986 when, in the weeks before the presidential election, it agreed to support Corazon Aquino's candidacy in exchange for her pledge to legalize the tenure of the area's residents. When Aquino became president, she granted 150 hectares in the western half of NGC for a housing project to accommodate the 18,000 families residing in the NGC at the time.

The National Government Center Housing Project (NGCHP) was established by President Aquino in 1988 to create policies for the planned redevelopment. SAMA-SAMA was provided equal representation with government agencies on the committee that governs the NGCHP. A framework plan for the project was developed, but the project stalled due to delays in government financing. Although the Aquino agreement specified that only those residing in the area before the date the law was signed were eligible beneficiaries, the population grew rapidly as word of the agreement spread. The population of the informal settlements in the NGC eventually rose to an estimated at 60,000 families, or about 300,000 people, far more than could be accommodated on the 150 hectares provided by the Aquino declaration.

The 1990s saw a decline in SAMA-SAMA's role in the NGC. Newly arrived families did not feel as much allegiance to SAMA-SAMA, as they are not considered qualified beneficiaries under the Aquino agreement. In addition, SAMA-SAMA's confrontational style, born of the Alinsky-style organizing of COPE, has alienated some NGOs and community leaders working in the area. The subsequent division among CBOs and NGOs in the area has provided government agencies with an opportunity to marginalize the group. By the late 1990s two competing federations, SANAPA and KAMPI, had begun to organize in the area. Under the Ramos administration, the government replaced SAMA-SAMA with SANAPA as the representative of communities on the NGCHP committee. In 1997, President Ramos signed a Presidential Declaration stating that the informal settlers in the part of the NGC not covered by the Aquino declaration would also be allowed to legalize their tenure. However, the declaration did not detail exactly how this would occur, and its outcome remains unclear.



**Figure 3.2: A Roadside Market, National Government Center, Quezon City**  
(Photo: Author)

Rosas-Everlasting is a community of approximately 300 families located in Barangay Batasan Hills, in the eastern part of the NGC (the area not covered by the Aquino declaration). It gets its name from two broad streets that border the area. The original inhabitants came to the area in the mid-1980s, when the area was still largely rural, and many still occupy spacious plots with substantial houses and gardens. In the past several years, however, the population has grown rapidly as newcomers have built small houses in alleys between the main streets.

COPE had a strong influence on the formation of the first CBO in the area, *Kabalikat*, which was the most active organization in Rosas-Everlasting between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s. *Kabalikat* successfully lobbied for barangay and city government assistance in bringing legal electricity connections to the area, paving the main roads, and installing a water pump. In addition, some in the *Kabalikat* leadership have been active in SAMA-SAMA's lobbying efforts for the implementation of the NGCHP. However, SANAPA has recently made considerable organizing inroads in the area, and three SANAPA chapters currently operate in the community. SANAPA played a key role in channeling government assistance into a part of the community that was leveled by fire in May of 1999.

In sum, the presence of a strong community organizing infrastructure, the relative openness of local government officials to CBO participation, and the political

influence exerted by informal settlers have contributed to the relative strength of CBOs in the NGC, including the organizations in Rosas-Everlasting, in dealing with local and national government officials. This has been reflected in the improvement projects CBOs have been able to undertake, and the relative feelings of tenure security of residents.

*Dona Josefa Estates Homeowners Association and NahVcom (Pasay City)*

Pasay, with a population of 408,610, is a densely developed, centrally located city immediately south of Manila. During the American colonial period the city emerged as a prominent entertainment district, and the post-independence era saw the rapid development of hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, and bars in the city. Until recently Pasay politics had for some time been dominated by Pablo Cuneta, the former proprietor of a local lumber company. After becoming mayor in 1956, he built a business empire based on real estate, property development, and the entertainment industry. Cuneta was mayor of Pasay for all but six years between 1956 and 1998. At the end of the Marcos era, however, Cuneta found his political legitimacy weakened by his association with the Marcos dictatorship. In addition, as he became increasingly aged and infirm towards the end of his rule, his hold on the reins of power began to slip. This culminated in a crisis in the late 1990s during which he was simply unable to rule due to illness. City government ground to a halt, garbage went uncollected, and civil servants went without pay. He was forced to retire from politics in 1998 at the age of 87. In the elections of that year, his relatives and protégés were roundly defeated in contests for local and national office. These included a son who ran for vice-mayor and a daughter who ran for Congress. The Cuneta hold on power had been broken.

The fortunes of the local housing movement were in inverse relationship to the fortunes of the Cuneta administration. During Cuneta's rule, the number of informal settlers grew significantly. In 1999, the city government estimated that 21,915 families lived in informal settlements, although local NGOs considered the number to be much higher (Pasay City 1999). The fact that settlements in Pasay tended to be fairly small, and to be scattered throughout the city, made organizing on a large scale difficult. In addition, Cuneta was constantly looking to expand his real estate holdings, and a spate of property acquisitions by companies owned by Cuneta led to several major evictions in the early 1980s. He was thus strongly opposed to the formation of strong CBOs that could challenge these actions. In the late 1970s communities in Pasay began to organize around the issue of a proposed extension of EDSA, a major ring road, through areas of Pasay that were occupied by several informal settlements. Cuneta backed the extension, which increased the accessibility of many of his properties (some claim that he had the extension diverted to avoid the demolition of his properties). City government proved quite hostile to the organizations that formed to oppose the extension.

The Pasay housing movement was galvanized by the abduction, torture, and slaying of a prominent community leader in 1988. In that year, a group of 18

local CBOs founded a federation, Ugnayan ng mga Maralitang Samahan sa Pasay (UMASAPA), or Alliance of Urban Poor Organizations of Pasay, with the assistance of the Institute for Social Order (ISO), an NGO at Ateneo de Manila University, and the PCUP. The organization has since expanded to 21 communities that have a combined population of about 3,100 families. UMASAPA has been active in organizing several member communities to undertake improvement projects, and several have legalized land tenure through the CMP. It was also among the early members of the ULR-TF, and many member CBOs sent representatives to lobby congress at a crucial point in the deliberations on the UDHA. Since the end of the Cuneta era, UMASAPA has also made significant progress in negotiating a role for CBOs in local government. The organization successfully backed the formation of an Urban Poor Affairs office in the city government, which was formally recognized in 1999 and incorporated significant input from UMASAPA.

Dona Josefa Estates and Viloso Compound are adjacent communities in the Tramo district, a residential area of Pasay. Both have recently undertaken a CMP project, and therefore hold legal title to the land they occupy. In preparation for the CMP project, the two communities developed a reblocking plan and now consist exclusively of concrete houses with paved footpaths, electricity, and plumbing. Since legalizing, they have been able to enlist considerable help from local government agencies to install legal electricity connections and to do minor improvements, such as installing basketball hoops and building a fence along the canal bordering the community.

Two factors have been critical to the recent successes of UMASAPA and its member organizations. The first is the assistance from NGOs and the PCUP, which have played a particularly important role in providing community organizing ideas and leadership training. The second major factor is simply Cuneta's decline and the consequent change in the local political atmosphere.

### *Kapit Bisig (Makati City)*

As noted in the previous chapter, Makati has developed in recent decades as the central business district (CBD) of Metro Manila. Although the city's name elicits images of office buildings, malls, and gated subdivisions, approximately 44 percent of the population lives below the poverty line (Gloria 1995). Makati is, in fact, composed of three distinct parts. The first is the CBD, which contains the major office and commercial establishments, and high-income residential areas. This area is largely privately managed, and handles its own security, garbage collection, and planning. The second area consists of the 17 barangay that surround the business district, which are generally composed of lower and middle-income residential areas. Finally, there is Fort Bonifacio, an expanse of land to the northwest of the CBD; formerly a military barracks, it now contains many informal settlements. Part of the Fort that is in the neighboring city of Taguig has recently been redeveloped as an integrated urban megaproject, Fort Bonifacio Global City.

The presence of a large low-income population in the city has contributed to the populist nature of local politics. Local politicians have undertaken a number of initiatives to foster a political base in low-income communities, utilizing the city government's considerable revenue generating capacity to populist political ends. For example, under a plan developed by Marcos-era mayor Nestorio Yabut, and expanded under recent administrations, low-income Makati residents are given free access to medical treatment at the Makati Medical Center, one of the premier hospitals in the country (Gloria 1995). The city also has an exceptionally well-financed school system. However, due to the high value of land in the city, and the consequent opportunities for increased revenue generation, as well as graft, from land transactions and development, local government has maintained a strong grip on decision-making in local development.

Since the end of the Marcos era Makati politics have been dominated by Jejomar Binay, a man of humble origins who was born in Makati and went on to become a prominent human rights lawyer and anti-Marcos activist. Binay was chosen by President Corazon Aquino in 1986 to replace Yabut, a Marcos loyalist, as an interim 'officer-in-charge' (OIC) until the elections of 1988. In an effort to develop his own power-base in preparation for the 1988 elections, Binay embarked on a spate of visible, politically popular projects, such as the building or upgrading of schools, sports facilities, and roads. Binay also attempted to develop direct links with low-income communities, making it a point to personally attend funerals and provide cash gifts to the relatives of the deceased. Through such tactics, Binay was able to serve three terms, and to have his wife elected mayor in 1998, when he was forced to step aside after having reached the constitutional term limit. He was elected for a fourth term once eligible again in 2002. In the process, however, Binay has gained a reputation for having adopted the strong-arm methods of previous Makati administrations as a means to maintain his political hegemony. The 1998 elections in particular were marked by violence and allegations of fraud from Binay's opponents.

While Makati mayors have courted the political support of the poor, they have also been wary of the potential threat CBOs could pose to development initiatives in the city. As such, city government has discouraged community organizing and asserted influence in communities through the barangay level government. There is minimal consultation between the city government and the urban poor, and there is no urban poor affairs office. One city official openly acknowledged in an interview for this research that city hall usually only directly interacted with informal settlements when it planned to evict them. As a result of this repressive atmosphere, community organizing has been quite limited in Makati. There are no major citywide CBO federations or NGOs organizing urban poor communities.

Kapit Bisig (Linking Arms) represents Zobel Street, a community of approximately 50 families located adjacent to Makati City Hall. The community consists of a row of houses built along a strip of land (intended to be a public road), bordered by the Pasig River to the north, a two-lane road to the South, a pumping station to the west, and a small candy factory to the east. The community was first settled in the late 1940s. Houses are mostly of concrete, with indoor plumbing and running water.

The community organization was formed in 1986 by a group of youth in the area. The organization has never received assistance from an NGO or CBO federation. It has never participated in any government programs, although it was able in the late 1980s to petition the local government to pave the road leading into the community. Because they have been there for some time, residents generally have a sense of security about their tenure. However, several households along the river have recently been informed that they will be relocated as a result of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Program, a government plan to clean up the polluted river that runs through the heart of the city. In addition, a rumor in the community has held that the neighboring candy factory is planning to use the plot occupied by the community as an access road for trucks entering and leaving the factory. For this reason, residents have become increasingly concerned about their future. In the prevailing political atmosphere in Makati, however, residents feel there is little they can do to improve the community's tenure situation.

## **Conclusion**

The preceding case studies indicate that the recent decentralization in the Philippines has heralded neither a transformation from a top-down to a bottom-up model of planning, nor a complete return to the pre-Marcos patterns of local politics ruled by 'guns, goons and gold.' Decentralization has had both negative and positive impacts on CBO and NGO efforts to exercise influence. On the positive side, the recent reforms have created a basis upon which organizations of civil society can legally stake a claim to representation in decision-making. They have, in some cases, been able to gain a place in local development councils, urban poor affairs offices, and other entities. While NGO and CBO representatives often find that their influence on these bodies is quite limited, many state that they have learned much about political processes from the experience, and that they have made valuable contacts with powerful people. Thus they feel that such participation is a first step towards gaining a voice in government and that their representation gives them some leverage in negotiations with government and other actors.

On the negative side, decentralization has resulted in the fragmentation of politics in Metro Manila. Many CBOs, particularly those located in cities and municipalities that are experiencing intense developmental pressure, find themselves utterly excluded from access to decision-making. Furthermore, even in those localities where local government is relatively receptive to CBO participation, organizations of civil society have not been able to have a significant impact on the distribution of local government resources. In fact, local governments are unlikely to undertake major initiatives to house informal settlers in such a highly decentralized system, as this would simply attract additional urban poor families to the locality, thus increasing the burden on the local government. Decentralization thus seemingly precludes the development of large-scale, long-term initiatives to develop housing or allocate land for the urban poor. While the CMP has provided a solution for some communities,

it is inherently limited by the fact that, in many communities, land prices are simply too high to make such programs affordable. Only a small percentage of informal settlers have benefited from such projects.

The next step in understanding when and why civil society participation does experience relative success in engaging political processes is to examine the circumstances under which community-based collective action does and does not occur, and when and why it is relatively effective in achieving goals set out by CBOs. The next two chapters undertake such an analysis, focusing on the influence of factors internal to communities, including social networks among residents and CBO-community relations, and those external to communities, specifically the local political economy and local state-community relations.

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## Chapter 4

# Building Communities: Social Capital and Participation in CBOS

To the visitor, Metro Manila seems to offer little in the way of pleasant, aesthetically pleasing public space. Outside of the posh central business district of Makati and a handful of other urban megaproject developments, major roads are permanently choked with traffic, and sidewalks are a rarity, so that pedestrians must negotiate an obstacle course of potholes, power poles, and open sewers in a haze of fumes. Garbage collects along roadsides, and wealthy subdivisions hide themselves behind whitewashed walls. The only respite, it seems, is the air-conditioned malls, where one is allowed to stroll or sit in a relatively clean and pleasant environment. Away from the main roads and the central areas of the city, however, a very different reality comes to light. In the back streets and residential areas, streets are cleaner, houses are decorated with potted plants, and greater value is placed on what common space exists. This simple fact demonstrates the importance of the local space for many Metro Manila residents. Particularly in poor communities, where government services are often not available, the local space is the center of a range of economic, social, and cultural activity. A fair amount of collective effort is therefore expended in making it livable.

This chapter examines the issue of community participation in shelter improvement and environmental management within the case study settlements. Following a study by Berner (1997), it argues that participation in community-based collective action occurs more frequently where people develop a sense of collective identity around local space. Specifically, it argues that participation is closely related to the thickness of social ties within localities. Furthermore, it argues that the development of such social ties is a function of a variety of factors, including the demographic makeup of the community, its historical formation, its history of collective action, and how residents perceive their political environment. Following a brief discussion of some theoretical perspectives on participation in informal settlements, the chapter discusses the historical formation and socioeconomic characteristics of the case study communities. It concludes with findings drawn from an analysis of survey data of households, looking specifically at the relationship between characteristics of households, social relations within the community, and household participation in collective activities.

## **Theories of Community Participation in Informal Settlements**

There has been a backlash against simplistic assumptions underlying the concept of community participation in much of the literature on informal settlements. A number of studies have questioned the inherent capacity of informal settlers to engage in collective action, and the potential benefits of participation. Marsden and Moser (1990), for example, proclaim that they are “tired of hearing accounts of failure that so often accompany the work of those who advocate participatory strategies, without adequate documentation of participatory processes in...housing projects, or sufficient analysis as to the underlying reasons why in reality so many have failed in practice.” They point out that the rhetoric of participation often goes hand in hand with calls for cost recovery and warn that participation may often simply be a justification for cutting subsidies for community improvement. Another study in the volume emphasizes the potential for co-optation of CBOs by political actors (Nientied et al 1990). This concern is echoed by Desai (1995), who goes a step further and argues that participation is a government construct imposed upon the poor and that “slum dwellers neither have much idea about policies nor much enthusiasm for ‘participation’.” In addition, some studies have concluded that participation in CBOs is usually limited to certain groups within communities and may in fact be detrimental to some groups who are excluded, such as renters, ethnic minorities, women, and the very poor (Gilbert and Ward 1985; Desai 1995; Berner 1997; Beard 2003).

In order to understand the meaning and potential of participation in urban community improvement, it is first necessary to make the simple distinction between two quite different modes of local collective action. The first mode involves government agencies or NGOs establishing participatory mechanisms for the purpose of implementing an improvement program. Such mechanisms may include the appointment of leaders, the establishment of committees, or simply holding meetings in which community residents can give feedback on the proposed project. The second mode results from local impetus and is not directly mandated by the state or other outside actors. Faced by government neglect, residents of informal settlements undertake community-based collective action as a means to protect themselves from outside threats, and to develop basic infrastructure and services or persuade government or NGOs to do so. Such participation, while not universal, is a common feature in informal settlements throughout the world and reflects the lack of integration of settlements into mainstream legal and economic systems. This more ‘grassroots’ form of participation may occur independently or may be encouraged by community organizers employed by NGOs.

While issues of representativeness and accountability are apparent in both types of collective action, many of the critiques cited above focus on the case of participation in government-sponsored community improvement projects. Politicians and government agencies often pay little attention to who is represented in such processes, and participation is often defined very narrowly as providing labor, finances, and limited input in project design. The second form of collective action is

less well understood, but is perhaps more important to the everyday functioning of many communities and the formation of social ties that build capacity for collective action in other arenas. Such basic activities as organizing community patrols or fire watches, or repairing roads, can form a basis in trust, community leadership, and local identity that leads to the institutionalization of such collective action in a CBO. The next two chapters largely focus on this locally initiated form of participation, and examine the question of when and why it emerges.

There are two perspectives on the issue of when and why people participate in sustained community-based collective action, particularly of the kind that attempts to address the fundamental issue of land tenure. The first emphasizes the role of social class as a source of the political identity for informal settlers. Drawing inspiration from the literature on social movements, it sees participation as inspired by informal settlers' recognition of their subordinate socioeconomic status (Leontidou 1985; Perlman 1976). In this view, sustained collective action is most likely to occur where community residents have developed a political consciousness around issues of land tenure and environmental degradation and begin to assert influence in dealing with the state and political actors. The second perspective argues that it is social capital—the networks of reciprocity and social trust that develop within communities—that makes collective action possible. Berner (1997), for example, argues that a sense of common identity and common cause arises where residents develop a belonging to place.

The necessary basis for the 'sense of belonging to the city' is a sense of belonging to a place, namely the locality. As the poor are effectively excluded from direct participation in politics and urban decision-making....they have to organize themselves to achieve some bargaining power. (Thus) locally based associations can be stable, durable, and efficient without seeing themselves as part of an anti-capitalist movement.

Each of these arguments has some merit. In order for community residents to engage in collective action, there must exist some level of trust that other residents will also take up some of the burden and share the benefits fairly. This must be based on some common identity rooted in locality. At the same time, political awareness is likely to increase the incentive of community residents to engage in collective action.

I believe that greater clarity is brought to the discussion if we understand that there are two distinct sets of factors that influence collective action. The first set of factors includes those internal to the community, which influence the degree of social trust and community cohesion as well as the availability of social surplus to undertake collective action. These factors include the length of time people have lived in the community, the thickness of social relations, shared ethnic or linguistic identities, and shared concern over local issues. In addition, factors related to the historical development of the locality and the local environment may also influence this shared sense of place. Second, there are factors external to the community, specifically the socioeconomic and political context in which collective action occurs. The presence of powerful political actors with an interest in local land markets influences

state-community relations. This in turn influences whether residents perceive that the political system is relatively hostile or benevolent with respect to community interests, and consequently the political orientations and the activism of residents. Where local political systems are relatively open to political participation by CBOs, we might expect that residents are likely to perceive greater potential to have an impact on programs and policies and this is likely to encourage participation. Where local governments are hostile to CBO participation, two responses might be expected—residents might be frustrated from engaging in collective action or they might be radicalized, and therefore inclined to engage in political protest. Internal and external factors do not, of course, operate in isolation from each other. The nature of social relations within communities affects how residents perceive the external environment, and the external environment shapes social relations within communities.

The next two chapters will discuss the formation of political identities in the five case study settlements, drawing primarily on data from the sample survey of households in these settlements that was conducted as part of the research for this book. This chapter will focus primarily on the impacts on participation of factors internal to communities, while chapter six will examine the political identities of community residents, and how these relate to participation. For the purposes of the current discussion, I argue, following Berner (1997), that residents of informal settlements will be more likely to participate in community-based collective action if they have a sense of belonging to locality and common identity with other community residents. Several conditions lead to the formation of a common identity, including the length of time the community has been settled, the demographic character of informal settlers, the size of the community, and the community's relations with external actors. The analysis of the case studies will begin with a general description of the formation of the communities. I will then examine the formation of social ties in the communities, focusing specifically on the tradition of godparenthood, a form of fictive kinship found in Catholic cultures. Finally, I will discuss how the formation of social ties in the communities relates to participation.

### **Methodology of the Household Survey**

The sample survey of household heads in the five communities was designed to develop a profile of the physical and social characteristics of the communities, and to provide an empirical basis for evaluating the determinants of community participation, specifically looking at the role of social ties in the communities and political views of residents on participation. For the latter purpose, the survey contained questions regarding residents' participation in various types of collective activities, the extent of residents' fictive kinship relations in the community, and their opinions of political leaders at the national, city or municipal, and barangay levels.

A survey of households was chosen because interviewing at the household level yields important information about household size and income that provides insights into the economics of informal settlements. In addition, since it cannot be expected that all household occupants will participate in CBOs, measuring participation by households is the most effective way to measure the extent of community organizing. The survey was carried out face-to-face in Tagalog by three research assistants. Households were chosen using a stratified sampling method. We acquired or drew a map of each community, drew a path passing every house on the map, then chose every third, fourth or fifth household along the path depending on the size of the community. Interviewers asked to speak to either the male or female head of household, although in some cases where the head of household was not available other respondents were chosen based on their knowledge of household affairs and involvement in collective activities.

We intended to survey approximately 60 household heads in each community except for Viloso Compound and Zobel Street, where we surveyed all houses. In all, we completed between 39 and 62 surveys for each community, for a total of 276 surveys. In 32 cases, we dropped households from the sample because we did not find the household head after three separate visits. Only three people refused to be interviewed.

### **Profile of the Case Study Communities**

As is the case in other cities in developing countries, there is considerable diversity among informal settlements in Metro Manila. Settlements differ in who owns the land they occupy, the method in which land was allocated, their environmental conditions, and other factors. Demographically, they differ in their socioeconomic and ethnic composition, and the place of origin of residents. Table 4.1 summarizes some of these differences in the case study communities, and the following discussion will analyze their impact on social relations and political identities.

#### *Rosas-Everlasting*

Like many communities in the National Government Center (NGC), Rosas-Everlasting has been strongly influenced by the organizing efforts of SAMA-SAMA and SANAPA, the two major CBO federations in the area. As noted in the previous chapter, CBOs in the area have gained considerable support from local government. However, the local CBOs, including Kabalikat (which is affiliated with SAMA-SAMA), and three SANAPA chapters, enjoy little support and recognition among residents, and participation in community affairs is low relative to the other communities under study. This section will argue that several factors have inhibited the formation of social ties, and consequently the propensity for collective action among residents. These include the socioeconomic makeup of residents, the fact

that the area developed relatively recently, and conflicts of interest between some residents.

**Table 4.1: Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of residents of the five communities**

Name of Community	Average number of years in community	Average monthly Income (pesos)*	Median education	Percent Tagalog speakers**	Percent renters
Rosas-Everlasting (n=59)	7.7	11,030	High School	25.4	28.8
Dona Josefa Estates (n=60)	30.2	11,893	High School (Unfinished)	65	6.7
Daang Hari (n=62)	12	6,954	Elementary School	43.5	30.6
Viloso Compound (n=56)	17	11,083	High School (unfinished)	37.5	7.1
Zobel Street (n=39)	22	9987	High School	76.9	17.9
Average (n=276)	17.5	10,129	High School (unfinished)	47.7	18.4

Source: Sample survey

\*The exchange rate at the time the survey was conducted was approximately 43 pesos to the US dollar.

\*\*Tagalog is the national language of the Philippines and the language spoken in Metro Manila. Non-Tagalog speakers are therefore highly likely to be recent migrants from provincial areas.

Rosas-Everlasting occupies an urban fringe area that has experienced rapid population growth in the last twenty years. The early settlers of the area were lower-middle income people, many of them civil servants, who relocated to the area from densely settled inner-city informal settlements or apartments in order to improve their quality of life. Many of the older residents relate that, in the mid-1980s a rumor went around that President Marcos was allowing people to settle in the area. At the time, the area was still largely rural in character, and many were lured by the prospect of owning their own homes on relatively spacious lots. The land was still privately owned at the time, and these early residents had to pay a fee to the owner of the property to be allowed to stay. This payment did not, however, give them permanent rights to the land. Later, as in other parts of the NGC, Rosas-Everlasting experienced a large influx of new residents. Thus the median length of tenure of residents is the lowest among the five communities under study, at under eight years.

Two aspects of Rosas-Everlasting's development have affected the community's socioeconomic and ethnic makeup and the formation of social ties. The first is the fact that many of the residents are what Turner (1976) has referred to as 'consolidators'—households that have lived in the city for some time and are upwardly mobile. Thus, even though 97 percent of Rosas-Everlasting residents were born outside Metro Manila, three-quarters report having moved to the community from elsewhere in Metro Manila. Only 56 percent of the respondents in the other communities reported having moved to their communities from elsewhere in Metro Manila. Accordingly,

residents of the area have followed the classic pattern of integration into urban life, first moving to the city, then gradually working their way to a better position in life and moving to more spacious housing on the urban fringe. The relatively upwardly mobile composition of residents is indicated by the relatively high median level of education and the average income. The fact that residents have lived in other parts of the city means that they are likely to have social ties outside the community. A possible result is that they are less likely to feel a sense of common cause with other residents than in other settlements.

The second aspect is the prevalence of new residents, which inhibits collective action in Rosas-Everlasting for two reasons. First, newer arrivals have not yet had time to form relationships with other residents. Second, there is a conflict of interest between newer and older residents. This conflict arises from President Aquino's proclamation of 1986 setting aside part of the National Government Center for a housing project for informal settlers. According to the proclamation, only residents who settled before the date of the proclamation could be considered beneficiaries of the project. This date was subsequently moved back to 1992, the date of the passage of the UDHA. Consequently, many older residents view new residents as an obstacle to the implementation of the project, and newer residents tend to be suspicious of the organizing efforts of older residents. This has made it very difficult for a CBO to unify the community or define collective goals.

#### *Dona Josefa Estates and Viloso Compound*

As noted in the previous chapter, Dona Josefa Estates and Viloso Compound are located on contiguous plots of land in Pasay, a highly urbanized city just south of Manila. These two communities differ from the others under study in that they have begun the process of legalizing their tenure through a Community Mortgage Program (CMP) project. The process of organizing these projects involved intense community organizing and community planning efforts, and a commitment of considerable time and resources by residents who benefited from the project, providing testimony to the degree of cooperation in the two communities. The high degree of participation is partially attributable to the fact that many residents have been in these communities for a long time, and have developed strong social ties in the locality. In Dona Josefa Estates, however, the CMP project has recently experienced serious problems, a phenomenon that I attribute to the lack of strong leadership, and divisions in the community brought about by its physical character.

Pasay urbanized during the middle of the century, and its economy has grown vigorously based primarily on the tourism and entertainment industries. Both communities consist largely of long-term residents who were either born in the area or came at a relatively young age and stayed because of the access to economic opportunities in the thriving Pasay economy. The location of the two communities, in a residential area surrounded by a maze of small streets and along a creek that (before the implementation of the CMP program) often flooded both communities, lowered the value of the land they occupied and therefore protected them from eviction.

Before the implementation of the CMP program, residents of both communities were renting their plots from the landowner. In fact, both communities take their names from the former landowners. The communities are relatively well off in comparison to the other informal settlements under study and have a relatively small number of renters, as former renters became owners under the terms of the CMP project. A rental market is only beginning to reemerge in the community.

Dona Josefa Estates is a particularly old settlement. Some residents have lived in the community for over 60 years, while the median tenure is 33 years. More than a third of the respondents were born in the community, while half were born in the provinces and the remainder elsewhere in Metro Manila. Although the area has been quite stable its physical layout has inhibited the formation of social relations among residents. The community is strung out along a canal, and its shape resembles a high-heeled shoe. Residents differentiate between three distinct parts of the area—the two opposite ends of the ‘shoe’ and the ‘takong’, or heel. Residents of the heel in particular have resisted participation in the CMP project, claiming that they have always had legal tenure and differentiating themselves from the ‘squatters’ in the rest of the community. The three parts of the community formed a single CBO only because they faced a common threat of eviction. A fire gutted the area in 1991, and, out of fear that the landowner would use the situation as a pretext to permanently remove the residents from the area, residents formed a CBO to negotiate to purchase the land.

The earliest occupants of Viloso Compound came about forty years ago, and the median length of stay is 17 years. Only five percent of respondents were born in the community, while 23 percent were born elsewhere in Metro Manila, with the remainder born in the provinces. In contrast to Dona Josefa Estates, the community is located on a very compact piece of land, and there is consequently a much greater sense of community cohesiveness. In the reblocking plan developed for the CMP project, the community was divided into seven lanes, each containing eight to ten houses, in rows of four or five facing onto a common pathway. The arrangement means that residents are constantly interacting with their immediate neighbors as these narrow lanes provide a common space for a handful of households. This seems to have accentuated the already strong social bonds in the neighborhood.

### *Daang Hari*

The CBO in Daang Hari, NMMD, enjoys a great deal of recognition in its community. NMMD regularly undertakes projects, including the maintenance of the pathways and the delivery of water, with financial and labor support from residents. It has also played a key role in mobilizing residents for political protests. Several factors seem to have fostered a strong collective identity in the community, including its ethnic composition, the manner in which the community was settled, and the shared experience of collective action.

As with many other shoreline communities in Navotas, Daang Hari is made up primarily of migrants from rural areas who have come to take advantage of the employment opportunities in the fishing, shipping and food processing industries that

make up the economic base of the municipality, as well as spinoff jobs in vending, driving pedicabs, and others. About 84 percent of the community's residents report having been born in the provinces. The community was first settled in the 1960s, when a handful of houses were built along the shore by migrants from the countryside. As employment opportunities grew, residents invited their relatives and friends from their provinces to join them in the city. People from the Visayan islands represent the majority of residents, and fully one half of residents come from one province—Samar. Thus the community is marked by a concentration of one linguistic group that does not exist in the other communities under study. Some residents attribute the formation of the CBO in the community to concern over discrimination against the area's residents by people in the surrounding area who are Tagalog—the linguistic group native to Metro Manila and the rest of central Luzon. Currently, however, many Tagalog speakers have settled in the community, and according to the survey for this research they are as active in the CBO as are non-Tagalog speakers.

Daang Hari is also relatively homogenous in terms its socioeconomic makeup. It has by far the lowest average income among the five communities under study, and the lowest median education. Only 25.8 percent of respondents have completed high school, as compared for 54.9 percent in the other communities. None report having completed a college education.

An additional factor in the development of social ties in Daang Hari is the extremely poor environmental conditions in the community, which create a need for community maintenance. The very task of building the bridges and stilts upon which the community is situated represents a tremendous collective endeavor. The maintenance of the bridges, and reconstruction following the typhoons that regularly devastate the community, require the constant attention of residents. Thus, even more than in most other informal settlements, environmental management is an intensely collective endeavor in Daang Hari and other stilt communities.

### *Zobel Street*

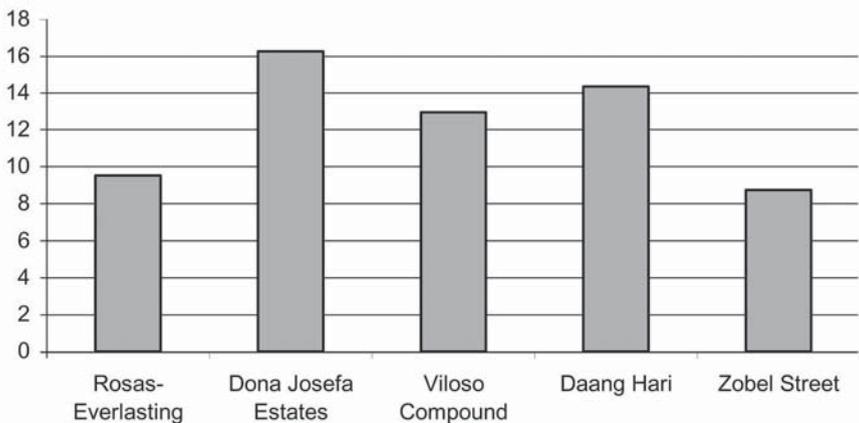
Community organizing is weaker in Zobel Street than in any of the other communities under study. The CBO in the community, Kapit Bisig, has not undertaken any major community improvement efforts in the past ten years. The lack of assistance from NGOs, and resistance in local government to working with CBOs seem to have inhibited the development of collective identities in the community.

Zobel Street contains approximately 50 families, and is located adjacent to Makati city hall. Since the Second World War, Makati has been transformed from a sparsely settled expanse of land to the central business district of Metro Manila, one of the most dynamic and rapidly developing areas in Southeast Asia. As a result of this growth, the availability of employment opportunities in the construction, vending, manufacturing, and other sectors have attracted migrants, many of whom have settled in informal settlements. Zobel Street is one such settlement. The community has existed for a relatively long time, with the earliest residents having been in the area for more than sixty years. Moreover, there is a clear divide in the community

between long and short-term residents—while 38.5 percent of respondents reported having arrived in the community within the last seven years, the same proportion reported having been there for 35 years or more. One third of respondents report having been born in the community, while another 20 percent were born elsewhere in Metro Manila, with the remainder coming from the provinces. While incomes in the community are relatively high, renter households, which make up almost 18 percent of the total, have less than half the average income of owners, earning slightly more than 5000 pesos per month.

### Kinship and Social Ties in the Communities

Students of community development in the Philippines are fortunate enough to have a built-in indicator of an individual's integration into their community. This is the *compadrazgo* (in Tagalog, *kumpadre* for men and *kumadre* for women) relationship, a form of fictive kinship based on the Catholic tradition of ritual godparenthood (Steinberg 1994). The relationship is formed when individuals ask friends or people they respect to sponsor the baptism of their newborn child. These people then become 'co-sponsors' of the parents. The relationship implies a lifelong bond of mutual support between the child's parents and the godparents, and has become an important way of solidifying relations with a friend or patron in Philippine culture. Thus asking residents of informal settlements about the number of *kumpadre* and *kumadre* they have in the community produces a useful indicator of the thickness of their social ties in the community.



**Figure 4.1: Average Number of Co-sponsors by Community**

(Source: Sample survey)

However, there are shortcomings to using this relationship as an indicator of the thickness of social relations. First, while some choose *kumpadre* and *kumadre* among close friends or neighbors, others seek people who are wealthy or powerful, and who therefore may be able to provide valuable assistance to their children in the future. Thus the *compadrazgo* relationship may represent the formalization of a friendship, or the formalization of a hierarchical relationship between a patron and a client. Second, as the cosponsor system is particular to Catholics, this measure underestimates social ties among non-Catholics. In the case study communities, Catholics have slightly more than twice as many co-sponsors as non-Catholics. Non-Catholics constitute more than 12 percent of respondents, and are disproportionately represented in Rosas-Everlasting, where they are 23.7 percent of the population, and Zobel Street, where they are 15 percent of the population. Nonetheless, even when we look at the median number of co-sponsors among those who do have at least one cosponsor, the rankings in terms of the thickness of social relations in the five communities remain largely the same as represented in Figure 4.1—Dona Josefa residents have a median of 16 co-sponsors, Viloso compound residents 14, Daang Hari residents 12, Rosas-Everlasting residents 10, and Zobel Street residents 8.

Several interesting points are worth noting in looking at the data on number of co-sponsors. The first is that while the average duration of stay of residents in the community is a factor in the formation of fictive kinship relations, it is not the predominant factor. Daang Hari and Zobel Street make an interesting comparison in this respect. Zobel Street has the lowest average percent of co-sponsors despite having the second highest average number of years of residence in the community. Daang Hari, on the other hand, has a fairly high average level of such relationships despite being a relatively new community. There are several possible reasons for this. First, the formation of social ties in Daang Hari may have been facilitated by the relative socioeconomic homogeneity of the area. Even renters, who constitute about 30 percent of households, are relatively socially integrated with the rest of the community—owners have an average of about 15 *kumpadre* and *kumadre*, while renters have an average of about 12. Second, the distinctly poor environmental conditions in the community, and its social isolation from the surrounding area, have also probably contributed to the high degree of social solidarity. Finally, the fact that the community developed through chain migration, as residents invited kin or friends to settle in the area, probably also played a role in fostering social ties.

Rosas-Everlasting also has a relatively low level of fictive kinship social networks. Again, this is probably due to the nature of the formation of the community. Because they are upwardly mobile, and have generally lived elsewhere in the city for an extensive period, residents of Rosas-Everlasting are more likely than residents of other communities to have established social networks elsewhere in Metro Manila. In addition, the high number of renters and non-Catholics in the area further depresses the average number of co-sponsors.

It should also be noted that residents tend to develop social ties with people in their immediate surroundings. Thus, in larger communities, a high average

number of kumpadre or kumadre in the community may not signify a high degree of trust among community residents in general, but rather residents' ties with their immediate neighbors. Dona Josefa Estates is a case in point—while the community has the largest average number of co-sponsors per resident, the subdivision of the community into three distinct areas indicates that these social ties may not reach throughout the community, and may not have much bearing on community-wide cooperation. In fact, as we shall see, there has been conflict within the community in recent years that has threatened the community's CMP project.

### **Participation in the Communities**

The sample survey contained questions about participation by household residents in eleven types of collective activities. This list of activities was developed based on interviews with CBO representatives. The survey asked whether any member of the household had been involved in each of these collective activities during the duration of their stay in the area (Table 4.2). Several caveats are necessary before embarking on an analysis of the responses to these questions. First, it is uncertain how truthful respondents were in their answers. The possibility exists that, out of a desire to project a positive image of themselves or their community, residents may have exaggerated their participation. Evidence for such a bias exists in the fact that four respondents in Daang Hari reported having cooperated in projects to improve the sewers in the community, even though the entire community is built on stilts and no sewer system exists. Second, it is to be expected that levels of participation in various activities will naturally vary between communities based on differing needs and issues, thus making a comparison across communities problematic. Third, the survey does not differentiate between relatively active forms of participation, such as direct involvement in a project, and passive forms of participation such as donating some money towards a community improvement effort. Nevertheless, the survey provides some useful indicators of propensity for collective action.

In order to shed further light on the degree of participation by households in the five communities, the survey instrument was used to construct a scale of participation in collective activities. The scale differentiates between non-participants, who report having participated in none of the eleven activities; low participants, who were involved in one or two activities; moderate participants, who were involved in 3 or 4 activities, and high participants, who were involved in five or more activities. The scale was constructed in this way to differentiate between residents who generally do not participate, those who participate in basic activities such as community elections and meetings, and those who go beyond this basic form of participation to engage in other sorts of activities.

**Table 4.2: Resident participation in eleven types of collective activities by community (percents)**

		Rosas- Everlasting	Dona Josefa Estates	Zobel Street	Daang Hari	Viloso Compound
Attend meetings	CBO	64.4	91.7	79.5	71.0	82.1
Vote for leaders	CBO	39.0	78.3	76.9	82.3	78.6
Attend rallies		32.2	38.3	15.4	38.7	67.9
Water delivery		11.9	11.7	10.3	9.7	25.0
Sewer development		39.0	46.7	33.3	6.5	51.8
Road development		39.0	35.0	38.5	62.9	44.6
Electricity		10.2	23.3	17.9	29.0	28.6
Garbage disposal		8.5	10.0	15.4	1.6	17.9
Security		3.4	23.3	15.4	4.8	14.3
Livelihood		3.4	8.3	2.6	4.8	8.9
Services		0	15.0	5.1	3.2	10.7

(Source: Sample survey)

**Table 4.3: Degrees of resident participation in the five communities (percents)**

	Rosas- Everlasting	Dona Josefa Estates	Zobel Street	Daang Hari	Viloso Compound
High participation	18.6	31.7	28.2	21.0	47.3
Moderate participation	33.9	36.7	23.1	41.9	29.1
Low participation	16.9	26.7	28.2	30.6	14.5
No participation	30.5	5.0	20.5	6.5	9.1

(Source: Sample survey)

Rosas-Everlasting generally has a low level of participation in the two most basic forms of collective activities listed in the survey—voting and attending community meetings. This is partially a consequence of the divisiveness within the community that is associated with competition between Kabalikat and the three SANAPA chapters. As noted in the previous chapter, COPE undertook extensive community organizing in the NGC in the 1980s. In the late 1980s, SAMA-SAMA was regularly able to mobilize thousands of residents for demonstrations at government offices to push for the implementation of the NGCHP. Kabalikat members claim that at the time, the organization was much more active, and there was a much higher degree of cooperation in the community. In the late 1980s, Kabalikat was instrumental in lobbying the local government to asphalt the main road leading into the area, and to install a water pump. More recently, both a local SANAPA chapter and Kabalikat claim to have been involved in organizing residents to cement Rosas Street. Today, however, both organizations have largely ceased to implement major community improvement projects. Kabalikat is largely inactive, although its officers are still involved in SAMA-SAMA projects, and in political rallies. The three SANAPA chapters also largely focus on political activities rather than organizing residents to solve local problems.

In all, the competition between the two CBO federations seems to have been met with a combination of apathy and confusion among community residents. Only 58.9 percent of residents claim to be a member of a local CBO, with slightly more than half of that number claiming allegiance to Kabalikat, and the remainder claiming allegiance to SANAPA. However, respondents to the survey were often unable to indicate which of the local leaders belonged to their organization, or gave contradictory responses. It seems that while residents are able to identify community leaders, the organizations they represent have largely lost meaning for them. The prevalence of new residents has also contributed to the low level of participation in the community. Of the 18 households in the community that reported not having participated in any type of collective action, 12 had been in the community for two years or less.

Until the early 1990s, neither Viloso Compound nor Dona Josefa Estates had a functioning CBO. However, in 1990 the residents of Viloso Compound learned that the plot of land they occupied had been sold to a new owner, a Taiwanese factory owner who had plans to develop the land for employee housing. The next year a fire leveled Dona Josefa Estates, raising fears among residents that the owner would exploit the situation to permanently remove them. The communities subsequently approached a community organizer working for Bukas Palad, a local NGO, who initiated the process of community organizing that led to the establishment of the CMP projects in both communities. Viloso Compound residents formed the *Nagkakaisa ng Homeowners ng Viloso Compound*, or *NahVCom*, and Dona Josefa Estates residents formed the *Dona Josefa Estates Homeowners Association*, or *JEHA*. Both CBOs have since become active in *Ugnayan ng mga Maralitang Samahan sa Pasay (UMASAPA)*, a city-wide coalition of CBOs that lobbies city government for assistance to informal settlements.

Participation in both Viloso Compound and Dona Josefa Estates is fairly high. This should not be surprising given the fact that both communities have recently undertaken CMP projects, which entail considerable community effort in self-help and development activities. In addition, a fire in 1998 destroyed almost all of the houses in Viloso Compound, and the community has since rebounded due to an impressive display of cooperation in the rebuilding effort. In addition, both communities have been heavily involved in political activities in collaboration with *UMASAPA* and the *ULR-TF*. However, participation in *NahVcom* has been particularly high, and the community has maintained a 100 percent repayment rate on its CMP loan. *JEHA*, on the other hand, has experienced considerable troubles in its CMP program. Some members of the CBO have refused to abide by the reblocking plan, and there have been allegations of theft of funds by a member of the organization's leadership. As a result, the repayment rate has fallen below 60 percent. Two interrelated factors partially explain the differences in experience between the two communities. The first is the difference in levels of trust between the communities, which is partially an outcome of differences in physical layout. The second is leadership—the woman who leads of *NahVCom* is widely respected in the community and is credited by

most with the success of the CMP. The existence of such a leader has contributed to trust in the community.

Daang Hari has a long history of community organizing dating back to the 1970s. The local organization, *Nagkakaisa ng Mamamayanan Maralitang sa Daang Hari* (NMMD), was formed in 1982 by a man who resided in the community who had received training in community organizing from an NGO based in Metro Manila. NMMD has been involved in several community improvement programs. The organization negotiated with the local government in the early 1980s to install a water tap at the entrance of the community, and sells water from the tap to community residents to fund community improvement projects. NMMD regularly organizes efforts to improve the pathways in the community, and runs a night patrol and fire watch. It has also been involved in political rallies. Most notably, many residents of Daang Hari took part in demonstrations, organized by ALPASAN, to protest over allegations of fraud in the 1998 Navotas mayoral elections. This protest will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. The high degree of participation in NMMD activities is particularly remarkable considering the poverty of residents, and the large number of new residents and renters. It would seem that new residents and renters are quicker to integrate into the community and get involved in local affairs. Only 2 of the 19 renters interviewed had not participated in any community activities, and 9 had participated in three or more such activities.

Four factors seem to have affected the high rate of participation in Daang Hari. The first is the strength of social ties in the community, which seems to be a consequence of the fact that many residents came to the community through chain migration. The second factor is the difficulty of physically maintaining the community. Residents face a constant struggle in fixing the paths, dealing with damage from disasters, protecting against fire, and delivering water. Thus participation is to a certain degree a necessity of everyday life. A third factor is the shared sense of purpose that residents have developed as a result of their extremely poor living conditions, which has fostered a sense of solidarity among residents. The final factor is leadership. While the presidency of the association has changed hands several times since 1982, a stable set of leaders, most notably the man who originally founded of the organization, have remained in the association either as officers or ‘advisors.’ The stability of the leadership has led to recognition and trust of the organization by residents.

Zobel Street is the only one of the five communities that has not been organized by an NGO or CBO federation. The community organization, *Kapit Bisig* (Linking Arms), was established in 1986 by a group of neighborhood youth, perhaps inspired by the People’s Power revolt that occurred that year. The organization initially undertook a wave of projects. Among its main activities was fundraising through raffles and bingo to establish a fund for local residents to establish new businesses, or for assistance in times of emergency. The organization also successfully lobbied the local government to asphalt Zobel Street, and to install a community faucet. *Kapit Bisig* has not undertaken any major projects in recent years. However, the organization continues to run a nightly fire watch and crime patrol, and organizes the

community's participation in the local *calbarrio*, an annual event around Christmas in which communities compete to develop the most elaborate nativity scene. The community currently has a rather low level of participation in the organization, a consequence largely of the lack of assistance to the organization either from government or from NGOs or CBO federations.

### Household Characteristics and Participation

In his study of informal settlements in Metro Manila, Berner (1997) found that "in the tedious process of local integration, ethnic and regional alignments lose much of their relevance and are superimposed by the emergence of local solidarity." This finding is duplicated in this study. Participation in community activities is not significantly correlated with either language spoken (e.g. whether an individual is a native speaker of Tagalog or another language), or place of origin. Even in Daang Hari, where residents attribute the formation of the CBO to discrimination against Visayan speakers in the community, Tagalog speakers have gradually integrated into the community, and have a high rate of participation in collective activities. There is, however, a significant difference between Catholics and non-Catholics in participation. Thirty percent of the 34 non-Catholics respondents (one Muslim, the rest of other Christian denominations) interviewed stated that they had not participated in any of the types of participation identified, while only 11 percent of Catholics were non-participants. This may reflect either discrimination against religious minorities in CBOs, or the tendency for non-Catholics to develop social ties outside of their communities.

**Table 4.4: Degree of participation by individual characteristics**

	Rosas- Everlasting	Dona Josefa Estates	Zobel Street	Daang Hari	Viloso Compound
High participation	18.6	31.7	28.2	21.0	47.3
Moderate participation	33.9	36.7	23.1	41.9	29.1
Low participation	16.9	26.7	28.2	30.6	14.5
No participation	30.5	5.0	20.5	6.5	9.1

(Source: Sample survey)

The factors that do have a significant correlation with participation are shown in Table 4.4. They are generally characteristics that signify some degree of integration into the community and the formation of social ties within the community. Those who participate are likely to have a larger number of co-sponsors and are more likely to have co-sponsors who are officers in the CBO. They are also much less likely to be renters and on average have lived in the community longer. Finally, those who participate more have a higher average income. This would seem to validate the hypothesis that social surplus at the household level leads to greater participation.

## **Conclusion**

The preceding analysis provides some initial evidence for understanding when and why people participate in CBOs. The analysis indicates that residents' identity with and sense of belonging to the community influences their propensity to engage in collective action. This sense of identity and belonging in turn appears to be related to factors in the community's history and social formation—for example, whether people had social ties with people in the area before entering, or whether they come from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Likewise, the presence of some shared project or collective goal also appears to have some bearing on participation. This may be a formal project, such as the CMP in Viloso Compound and Dona Josefa Estates, or an ongoing effort at community preservation, such as NMMD's perpetual struggle to protect the pathways and houses of Daang Hari from the forces of nature.

While factors related to the history and social formation of communities play a role, however, the evidence also points to the critical role of NGOs and CBO federations in encouraging participation. It is apparent from observations of NGO community organizers and discussions with CBO representatives that organizers often exert a great deal of effort in exhorting residents to work together, and to include all members in collective activities. Such efforts often play a critical role in fostering cohesiveness in communities. Based on this observation, it seems likely that physically isolated communities may be less cohesive than communities that are located in concentrations of informal settlements, because NGOs and CBO federations are much more likely to operate in such areas of concentration. This certainly seems to be the case in Zobel Street, which has been largely cut off from external support for collective activities.

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## Chapter 5

# Political Identities and Collective Action

In the aftermath of the overthrow of the Marcos regime, many community organizers and NGO personnel anticipated a period of increased political activism in informal settlements. Reforms for democratization and decentralization seemed to portend the growth of local housing movements and the formation of new electoral coalitions at both the local and national level in which low-income groups would have a greater voice (Clarke 1993; Karaos 1995; PHILSSA and UPA No date). Since that time there have indeed been some notable successes in political organizing, including the movement that resulted in the passage of the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1995 and several local movements for the formation of urban poor affairs offices. In many cases, however, CBOs have made little effort to exert influence on local government or have been thwarted in such efforts. In addition, informal settlers have in most instances not provided significant support for 'pro-poor' political candidates backed by NGOs and CBO federations. In the 1992 elections, for example, presidential candidates backed by NGOs were overwhelmingly defeated in poor communities by, among others, Imelda Marcos, and Eduardo Cojuangco, a notorious Marcos crony (Berner 1997). In addition, NGO-backed candidates running for local positions, including many who were from informal settlements, have generally fared poorly (Quimpo 2005).

Thus the political behavior of informal settlers in the post-Marcos era has been decidedly mixed. This chapter will address the question: What factors shape the political orientations of informal settlers and their propensity for activism? Specifically, why do some community organizations engage in radical politics, while others support mainstream politicians, while yet others remain disengaged from the political system altogether? It will argue that the tendency for informal settlers to express ambivalence towards change in politics is a consequence both of the culture of clientelism that defines Philippine politics, and the perception that such change is unlikely to achieve its objectives due to entrenched opposition. In the contemporary context of ascendance of political and economic interests tied to the globalization of Metro Manila's economy, residents of informal settlements generally perceive limited potential to significantly influence politics through community based collective action or through their vote. They therefore largely choose to spend their limited political capital on more modest and realizable objectives, such as the achievement of specific community improvements. Only where they perceive significant political opportunity, or where they have assistance from powerful political allies in NGOs, church-based organizations, or prominent political figures, do they undertake more ambitious political agendas.

The chapter will begin with a brief discussion of the literature on the political identities of informal settlers in developing countries, and specifically in the Philippines. It will then review the political orientations of heads of households based on the sample survey, which asked about their perception of political actors at the local and national levels, and of the degree of CBO agency in working with other actors to achieve community goals.

### **Political Orientations of the Urban Poor: A Brief Theoretical Review**

Debates regarding the political orientations of the urban poor in developing countries have historically been polarized between views that see them as inherently radical and those that see them as conservative. During the 1950s and 60s, the prevailing view held that, in rapidly modernizing societies, social alienation caused by the breakdown of patron-client relations and persistent poverty would create the potential for anti-systemic violence and disorder among the urban poor (Abrams 1964). It was presumed that poor rural-urban migrants, arriving in the city with grand expectations, would inevitably be disappointed with the crowded, filthy environs of informal settlements, and would be further goaded by the disparity in incomes in cities. The resulting feelings of despair and relative deprivation would create a situation ripe for social unrest, either in the form of random acts of violence, or in the growth of revolutionary movements.

In the 1970s and 80s, however, two strands of research contradicted predictions of violence and radicalism among the poor. First, the research of John Turner and others demonstrated that the urban poor tended to form organizations geared towards practical and mainstream goals of property ownership and housing improvement (Turner 1976). This contradicted the common depiction of the poor as disorganized masses easily swayed by the rhetoric of the radical left. Second, the research of Nelson (1979), Perlman (1976), and others revealed that the urban poor were often supportive of existing political structures. Perlman, in a study of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, argued that:

Politically, [the urban poor] are neither apathetic nor radical. They are aware of and keenly involved in those aspects of politics that most directly affect their lives, both within and outside the favela. They are responsive to the changing parameters in which they operate....and they are generally aware of their vulnerable position. As for any signs of radical ideology, or propensity for revolutionary action, these are completely absent. Favelados are generally system-supportive and see the government not as evil but as doing its best to understand and help people like themselves...

Others, however, argued that this mode of political behavior was attributable to the success of politicians at maintaining patron-client relations with communities, and at preventing independent mobilization by coopting community organizations and repressing such mobilization when it occurred (Eckstein 1977; Burgess 1982).

Marxist political theorists continued to argue that the potential for radical political action lay latent in urban poor communities (Castells 1980).

Researchers have gradually moved beyond debates regarding whether informal settlers are inherently radical or not, and have paid increasing attention to the factors that lead to differences in political orientations and degrees of activism between communities. Schneider (1995), for example, argues that clues to the presence or lack of radical political activism can best be found by examining “the intersection of political institutions, social movements, and urban geography.” Examining the political orientations of pobladores in Santiago, Chile, under the Pinochet regime, she argues that the major factor determining their political activism was the community’s previous history of engaging in such activism.

This chapter argues that there has in fact been no dominant tendency in the political behavior of Metro Manila’s informal settlers—while some CBOs have engaged in political activities, others have avoided doing so despite the prodding of NGOs. Understanding why this is so provides insights into the implications of recent political reforms for popular participation in government. I argue that four main factors have influenced the propensity of residents of informal settlements to engage in collective action for political change. The first is the history of state-community relations in the locality. Specifically, where residents have faced significant opposition to their participation in local politics, they are less likely to believe that political reform can be achieved through collective action, and are therefore less likely to engage political institutions through mainstream political methods. The second factor is the history of community organizing. Where communities have experienced successes in political organizing, residents are likely to have greater confidence in the potential for future successes. The third factor is the influence of CBO federations and NGOs. By disseminating political views, and relating experiences of political organizing in other settlements, such organizations have a profound impact on the political orientations of informal settlers. In addition, community leaders often look to NGO staff as people with expertise and power, and are therefore likely to follow their political lead in order to take advantage of their knowledge and influence. The fourth factor is the political economy of local development and the interests of local economic and political actors, which profoundly impacts state-community relations. In the Philippine context, I argue that the political orientations of informal settlers has been influenced by the predominance of clientelism in the political system, but that the degree to which clientelism is contested is shaped by the degree to which the local economy is integrated into the global economy and the consequent intensity of conflicts over land.

The chapter will further argue that, based largely on variations in these contextual factors, three types of political identity emerge in informal settlements. This argument is roughly adapted from Castells (1997), who argues for a similar typology of social movements more generally. These types of identity are:

- A *transformative identity*, which is characterized by a high degree of confidence of community residents in the potential for political change through

collective action. In communities that form such an identity, I argue, there is greater resident participation in CBOs, CBO's are more likely to engage in political activism, and they are likely to make more frequent demands on local government. A transformative identity is most likely to emerge where communities have experienced successes in community organizing and where the political climate creates possibilities for participation by CBOs. In addition, NGOs often play an important role in defining the political agenda of CBOs and in inculcating community residents with a sense of shared purpose through training and consciousness raising efforts.

- *A dependent identity*, which is characterized by a low degree of confidence of residents in collective action, and a low level of confidence in the local CBO. Leaders of communities characterized by a dependent identity are likely to establish patron-client ties with local government officials. Such an identity is most likely to occur where community cohesion is low, where there is little political space for civil society participation in government, and where CBOs have little contact with other organizations of civil society.
- *A defensive identity*, in which most residents perceive the political environment to be hostile to the interests of community residents. Residents of such communities perceive collective action as the only defense against a hostile political atmosphere, and the only means of delivering basic services in the face of government neglect. Thus there is a high degree of collective action, as in the transformative identity, yet CBOs are less likely to make demands on government, and are more likely to engage in radical political activism. Due to government neglect, there is also likely to be a high degree of reliance on self-help efforts for the delivery of infrastructure and services. A defensive identity is most likely to emerge where land prices are rising rapidly and communities consequently perceive the immediate threat of eviction due to the machinations of landowners and government.

These three categories are, of course, abstractions and generalizations, and no one community conforms precisely to any one of the three models. In fact individual communities can and usually do exhibit characteristics of all of them to differing degrees. Nonetheless, I argue that one of the three tends to be the dominant identity in a given community.

The remainder of this chapter will examine political identities in the five case study communities. It will begin with a theoretical discussion of the characteristics of Philippine political culture, arguing that relations between local governments and poor communities in the Philippine context are strongly colored by the pervasive influence of patronage politics and that this dynamic strongly influences patterns of collective action in communities. The chapter will then discuss the political orientations of informal settlers in each of the five settlements, emphasizing how these orientations have been shaped by local contexts.

## **Political Orientations of Informal Settlers in Metro Manila**

The nature of local politics has been the subject of considerable debate in the Philippines. Early research utilized patron-client frameworks in analyzing how local political families gained and retained power (Hollnsteiner 1963). This framework describes a largely benevolent political arrangement in which “the patron uses his own influence and resources to provide for the protection and material welfare of his lower status client and his family who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron” (Lande 1964). This framework assumes that the client willingly enters into such a relationship for pragmatic reasons, and that the outcome is mutually beneficial.

More recently, however, radical political economists have criticized the patron-client framework for underestimating, or at least downplaying, the inequality and conflict inherent in relations between local politicians and their constituents. In contrast to the patron-client framework, Sidel (1999) has described Philippine local politics as being characterized by ‘bossism,’ a system in which local political bosses perpetuate their power through a combination of patronage and violence. Violence has in fact been a hallmark of Philippine electoral politics, as manifest in the dozens of murders that regularly mark elections as rival candidates at both the local and national level attempt to intimidate political rivals and their supporters. Sidel argues that political bosses combine such manifestations of raw power with culturally symbolic acts aimed at establishing the politician as a father figure (such political leaders are predominantly male) and benign patron of the locality. In smaller towns, this has traditionally been accomplished by hosting feasts for local residents or sponsoring the construction of a local cockpit (cockfighting is a major form of recreation among men) or community center. This is also done through the ritual of godparenthood—in some smaller towns the direct and indirect kinship ties of political families encompass a majority of local residents. Through such tactics, local politicians are able to foster a strong sense of loyalty among supporters, as well as a fear of retribution for acts of disloyalty.

The political climate of large and rapidly urbanizing cities is obviously quite different from that of small rural towns. Larger populations make it more difficult for politicians to establish direct kinship ties to local residents or power-holders, or to provide direct and tangible benefits to all residents. Nevertheless, many urbanites continue to be familiar with this personalistic style of politics, and local politicians, particularly mayors and aspiring mayors, continue to evoke personal loyalties in their constituents as a means of gaining support. One popular means of doing so is through participation in the major life events of constituents. Political analysts refer jokingly to the importance of ‘KBL’ in local politics—the acronym evokes Marcos’ Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, or New Society Movement, but refers here to *kasal* (weddings), *binyag* (baptisms), and *libing* (funerals) (Sidel 1995). Many local politicians attend or send gifts or money for these events. It is common for city and municipal governments to provide funding for funerals for poor families, and

mayor Jejomar Binay of Makati makes a habit of personally attending almost every funeral in the city, which has a population of over 400,000 (Gloria 1995).

Politicians also attempt to forge personal loyalties among residents, and particularly among community leaders, by providing infrastructure and services directly to communities rather than through formal programs. All of the case study communities have experienced visits from mayors and mayoral candidates prior to elections, and many of these visits have resulted in minor improvements. A leader of one of the Pasay communities described going to city hall shortly before the 1998 elections to request assistance in building a fence along a canal adjacent to the community. Much to her surprise, one of the members of the city council, a mayoral candidate, arrived in the community within hours. After touring the community and expressing his concern, he ordered construction of the fence to begin the next day. Basketball courts are a particularly popular project of political candidates, and their ubiquitous presence is almost always marked by a sign attributing credit for their construction to a prominent local politician. Politicians also provide assistance in times of disaster. The day after a major fire swept through Rosas-Everlasting, destroying about 30 houses, a truck carrying sacks of cement and bricks arrived, and a sign was rapidly erected attributing the disaster relief to city councilman Bu Mathay, who was at the time the mayor's son and a prospective mayoral candidate. Such strategies are quite successful in creating loyalties among community residents. When discussing government assistance to communities, CBO personnel and community residents are much more likely to attribute improvements to particular politicians rather than to government programs or projects.

Vote buying is another prominent feature of local politics in Metro Manila, particularly in very poor areas. According to residents of Daang Hari, 200 pesos, or about five dollars, was the going rate for a mayoral vote in 1998. The direct buying of votes is nonetheless no replacement for traditional patronage politics. As residents are quick to note, it is quite easy for them to take money from one or more candidates, then make a different choice when in the polling booth. In addition, vote buying is expensive. Thus other forms of populist and patronage politics, which have greater emotive impact, are still necessary.

While all of these acts are intended to foster loyalty in local residents, they also often imply a threat of moral censure, and sometimes retribution, should residents defy the will of the political patron. Settlements that oppose an administration may find what little tenure security they enjoy threatened, and local government may be less responsive to their requests for assistance. In extreme cases opposition has led to acts of violence against communities and community leaders. The implied threat of moral censure is also persuasive. Pinches (1994) argues that the Filipino concept of *hiya*, or shame, is central to understanding relations between the state and informal settlements. He states that, in framing government housing programs as acts of charity and characterizing informal settlers as needy and benighted, the Marcos government attempted to exploit feelings of shame among informal settlers at their poverty and illegal status, thus increasing their willingness to cooperate with the government. When negotiations over land tenure legalization broke down,

government officials accused settlers of being '*walang hiya*' (shameless), a terrible insult in Tagalog. Such tactics are evident in local politics today, where politicians represent community improvement efforts as manifestations of personal munificence and acts of defiance by community residents as ingratitude.

All of these strategies are quite effective in maintaining support among informal settlers. Even in Daang Hari, where communities along the shoreline face the immediate prospect of eviction as a result of the North Bay Business Park Reclamation Project, which was backed by recent mayoral administrations, residents are reluctant to directly criticize local politicians. When asked about the community's relations with former mayor Felipe del Rosario Jr., who was a major proponent of the project, residents and CBO officers are remarkably conciliatory. They are quick to note, for example, that del Rosario Jr. has in the past provided funding for the repair of the walkways in their communities, and other minor improvement projects. They are also nostalgic about the rule of Felipe del Rosario Sr., who was mayor in the 1960s and 70s. Such sentiments are typical of all of the case study areas.

The personalistic nature of Philippine political culture is also increasingly apparent at the national level. This is largely a consequence of the expanding reach and increased influence of the national media, which has enabled politicians to form a direct connection with the electorate, thereby reducing their reliance on local patronage networks (Magno 1993; Sidel 1995). Recent elections have witnessed the remarkable rise to power of celebrities, most notably television and film stars, and professional athletes, who have used their name recognition and media skills to gain office. Four of the twelve senators elected in 1998, and 6 of the 24 elected in 2001, came from such backgrounds.

Most notable, however, was the election of Joseph Ejercito 'Erap' Estrada as President. Estrada rose to prominence in the 1960s and 70s as an action film star who often portrayed characters of modest means who were champions of the poor. He was elected mayor of the municipality of San Juan in Metro Manila, and later served as a Senator and Vice President. Running under the slogan '*Erap para sa mahirap*' (Erap for the poor), he won a convincing victory in the 1998 presidential elections based primarily on his appeal to low-income voters. Political analysts have noted that much of Estrada's appeal lies in his populist image and his personal approach to politics, particularly his willingness to visit low-income areas and speak with the poor in their own language. Spelled backwards, his nickname 'Erap' becomes 'pare', a slang term for a good friend that is an abbreviation of kumpadre, or compadre. In his rhetoric, Estrada presents the image of the grand compadre, the friend of the poor who is willing to use his power to advance their interests. Using a populist tactic reminiscent of local politicians, Estrada put his nickname to use extensively upon gaining office, initiating several highly visible government programs with the acronym ERAP (the Enhanced Retail Access for the Poor program and the Emergency Rice Assistance Program are two examples). Thus, through a combination of a skillful use of the mass media and a keen understanding of patronage politics, Estrada was able to develop a formidable political base. Estrada was eventually forced from power in 2001 following street demonstrations

over allegations of corruption in his administration. The middle class and business sectors formed the core of the anti-Estrada movement as he had gradually lost support from these groups due to the perceived incompetence and corruption of his rule. It is notable, however, that he retained strong backing from elements of the urban poor, who participated in counter-demonstrations in the runup to and aftermath of Estrada's ouster (Lande 2001).

The community organizing strategies employed by NGOs and CBO federations are generally intended to counter patronage politics. Specifically, the Alinsky model of organizing seeks to engage community residents in a consciousness-raising process that will eventually lead them to identify their political powerlessness as the core issue impeding their progress. Even in communities that have been organized by politically oriented CBO federations and NGOs, however, the effects of patronage politics are often apparent. Community leaders are generally careful to note the assistance that local politicians have provided even though they may criticize the political system in general. Many NGO and CBO federation staff and academics have concluded that community organizing is to some degree counter-cultural—that the urban poor are imbued with a set of ideas and values that stress deference to authority figures and an unwillingness to oppose the status quo (Carroll 1998). In addition, political issues, such as the economic inequities of Philippine society and the lack of political influence of the poor, are subsumed to the immediate imperative of daily subsistence. “The mental frame of generations of hand-to-mouth existence,” argues Karina Constantino-David (1980), a long-time community, “is one that is rooted in what a person can immediately see and hear.” Thus political apathy has deep roots in acculturation to patron-client ties and the daily realities of powerlessness and poverty.

Nevertheless, the case study communities have undertaken a variety of forms of political activism. Three of the areas—Daang Hari, Dona Josefa Estates, and Viloso Compound—have recently taken part in demonstrations and rallies organized by NGOs. In addition, the organizations in all of the communities except Zobel Street have formed alliances with NGOs and CBO federations of varying political views in attempts to assert influence in dealing with government. In order to understand these instances of political activism, it is necessary to examine the three other parameters discussed in the previous section—resident perceptions of their political environment, their perception of the strength of collective action in the community, and the influence of NGOs and CBOs.

### **Resident Perceptions of their Political Environment in the Case Study Communities**

The political environment in the five case study areas has already been discussed in some detail in chapter three. CBOs have faced considerable opposition to participation in local politics in Navotas and Makati, although, in Makati, state-community relations have been less conflictual due to the considerable resources

that the local government expends on programs that benefit the poor. In Pasay, state-community relations were quite strained during the Marcos period, when Mayor Cuneta used the extraordinary power provided to him by his close links with the Marcos government to acquire large landholdings in the city. However, as Cuneta's grip on power weakened as he grew old, community organizers made considerable inroads in organizing local communities, and in gaining a voice in local government. In Quezon City, Mayor Mathay took a populist approach to dealing with informal settlements, and organizations of civil society gained representation on many decision-making bodies.

In order to gauge how these differences in local politics influence residents' perspectives on their political environment, the survey asked their views of the performance of both local and national level government officials, and of community relations with these officials. With respect to national politics, residents were asked two questions. The first was whether the 'People's Power' revolution of 1986, which resulted in the overthrow of the Marcos government, had led to any improvement in the political climate in the Philippines. This question was intended as a measure of how respondents generally perceived the impacts of political reform on the capability and accountability of government as a whole. The second asked what impact residents believed the policies of President Estrada, who held office at the time, would have on living conditions of the urban poor of Metro Manila. With regard to local politics, respondents were asked to rate the performance of the local mayors and barangay officials, and to say how helpful these officials had been to their communities. As the survey was implemented in 1999, and the mayors of three of the four local governments had been in office for only a year, the survey in these cases asked about the previous mayor. These former mayors—Jejomar Binay in Makati, Pablo Cuneta in Pasay, and Felipe del Rosario in Navotas—were all prominent political figures who had dominated local politics until recently, and all had left office due to term limits or ill health rather than being elected out. Resident perceptions of them were therefore seen as a reliable indicator of how people perceived their political environment.

An examination of responses to the questions regarding political conditions at the national level reveals a considerable degree of skepticism regarding the general political climate in the Philippines. Only half of the respondents feel that the country has seen any improvement in its political climate since the overthrow of the Marcos regime, and only six percent see a major improvement. Furthermore, despite the strong support Estrada received from the urban poor in the 1998 elections, residents in the case study communities exhibit little hope that his policies will improve their living conditions.

**Table 5.1: Resident perceptions of the impact of the 1986 people's power revolution the political climate in the Philippines (percent)**

	Rosas- Everlasting (n=59)	Daang Hari (n=60)	Dona Josefa Estates (n=62)	Zobel Street (n=39)	Viloso Compound (n=56)	All communities (n=276)
Major improvement	3.4	4.8	3.3	7.7	12.5	6.1
Some improvement	52.5	38.7	43.3	46.2	39.3	43.7
No improvement	27.1	32.3	33.3	35.9	33.9	32.1
Deterioration	6.8	11.3	11.7	0	12.5	9.0
Do not know/ No answer	10.2	11.3	8.3	10.3	1.8	8.3

Source: Sample survey

**Table 5.2: Resident views on the impact of President Estrada's policies on living conditions of informal settlements (percent)**

	Rosas- Everlasting (n=59)	Daang Hari (n=60)	Dona Josefa Estates (n=62)	Zobel Street (n=39)	Viloso Compound (n=56)	All communities (n=276)
Very positive	3.4	6.5	5.0	7.7	7.1	5.8
Somewhat positive	52.5	29.0	30.0	43.6	39.3	38.3
No effect	25.4	24.2	40.0	25.6	33.9	30.3
Negative effect	5.1	17.7	11.7	12.8	8.9	11.2
Do not know/ No answer	0	22.6	13.4	10.3	10.7	14.4

Source: Sample survey

The data on resident views of local mayors reveals an interesting trend. In general, residents are as skeptical regarding the local political climate as they are about political conditions at the national level—only 41 percent of respondents rated the performance of the mayors as good or excellent. Positive assessments of the local mayor were most prevalent in Zobel Street and Rosas-Everlasting. This is not surprising—the Binay administration in Makati has invested considerable resources in programs that have benefited low-income people, while Quezon City government has undertaken numerous improvement programs in informal settlements. Despite their critical assessment of city mayors, however, residents were also quick to acknowledge past assistance they have received. About 85 percent of respondents rate the mayor as somewhat helpful or very helpful to their community (Table 5.4). Only 2 out of 277 respondents described the mayor as having harmed their community. Both of these respondents were officers in NMMD, the CBO in Daang Hari that has been organized by a socialist CBO federation that was strongly opposed to former mayor del Rosario's plans for a reclamation project along Manila Bay. However, even in Navotas, more than 80 percent of residents say that del Rosario was helpful to their community. Likewise, in Pasay, the vast majority of residents rate former mayor Cuneta as helpful to the community despite stories that circulate in many communities of violent evictions of informal communities on Cuneta-owned properties, and of local police harassment of community organizers. The relatively

negative assessment of the performance of the mayors contrasts with belief among residents that the mayor has been helpful to their community. One interpretation of this finding is that residents feel compelled to acknowledge assistance from mayors, no matter how minor, out of a sense that not doing so would be an act of ingratitude. Thus, while NGO advocates argue that housing is a basic right that must be guaranteed by law, community residents tend to maintain a deferential attitude towards government and harbor no such expectation.

**Table 5.3: Resident assessment of the performance of the local mayor (percent)**

	Rosas- Everlasting (n=59)	Daang Hari (n=60)	Dona Josefa Estates (n=62)	Zobel Street (n=39)	Viloso Compound (n=56)	All communities (n=276)
Excellent	10.2	0	6.7	10.3	3.6	3.6
Good	39.0	38.7	36.7	48.7	28.6	37.5
Mediocre	39.0	38.7	45.0	35.9	39.3	41.9
Poor	0	9.7	6.7	2.6	17.9	7.6
Do not know	10.2	12.9	5.0	2.6	10.7	8.7

Source: Sample survey

**Table 5.4: Resident responses to the question: how helpful do you feel the mayor has been to your community?**

	Rosas- Everlasting (n=59)	Daang Hari (n=60)	Dona Josefa Estates (n=62)	Zobel Street (n=39)	Viloso Compound (n=56)	All communities (n=276)
Very helpful	28.8	12.9	23.3	38.5	17.9	23.1
Somewhat helpful	55.9	69.4	66.7	53.8	60.7	61.7
Not helpful	1.7	6.7	5.0	2.6	10.7	5.4
Harmful	0	3.3	0	0	0	.7
Do not know/ No answer	11.9	8.1	5.0	5.1	10.7	8.3

Source: Sample survey

The survey also reveals a high degree of trust in barangay or neighborhood government—in all communities, most residents find the local barangay office to be ‘very helpful’ to the community (Table 5.5). This is not surprising, as barangay officials are more visible to residents than are officials at higher levels. The barangay level of government was initially created by the Marcos government in the 1970s in an effort to counter leftist community organizing (Goss 1990). Barangay officials were appointed, and were chosen largely based on their loyalty to the regime. Today, barangay officials are elected and, as a consequence, residents of informal settlement themselves have in many cases been elected to office. Thus the barangay government is often seen as accessible to community residents, and a potential channel for community influence on government.

**Table 5.5: Resident responses to the question: how helpful do you feel the local barangay office has been to your community**

	Rosas- Everlasting (n=59)	Daang Hari (n=60)	Dona Josefa Estates (n=62)	Zobel Street (n=39)	Viloso Compound (n=56)	All communities (n=276)
Very helpful	72.9	59.7	58.3	56.4	55.4	60.6
Somewhat helpful	8.5	17.7	13.3	23.1	12.5	14.4
Not very helpful	3.4	14.5	21.7	12.8	23.2	15.2
Not helpful	1.7	6.5	3.3	2.6	3.6	3.6
Do not know	0	13.6	0	13.3	5.4	5.4
No answer	0	0	1.6	0	0	.4

Source: Sample survey

The typology of political identities discussed earlier in the chapter implies that those who have a more skeptical view of government, in other words those with a transformative or defensive political identity, are more likely to engage in collective action. The data from the survey seem to bear this out. While 39 percent of those who participate in two or fewer types of collective activity feel the mayor is doing only a fair or poor job, 56 percent of those who engage in three or more collective activities feel this way. Those who have very negative views of their political environment are particularly likely to have high rates of participation. Thus 19 of the 21 people who rated the mayor as poor engaged in three or more types of participation, and 14 of the 17 people who said the mayor was either not helpful or harmful to the community had this rate of participation (Table 5.6). This would seem to indicate that there is a core of residents who are highly politicized, and who are strongly involved in the local CBO.

**Table 5.6: Relationship of participation in collective activities to assessment of the performance of the mayor**

Participation	Assessment of mayor			
	Excellent (n=10)	Good (n=104)	Mediocre (n=115)	Poor (n=21)
0-2 forms of participation	60.0	40.3	33.0	9.5
3+ forms of participation	40.0	59.7	67.0	90.5

Source: Sample survey

Several conclusions can be drawn from the above analysis. First, the results are consistent with previous research in finding that informal settlers generally do not espouse radical political views and in fact are often fairly conservative. Second, there is a fair amount of variation in the political orientations of the communities. Specifically, residents of Daang Hari, Viloso Compound and Dona Josefa Estates

are more critical of both local and national government than are residents of Zobel Street and Rosas-Everlasting. This is likely due to two factors. The first is the relatively oppressive political climate in Pasay and Navotas under the recently concluded Cuneta and del Rosario administrations. While state-community relations have seen improvement in each of these cases, doubts about the sincerity of local government remain. The second is the relative strength of the NGO and CBO federation presence in these two areas—the training provided to leaders of these communities by their NGO and CBO federation sponsors has undoubtedly influenced their political perspectives. In contrast, Zobel Street has been isolated from political influences independent of the Binay administration, and conflict among CBO federations in Rosas-Everlasting has weakened their influence on residents of the area.

### **Residents' Perceptions of CBO Agency**

Community residents' perceptions of the potential success of political activism are influenced not only by their political environment, but also by their confidence in the community's ability to engage in such activism. This perception is itself influenced by two main factors. The first is community residents' knowledge of successful cases of collective action. Such knowledge may come from experiences within the community or from learning of the experiences of other communities. NGOs and CBO federations play an important role in this learning process, both through training and by creating networks among CBOs. The second is the degree of social trust within the community, a topic explored in the previous chapter. Simply stated, where communities have experience with successful collective action, and where social networks among residents are strong, communities are more likely to engage in politically oriented activism.

Experiences with collective action have varied widely between the five communities. In Pasay, NGOs have consciously pursued a strategy of creating networks among CBOs so that communities can learn from each others' successful experiences. In addition, NGOs have built on successes in tenure legalization and service and infrastructure delivery to instill community leaders with an ethos of political activism. Specifically, they have used the successful implementation of CMP projects in many communities as the foundation for the development of ALPASAN, a CBO federation that later made significant inroads in influencing the housing policy of Pasay city government. Leaders of both Dona Josefa Estates and Viloso Compound credit the experience of organizing for the CMP as the inspiration behind their subsequent involvement in ALPASAN, and in the lobbying effort for the UDHA.

In Daang Hari community residents have a high degree of participation in self-help efforts. Yet the political climate in Navotas has generally been hostile to CBO participation. In contrast to the organizing strategy of NGOs in Pasay, KPML, the CBO federation that operates in Navotas, has made little attempt to

encourage NMMD and other CBOs along Manila Bay to engage in negotiations with the local government. To the contrary, CBOs along the shore have been instructed that KPML will take responsibility for negotiations with government in the case of an eviction. Thus there is little confidence in Daang Hari of the CBO's ability to engage the political system independent of their more powerful political allies.

In Rosas-Everlasting, the weakness of existing CBOs has created a lack of confidence among residents in collective action. The successful efforts of SAMA-SAMA in lobbying for the establishment of the National Government Center Housing Project in the late 1980s is a rapidly fading memory, and the lack of implementation of this project, along with an influx of new residents, has exacerbated cynicism regarding the effectiveness of local CBOs.

Finally, residents of Zobel Street have no significant history of collective action, and no contact with NGOs. Consequently, they exhibit little inclination to undertake collective projects.

**Table 5.7: Residents' assessment of the degree of the local CBOs' influence on government programs and policies (percent)**

	Rosas- Everlasting (n=52)	Daang Hari (n=60)	Dona Josefa Estates (n=62)	Zobel Street (n=39)	Viloso Compound (n=56)	All communities (n=276)
Strong influence	25.0	33.9	33.3	28.2	60.7	35.7
Some influence	36.5	27.4	43.3	35.9	28.6	33.2
Very little influence	9.6	9.7	1.7	2.6	1.8	5.1
No influence	3.8	8.1	10.0	15.4	0	6.9
Do not know	25.0	21.0	11.6	17.9	7.2	15.9

Source: Sample survey

This variation in experiences is reflected in residents' views of the potential agency of CBOs (Table 5.8). Residents of the Pasay communities have a greater degree of faith in CBO agency than do the other three communities—89.3 percent of Viloso Compound residents and 76.6 percent of Dona Josefa Estates residents believe that CBOs have strong or some influence in governance, as compared to 65.1 percent in Zobel Street, 61.5 percent in Rosas-Everlasting, and 61.3 percent in Daang Hari.<sup>1</sup> Yet what truly stands out is the fact that Viloso Compound residents are twice as likely as residents of the other four organizations to believe that CBOs have a strong influence on government policies and programs. This clearly reflects the strength of NahVCom's leadership, the high degree of social cohesion in the community noted in the previous chapter, and the influence of community organizers

1 These figures should be interpreted cautiously as personal relationships between residents and community leaders may lead some to overstate their true beliefs about CBO political capacity.

who have worked in the community. Viloso Compound seems to have entered a virtuous circle, in which the strong social ties in the community foster cooperation, which leads to successes in collective action, which in turn leads to confidence in further collective endeavors. In the other communities, failures in efforts at collective action or the intransigence of local government seem to have created cynicism in the community that has hindered efforts at collective action.

Another measure of residents' perception of community agency is their belief that their community will continue to exist in the face of persistent threats of demolition. Of perhaps greater concern than demolition in some cases is the possibility that the landowner will attempt to circumvent the legal requirements associated with evictions by simply setting fire to the settlement, a practice that is quite common (Berner 1997). Many CBOs form nightly fire watches to guard against this possibility. Residents of the three case study communities that have not begun the process of legalizing their land tenure were asked how likely they thought it was that their community would be evicted in the next five years. For obvious reasons, Daang Hari residents are far more likely to believe that a demolition is imminent.

**Table 5.8: Resident perceptions of the likelihood that the community will be evicted in the next five years (percent)**

	Rosas-Everlasting (n=59)	Daang Hari (n=60)	Zobel Street (n=39)
Highly likely	11.9	30.6	12.8
Some possibility	32.2	40.3	41.0
Small possibility	6.8	3.2	5.1
No possibility	20.3	4.8	15.4
Don't know/No answer	3.4	21.0	10.3

Source: Sample survey

Finally, the survey asked residents to name up to three major improvements they had observed in their community in the previous three years, and who they felt was responsible for these improvements. These questions were open-ended, allowing residents to name the improvement and responsible individual or entity themselves without choosing from pre-determined lists. Table 5.9 provides summary answers. These answers provide an additional indicator of resident perceptions of CBO agency. It is notable that there is a wide discrepancy in the number of improvements named in each community, ranging from Viloso Compound, where resident named an average of 1.9 improvements, to Zobel Street, where residents named an average of only .6 improvements. Altogether, 56 percent of Zobel Street residents were not able to name any improvements at all in their community in the past three years, as compared to 26 percent in the other communities. Zobel Street is also distinctive because only a small minority of the improvements mentioned were attributed by respondents to the CBO. In all of the other communities, the local CBO is credited with responsibility for a large majority of improvements. Daang Hari is particularly

notable in this regard—only five of the 74 improvements mentioned by residents are attributed to government assistance. This reflects both the belief of residents in the capacity of NMMD, and the lack of government assistance to the area. Another finding that stands out is the degree to which the presidents of the Daang Hari and Viloso Compound CBOs were singled out for their role in named improvements. Here, leadership seems to have been a key element in the power of community-based collective action.

### **The Origins of Political Activism in Pasay and Navotas**

Given the relatively high degree of confidence in community-based collective action in Daang Hari, Viloso Compound and Dona Josefa Estates, it is not surprising that these are the three communities among the case studies that have recently been involved in political movements. These movements occurred under quite different circumstances. Daang Hari residents took part in a series of protests over the outcome of the 1998 mayoral elections that turned into a violent confrontation between demonstrators and the police. Residents of Dona Josefa Estates and Viloso Compound were involved in rallies at Congress in support of the passage of UDHA. Yet both cases highlight certain persistent themes in urban poor movements, and particularly the critical role that NGOs and CBO federations play in encouraging such political activism. This section will analyze these movements in order to address the question: Why and under what circumstances are communities likely to become active in political movements?

The demonstrations in Navotas were instigated by allegations of fraud in the mayoral elections that had taken place in March of 1998. These allegations were eventually substantiated, leading to the removal from office of Miguelita del Rosario, wife of former mayor Felipe del Rosario. As with other CBOs along the shore, NMMD was strongly involved in mobilizing residents to take part in these demonstrations. Data from the sample survey indicate that 40 percent of households in Daang Hari had at least one resident who participated in a rally or demonstration. While it is unclear how many of these were involved in the rally over the mayoral elections, community leaders argue that participation was quite high.

The elections of 1998 were of particular relevance to the communities along the shore because the victor would preside over key decisions regarding the proposed 45-billion-peso North Bay Business Park reclamation project.<sup>2</sup> The election pitted Cipriano “Efren” Bautista, running with the Laban ng Masang Makabayang Pilipino (LAMMP) party of presidential candidate Joseph Estrada, against Miguelita del Rosario, wife of the outgoing mayor Felipe del Rosario, running with the Lakas party. As the outgoing del Rosario administration had been a principal advocate of the reclamation project, many believed that the del Rosario family would be willing to go to extreme lengths to maintain power. The election campaigns were fraught

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2 As of the time of this writing the project has yet to move forward, and in fact seems to be stalled indefinitely.

**Table 5.9: Community improvements named by community residents, and who they felt was responsible for improvements (number of responses)\***

Name of Community	Improvements		Who was responsible for improvements	
Rosas-Everlasting	Road improvement	23	<i>Community-Based Organization</i>	<b>38</b>
	Water	19	CBO in general	33
	Electricity	18	President	5
	Telephones	8	<b>Government</b>	<b>11</b>
	New Houses	4	Barangay officials	6
	Sewers	4	Mayor	5
	Other	12	Other government officials	0
			<i>Community residents</i>	<b>14</b>
		<i>Other</i>	<b>1</b>	
Daang Hari	Path improvement	30	<i>Community-Based Organization</i>	<b>61</b>
	Water	22	CBO in general	12
	Electricity	13	President	49
	Cooperation	5	<b>Government</b>	<b>5</b>
	Other	4	Barangay officials	1
			Mayor	1
		Other government officials	3	
		<i>Community residents</i>	<b>3</b>	
Dona Josefa Estates	Road improvement	23	<i>Community-Based Organization</i>	<b>68</b>
	Water	20	CBO in general	42
	Peace and order	13	President	26
	Electricity	13	<b>Government</b>	<b>17</b>
	New houses	11	Barangay officials	8
	Cleanliness	4	Mayor	6
	Tenure	3	Other government officials	3
	Other	12	<i>Community residents</i>	<b>17</b>
		<i>Other</i>	<b>1</b>	
Zobel Street	Cleanliness	5	<i>Community-Based Organization</i>	<b>3</b>
	Cooperation	4	CBO in general	2
	Road improvement	3	President	1
	New houses	2	<b>Government</b>	<b>11</b>
	Health care	2	Barangay officials	6
	Schools	2	Mayor	2
	Other	6	Other government officials	3
			<i>Community residents</i>	<b>10</b>
Viloso Compound	Road improvement	35	<i>Community-Based Organization</i>	<b>81</b>
	Water	15	CBO in general	26
	New houses	14	President	55
	Electricity	13	<b>Government</b>	<b>21</b>
	Tenure	9	Barangay officials	11
	Peace and order	10	Mayor	5
	Cleanliness	5	Other government officials	5
	Peace and Order	5	<i>Community residents</i>	<b>16</b>
	Sewerage	5	<i>Other</i>	<b>1</b>
	Other	7		

(Source: Sample survey)

\*Residents were asked to name up to three improvements, and the person or entity that was responsible for that improvement. Thus the total possible number of responses was 177 in Rosas-Everlasting, 180 in Daang Hari, 186 in Dona Josefa Estates, 117 in Zobel Street, and 168 in Viloso Compound.

with allegations of fraud (*Manila Times* 5/3/98). LAMMP representatives sought the Commission on Election's assistance in having the police chief of Navotas and several senior officers dismissed for allegedly engaging in vote-buying. The National Citizen's Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), a prominent election watchdog group, also found that several thousand registered voters could not be found at the addresses listed on their registration forms. In addition, the opposition was convinced that the del Rosario family was behind the late registration of a third candidate whose name—Efren Bautista—was identical to that of the LAMMP candidate. The new Bautista was an unknown, and this move was seen by many as an attempt to confuse voters and draw votes away from the Bautista running with LAMMP.

Bautista's positions on the status of informal settlements along the Bay, and on the proposed reclamation project, remained unclear throughout the campaign. Nevertheless, he received the backing of socialist NGOs and CBO federations that were influential in informal settlements in the municipality. This support came out of a tactical alliance between Bautista and SANLAKAS, a national socialist organization that was backing the senatorial bid of Edsel Lagman, another LAMMP candidate. SANLAKAS is closely affiliated with KPML, the CBO federation of which NMMD and many of the CBOs along the shoreline are members. In exchange for SANLAKAS' vow to use KPML's considerable influence in the shoreline communities in support of his campaign, Bautista agreed to assist the Lagman campaign in Navotas by placing Lagman's name on campaign banners, and providing assistance in producing campaign materials. NMMD consequently endorsed Bautista in Daang Hari, although community leaders note that residents were free to disregard their endorsement.

The elections results set the stage for the protest. Del Rosario emerged the winner after some 20,000 ballots marked Bautista or E. Bautista were declared invalid because of uncertainty caused by the presence of the nuisance candidate. For over a month after the results were announced, KPML and SANLAKAS assisted in organizing daily demonstrations and vigils outside of the municipal hall opposing the election results. These demonstrations sometimes attracted crowds of several hundred. The protest culminated in a night of violence on June 7 that ended with the burning of the municipal hall. There were conflicting reports regarding who started the fire. According to some newspaper accounts, the scene became confrontational, and the police allegedly fired several shots into the crowd of some 500 (*Philippine Daily Inquirer* 6/8/98; *Manila Times* 6/8/98). The protesters then allegedly became violent, attacking police and storming the municipal hall armed with clubs, fireworks, and Molotov cocktails. Bautista's followers, however, claim that the police themselves set the fire to cover up evidence of electoral fraud, a contention that many residents of Daang Hari believe. Three days later, another group of an estimated 20,000 people gathered at a prayer rally outside the municipal hall, in protest of the proclamation of del Rosario that day. Eventually, the Supreme Court ruled Bautista the victor, and he assumed the mayorship.

The experience of CBO organizing around the 1998 elections in Navotas reveals some of the contradictions of the political organizing efforts of CBO federations and NGOs. While SANLAKAS' and KPML's actions both during the campaign and afterwards were ostensibly motivated by a desire to advance the interests of the shoreline communities, in fact their political interests with respect to the Lagman campaign proved an obstacle to this objective. KPML and SANLAKAS never attempted to use the electoral clout of the shoreline communities as leverage to influence Bautista's stand on the reclamation project, nor to encourage him to commit to CBO and NGO participation in decision-making regarding the project. Since gaining office, Bautista has avoided contact with CBOs, and was caught on one occasion leaving his office through the rear exit in an effort to avoid a meeting with a group of community leaders. Although NMMD leaders express their increasing frustration with the Bautista administration, they do not openly question KPML and SANLAKAS. This is indicative of the inequalities in relations between CBOs and the organizations that assist them. CBOs rely on NGOs and CBO federations for critical logistical and financial support, yet often have little influence over their decisions.

The lobbying effort for the passage of UDHA took place in May and June of 1991. The bill faced strong opposition from real estate lobbying groups, who feared its passage would create obstacles to property development, and would create competition from government in the development of low-income housing. Advocates of the bill feared that Congress, unwilling to defy the real estate lobby, would delay action on the bill, or alter it significantly before passage. An array of NGOs and CBO federations, as well as prominent church leaders, were involved in the effort to hasten its passage, engaging in a variety of strategies including prayer vigils, letter writing campaigns, and meetings with members of congress. Many of those who were involved, however, argue that the rallies and demonstrations of informal settlers were ultimately the primary factors that led to the relatively swift passage of the bill, and the retention of some of the more controversial passages, particularly those concerning the protection of informal settlers during evictions. CBOs in informal settlements were mobilized by the Urban Land Reform Task Force (ULR-TF), a self-proclaimed CBO federation whose leadership is in fact primarily composed of NGO workers. Pasay communities were the most active of all ULR-TF member organizations. According to officers of JEHA and NahVCOM, turnout from their communities was particularly high.

The two communities initially got involved in the effort through their connection with the Institute for Social Order (ISO), an NGO that shares office space with the ULR-TF. In 1990, the ISO had fielded a community organizer to organize the two communities for a CMP project. Several leaders from both communities attended workshops in leadership and organizing hosted by the ISO. In early 1991, after the two communities had begun the process of negotiating for the CMP project, the ULR-TF called a meeting of 250 community leaders throughout Metro Manila. The leaders of the two Pasay communities remember little of the meetings, other than

that it concerned the importance of the passage of UDHA and that all present signed a manifesto committing to the lobbying effort.

The first round of mobilizations for the bill occurred in late May and early June of 1991, as the bill went before the House of Representatives. The ULR-TF and other NGOs paid for roundtrip transportation and food for participants, and hundreds gathered daily in the stands waiting for the bill to reach the floor. On the day the bill reached the floor, the crowd exceeded 3,000, exceeding the seating capacity of 2,000 in the hall. Under the restive gaze of the first capacity crowd in the history of the House, representatives passed the bill on the last day of the session. The rallies continued during the Senate deliberations, as community residents held daily vigils outside the offices of Senators, and camped out in front of the Senate building in the evenings. In December 1991, the bill passed the Senate unanimously, and President Aquino signed it into law in March of the next year.

### **Role of Non-Governmental Organizations**

Both of the cases described above highlight the critical role that NGOs and CBO federations often play in encouraging political activism among the urban poor. Such organizations help define and articulate the agenda for mass movements, assist CBOs in organizing communities and disseminating the movement's message, develop information networks, and provide the material resources necessary to sustain participation. In addition, the political influence of NGOs and CBO federations legitimizes protest activities, thus facilitating participation by the urban poor.

Despite the evident success of both movements in achieving their objectives, however, the cases also highlight some of the issues that arise with the involvement of NGO and CBO federations. CBOs are often highly dependent on material and political support from these organizations, and are therefore frequently quite deferential to them. As a result, they may be in no position to assert influence on the agendas of political movements. This raises the question of whether the political agendas of NGOs and CBO federations are in fact representative of the interests of poor settlements. This issue is particularly apparent in the case of the Navotas mobilization, where the CBO's concerns appear to have been subverted to the political interests of SANLAKAS. The question also arises as to whether NGO and CBO involvement might under some circumstances weaken political mobilization. While successful mobilization can create confidence in residents of the potential for political activism, residents might lose confidence in their potential as political agents where they feel dependent on outside organizations in undertaking political endeavors, or where their interests are subverted to the larger political interests of outside organizations. NGOs tend not to be fully conscious of this contradiction, either because they feel they know what is best for communities, or because they feel they incorporate a sufficient degree of participation.

The case studies also illustrate a dilemma for NGOs, which are often torn between assisting communities in pursuing their particular objectives and encouraging them

to view themselves as part of a larger political movement. More politicized NGOs argue that the former strategy simply results in CBOs and NGOs becoming tools of political leaders and does little to resolve the housing crisis facing the urban poor. NGOs that are less political in their orientation argue that politicized CBOs end up clinging to abstract ideals, thereby leading to an impasse in negotiations between CBOs and government that ultimately alienates both sympathetic elements in the government and the residents of communities themselves.

## **Community Identities**

The case study areas clearly indicate the differences in political orientations among communities. To some degree this variation reflects differences in the strategies of local politicians, who craft policies towards the urban poor based on the particularities of politics and economic development in localities. Since the implementation of reforms for democratization and decentralization, politicians have increasingly courted the votes of the urban poor, either by forming alliances with particular community leaders, by instituting improvements or giving assurances regarding the tenure status of particular communities, or through vote-buying. Thus CBOs are inevitably pulled into political rivalries in localities.

In the beginning of the chapter I argued that three distinct types of political identity emerge in informal settlements—a transformative identity, a defensive identity, and a dependent identity. Having completed a discussion of the formation of political orientations in the five case study communities, it is now possible to assess where these communities fit in this typology. I will focus specifically on three communities that seem to exemplify the three types of identity: Viloso Compound, Daang Hari, and Zobel Street.

Viloso Compound residents come closest to embodying the description of a ‘transformative’ political identity. Residents of the community maintain an attitude of skepticism towards local government, yet are confident that the local CBO can act as an effective watchdog for community interests. Residents have a high rate of participation in collective activities, and have also engaged in political activities over city-wide and national political issues. Several factors, both internal and external to the community, seem to have led to this outcome. The high degree of social cohesion in the community has contributed to the success of efforts at collective action. In addition, NGOs in Pasay have made a conscious effort to build the organization in the community by assisting it in improvement efforts, and by fostering networks between communities in the city. In addition, the development of NahVCom has taken place as the political context in Pasay has become progressively more open to civil society participation. Specifically, the crisis in government caused by Cuneta’s physical decline in the 1990s weakened political opposition to civil society political participation, creating space for CBO influence.

Daang Hari most closely resembles the description of a community with a defensive political identity. Residents are extremely suspicious of the intentions of

the local government and local economic actors. This was evident in the reaction of residents to the presence of the research team conducting the household survey for this thesis—we were alternately suspected of being government officials conducting a survey for a planned demolition of the community, representatives of a foreign investor interested in developing the area, and collectors for one of the hundreds of Indian moneylenders, who ply their trade in Metro Manila's poorer districts. Yet, there is also a great deal of trust in the organization—once members of the survey team mentioned the names of community leaders who had endorsed this study, we were accepted. In the politically volatile environment of Navotas, collective action through participation in the CBO is seen as critical to the survival and maintenance of the community.

Finally, Zobel Street perhaps best fits the profile of a 'dependent' community. There is little community mobilization or belief in the capacity of the local organizations, and government is treated with a combination of deference and suspicion. One could argue that it is unfair to characterize Zobel Street by the term 'dependent'. After all, the local government has provided important services in the community, and the community has existed for over 50 years without a serious threat of eviction. Nevertheless, more than half of residents feel there is a significant chance of an eviction occurring in the next ten years, and they see little potential for the CBO to influence the political system.

## Chapter 6

# A Quantitative Assessment of Community Organizing in Metro Manila

The current orthodoxy in housing policy in developing countries, based on the enablement model, makes a number of assumptions about the role of community participation in housing delivery: that the potential for community organizing exists in all or most communities; that CBOs are stable, and have the technical capacity to deal with housing and infrastructure development; that such organizations represent the interests of community residents; and that they operate in a political atmosphere marked more by cooperation than conflict. In discussing the case studies in the preceding chapters I have called these assumptions into question. First, I have argued that CBOs must exert political influence if they are to deal with the issue of land tenure, and that their ability to do so is strongly conditioned by the local political environment. Second, I have argued that certain conditions must exist if CBOs are to play a strong role in community development. These conditions include the existence of social ties in communities and recognition among residents of a shared set of interests. The consistent intervention of NGOs or an unusually strong and popular leadership are also likely to strengthen CBOs and make them more stable. In the absence of these conditions, CBOs are likely to remain organizationally unstable and ineffective.

As is always true of case study research, however, the question that inevitably arises is: To what degree can we generalize from the case studies to the population of informal settlements in Metro Manila or other cities? This issue is of particular concern in studies of community organizing, which have almost exclusively used case study methodologies. Only a few researchers have attempted to conduct surveys of community organizations, and nobody has attempted to conduct a survey of randomly sampled communities that would allow for statistical inference and would enable a researcher to ask questions about the extent of community organizing and the character of these organizations (Sen 1992; Berner 1997). The reliance on case study methodologies is understandable—few governments maintain comprehensive lists of informal settlements, and defining the population from which to draw a sample is therefore a major issue. The difficulty of traveling to numerous settlements and attempting to determine whether they have a CBO provides a further deterrent to conducting such a survey.

Nevertheless, without the type of data provided by such a survey, there is no way of knowing how widespread community organizing is or what types of organizations exist. This chapter will begin to address this gap in CBO research by presenting

the findings of a survey of 80 randomly sampled informal settlements in Metro Manila. Through a comparison of informal settlements in two cities—Quezon City and Manila—the data will also provide further evidence for the central arguments of this thesis regarding the uneven nature of community-based collective action, and political participation by CBOs.

The chapter will first discuss the methodology employed in the survey. It will then provide a profile of the informal settlements surveyed, and a description of the CBOs in them. Finally, it will discuss the communities' interaction with NGOs and government agencies.

### **Methodology of the Survey**

The survey results reported in this chapter are from a questionnaire that was administered in 80 informal settlements—40 in the city of Manila and 40 in Quezon City. The samples were drawn from lists of informal settlements in the two cities that had been compiled by the city governments. It is important to note that these were lists of settlements, not of organizations. Therefore, one of the first tasks of the survey was to identify community leadership, and to determine whether a formal organization existed in these areas. The procedures followed for doing this are described later in this section. If a CBO was identified, the full questionnaire was administered to a community leader. If no CBO was identified, the same questionnaire was administered but questions related to the activities and leadership of the CBO were excluded.

One questionnaire was completed for each settlement using information provided by a community leader (although in some cases more than one leader was interviewed to fill gaps in the knowledge of the first respondent). While community leaders were the respondents, the unit of analysis was the community. The survey addressed a number of questions related to community organizing: What percent of communities have a CBO? Have they institutionalized formal channels for participation by residents? What types of activities do CBOs generally engage in? How many have been influenced by NGOs, and what types of assistance have NGOs provided? How are leaders chosen? How many have participated in government-sponsored community improvement programs? In addition, there were questions about how community leaders perceive NGOs and government agencies that were intended to gauge the political orientations of the leaders. However, the responses to these questions cannot be taken as representative of community residents or the CBOs, and therefore must be interpreted with caution.

Quezon City and Manila are the two most populous cities in Metro Manila, containing populations of 2.1 million and 1.7 million respectively (NSO 1998). They were selected as the locations for the survey for two main reasons. First, both had recently conducted comprehensive surveys of informal settlements in their areas and consequently had lists of informal settlements available from which samples could be drawn. While all cities and municipalities are required under the Urban

Development and Housing Act (UDHA) of 1992 to conduct such surveys, compliance has been mixed, and many local governments—including Navotas, Makati, and Pasay—have only partial lists. Second, the two cities differ significantly in their historical development, demographic makeup, and local politics and therefore are suitable for testing the validity of this study's hypotheses regarding the impact of such factors on the form and extent of community organizing.

Manila is the oldest city in Metro Manila, and has long been densely settled. The city's population has increased only marginally in the past two decades, and the population density exceeds 40,000 people per square kilometer (NSO 1998). There is considerable demand for commercial and office space in Manila, and a number of high priority infrastructure projects are planned, yet there is little vacant developable land left in the city. The local government has generally sided with developers in land disputes with poor communities and has consequently gained a reputation among NGOs for being particularly harsh in dealings with informal settlements. Manila was from 1992 to 1998 ruled by Mayor Alfredo Lim, who gained national repute for his tough anti-crime policies, and most notably for his tolerance of 'salvaging', or summary executions of suspected criminals by the police. While Lim was widely criticized in NGO circles for his severity in dealing with informal settlers, he nonetheless maintained strong support among the urban poor for his reputation as a strong leader who cleaned up Manila and made inroads in addressing the city's notorious crime problem. Mayor Lim ran for President in 1998, and was replaced as mayor by Lito Atienza. While Mayor Atienza made more efforts to work with informal settlers in addressing community issues, he retains a propensity for an autocratic style of management—he has cited Rudolf Giuliani and Lee Kwan Yew as role models.

Quezon City extends to the northeast of Manila, and much of the city has seen rapid urban development only in recent decades. While the southern part of the city is heavily urbanized, much of the north remains relatively sparsely populated, with large tracts of open space. Between 1992 and 2001 Quezon City was ruled by Mayor Ismael Mathay, who took populist stands in dealing with informal settlements. As noted in chapter 3, the city has numerous channels for CBO participation in government, and has one of the strongest urban poor affairs offices in the city, the People's Bureau.

While UDHA mandates that local governments must conduct a census of informal settlers it leaves the methodology for these surveys to the discretion of local authorities. Quezon City's local government has been the most proactive, tasking the People's Bureau to conduct a street-by-street survey of informal settlements. In 1998, the survey identified a total of 1056 areas ranging in size from a single household to over 15,000 households. Manila city government farmed responsibility for the implementation of the census out to the district level, where a variety of methods were applied. Most districts relied on barangay offices to provide lists of communities with estimates of household numbers. The Manila list identifies 277 communities with populations ranging from 2 to 8000 households. Although the

Quezon City census is the more accurate and detailed of the two, during our time in the field we identified no major errors in the Manila list.

Two issues emerged in the process of sampling areas for the survey. First, many of the settlements listed in the censuses consisted of only a few households. As these areas were deemed unlikely to have a CBO and constituted a minute percentage of the population of informal settlements, all settlements of fewer than forty households were eliminated from the sample population.

Second, many of the areas identified in the censuses were large agglomerations of informal settlers, some with thousands of households. Such large agglomerations are often subdivided into smaller units based on delineations, such as streets, creeks, walls or other landmarks, that are widely recognized by residents, and CBOs often operate at this smaller geographical level. Thus in the National Government Center (NGC), for example, an agglomeration of some 56,000 families is served by over 200 CBOs with clearly defined areas. To deal with the problem of large agglomerations, a norm of 250 households was established and settlements were given weights in proportion to their size. Thus, for example, an agglomeration of 10,000 households was given a weight of 40, as compared with an area with 250 households, which was given a weight of one. The norm of 250 households was chosen because observations of several large agglomerations, including the NGC, indicated that this number accurately reflected the reality in most cases. Upon implementing the survey, we found that the average size of areas served by CBOs in large agglomerations varied widely between areas. However, this weighting system seems to have provided a sample that approximates the actual distribution of CBOs between those in larger and smaller agglomerations of informal settlements.

Once smaller communities had been eliminated and larger communities had been weighted, 40 settlements were selected from each of the lists using a table of random numbers. Four Tagalog-speaking research assistants then implemented the survey in three steps. First, they located the communities based on the description of the location provided on the census lists. Next, the researchers entered the communities and began asking people whether there was a CBO in the area that dealt with issues of land tenure and housing. Researchers were instructed to ask at least three different people in three parts of the community. They generally started by approaching the owners of small stores or groups of people gathered outside their houses. If these people were unable to identify a CBO officer, the researchers asked to speak to long-term residents who were knowledgeable of community issues, and asked them about the existence of a CBO. In some cases queries regarding the CBO produced instant recognition, and we were immediately led to the house of an officer in the CBO. In most cases, however, extensive questioning proved necessary, as most residents were unaware of organizations even where they existed. The lack of awareness of existing CBOs in the communities provides testimony to the weakness of many of these organizations.

In cases where we were unable to identify a CBO, the research assistants were provided with a list of alternative respondents who were to be chosen in the order of their availability. These alternative respondents were:

- First, informal community leaders who were not elected and did not belong to a CBO, but were identified by several residents;
- Second, barangay officials who lived in the community and were recognized community leaders;
- Third, people who had been identified by people in the area as knowledgeable residents.

The main criterion for developing this list were a desire to identify respondents who were knowledgeable of community issues and state-community relations, and who identified their interests with the community (as, for example, a barangay leader who was not from the community would not).

The possibility remains that the researchers may have failed to identify CBOs in some communities where they did exist.<sup>1</sup> However, considering the extent to which they probed, it is unlikely that they missed many. In all, we were able to identify CBOs in 60 of the selected communities, or 75 percent. In Quezon City 87.5 percent of the communities had a CBO, while in Manila only 62.5 did (Table 6.1). The reasons for this discrepancy between the two cities will be discussed later in the chapter.

**Table 6.1. Prevalence of CBOs in Manila and Quezon City (number of communities)**

	Manila	Quezon City
Communities with a CBO	25	35
Communities without a CBO	15	5
<b>Totals</b>	40	40

Chi square=6.667, p=.01

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

In the 20 communities that did not have CBOs, we interviewed three informal leaders, two barangay officials, and 15 long-term residents who had been identified by other residents as people knowledgeable of local affairs. Despite the politically volatile situation of many of the settlements, nobody refused to be interviewed, and in general respondents were generous with their time. Eight of the areas initially selected turned out to have been demolished. Consequently, eight more communities

1 It is also possible that the survey failed to identify cases where multiple CBOs claimed to represent the same community. We did not make any attempt to identify multiple CBOs within a community for two main reasons. First, we did not feel that identifying all CBOs in the selected communities would have added significantly to the quality of data since we had no reason to believe additional CBOs would differ significantly from the first CBOs identified. Second, asking for additional CBOs after one had been identified would have risked straining the patience of residents of the communities. In any case we suspect based on observations in the field that the existence of multiple CBOs in a community is a fairly rare circumstance.

were randomly selected from the original list, all of which were found to still exist. Thus, of the total of 88 communities selected, 8 had been evicted. Given that the lists from which they were chosen were mostly compiled in mid-1998, and the survey was conducted in mid-2000, this suggests a rate of demolition of about 9 percent of the communities in the 2 years prior to the survey. In addition, five respondents claimed that part of their communities had been demolished in the past, although the survey did not ask when these demolitions had occurred.

### **A Profile of Informal Settlements in Quezon City and Manila**

One premise underlying this study has been that the problem of informal settlements is essentially caused by the lack of affordable land in cities in developing countries. Specifically, while cities require a low-wage labor force to maintain their comparative economic advantage, the scarcity of centrally located land and speculation by landowners leads to land prices that are far beyond the means of low-income people. Exactly how tight land markets are in a given locality has a significant impact on how low-income people meet their basic needs for shelter and how they defend their communities from displacement by the forces of urban development. It also affects how people view the prospects for community improvement. Where land is scarce and highly valued, people are forced to settle on more marginal land, and are more prone to eviction. I have argued in this thesis that this in turn makes people more pessimistic regarding the future of the community and the potential for change through collective action, and consequently has a negative impact on community participation.

These assertions are borne out by the data from the survey. The city of Manila has been almost entirely built out, and its population actually declined slightly between 1980 and 2000 (NSO 2003). Yet the city offers the urban poor myriad economic opportunities in vending, scavenging, transportation, public sector employment, and various types of service industries. Consequently, the city has a large urban poor population that has exhibited considerable ingenuity in accessing shelter. Among the forty communities surveyed, the following types of shelter were identified:

- Twelve communities are located on land owned by the Philippine Ports Authority that was to be used for the development of a lighthouse and port.
- Seven communities are located either on stilts above creeks (referred to as *esteros* in Tagalog), or along the edges of creeks.
- Five communities are located on narrow strips of land owned by the Philippine National Railways along railroad tracks.
- Four communities are located on Isla Baseco, an agglomeration of 3000 households built on narrow strips of land reclaimed along a seawall that extends several kilometers into Manila Bay.
- Two communities are located within the walls of Manila Jail, which has been abandoned since the 1950s.

As is apparent from these brief profiles, informal settlers in Manila generally settle in hazardous areas, and on government land. This implies that, due to the value of land in the city, private owners are quicker to develop vacant land, and more vigilant in protecting their land from encroachment by informal settlers. In all, 29 of the 40 Manila communities are on land owned by national government agencies, most notably the Philippine Ports Authority, the Department of Public Works and Highways, and Philippine National Railways. These communities often exist in large, dense agglomerations—19 of the communities surveyed in Manila are located in agglomerations of more than 500 households, as compared with only 9 of the Quezon City areas. Most of this land remains undeveloped because it is marginal, or because of delays in the implementation of government infrastructure programs. These communities are often under pressure for eviction either because the government considers their presence to represent an environmental hazard or because they occupy land set aside for priority infrastructure projects. For example, at the time the survey was conducted many communities along esteros were targeted for relocation under the Pasig River Rehabilitation Project, a major initiative of President Estrada to clean up the Pasig River, of which many esteros are tributaries. In addition, road improvement and widening has also led to the displacement of many households in recent years.

**Table 6.2: Ownership of land in informal settlements in Quezon City and Manila (percent)**

Ownership of land	Quezon City (n=40)	Manila (n=40)	Total (n=80)
National government	32.5	72.5	52.5
Local government	10.0	15.0	12.5
Private individual	45.0	7.5	26.3
Company	7.5	0.0	3.8
People in community	5.0	2.5	3.8

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

In contrast, Quezon City communities are much more likely to be located on land owned by private individuals. Many communities consist of relatively small patches of land, usually a few parcels, that have remained undeveloped because their owners are holding them speculatively. Often the residents rent the land they occupy through informal agreements with the landlord, and half of the residents who live on private land report paying for the right to stay. Thirteen of the Quezon City communities are on national government land, and nine of these are located in the National Government Center, the largest agglomeration of informal settlers in the country. However, due to the various presidential proclamations granting residents legal rights to the land in the NGC, these communities do not face the immediate prospect of eviction that communities on government land in Manila do.

Demolition is a real threat for informal settlers in both cities. While the communities surveyed have existed for an average of more than thirty years, they are

nonetheless persistently made aware of the insecurity of their tenure by the threats of landowners and the rhetoric of politicians. More than two-thirds of community leaders state that their communities have been threatened with eviction—77.5 percent in Manila and 60 percent in Quezon City. The nature of these threats varied from a letter from the landlord declaring the intention to develop the land at some unspecified point in the future, to the actual arrival of bulldozers and wrecking crews in the community. Landowners have also allegedly resorted to illegal means to displace settlers in several communities. One community in Manila that is the site for a proposed mall development had experienced six fires in the year prior to the survey, one of which resulted in two fatalities. Threats of eviction have met with resistance in many cases. Below is a summary of the outcome of eviction threats in 55 of the communities, as reported by community leaders:

- The community is in process of negotiating to stop the eviction: 28.6 percent
- The eviction was stopped by demonstrations, rallies, barricades, or negotiation: 23.2 percent
- The government or developer had no money to move forward with the project: 10.7 percent
- The issue is still in the courts: 8.9 percent
- The demolition has been delayed due to the lack of an adequate relocation site: 8.9 percent
- Parts of area have already been demolished: 8.9 percent
- Nothing has happened: 7.1 percent
- Talk of demolition was politically motivated, and the threat was never real: 3.6 percent

Even more than the reality of eviction threats in the two cities, the relative insecurity of tenure of Manila residents is highlighted by how they perceive the threat of eviction in their locality. Community leaders in Manila are much more likely than those in Quezon City to foresee the eviction of their community in the near future (Table 6.3).

The relative tenure security in Quezon City communities appears to have resulted in moderately better physical conditions. Quezon City communities have more substantial houses and greater access to legal electricity connections (Table 6.4). The average age of communities in the two cities is quite similar, but this masks significant differences. In fact, Manila communities are more likely to be either very old or very new. While only one of the Quezon City communities was settled before 1950, 9 in Manila were. Likewise, 10 Manila communities had been established after 1980, as compared to 4 Quezon City communities. These numbers reflect both the fact that Manila has been settled for a much longer time, and that development pressures have led to a much more rapid rate of displacement of existing communities.

**Table 6.3: Perception of the probability of a demolition in the next three years (percent)**

	Quezon City (n=40)	Manila (n=40)	Total (n=80)
Very likely	10.0	32.5	21.3
Some possibility	17.5	15.0	16.3
Little possibility	15.0	12.5	13.8
No possibility	45.0	35.0	40.0
DK/NA	12.5	5.0	8.8

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

The literature on informal settlements suggests a differentiation between ‘bridgeheader’ and ‘consolidator’ households (Mangin and Turner 1968). Bridgeheader households are newcomers to the city and settle in central city areas where tenure is insecure but where jobs are available. In theory, they tend to be poorer and their communities in worse physical condition than consolidator households. Consolidator households are composed of people who have lived in the city for some time or are second or third generation and have moved out to the urban fringe where lot sizes are larger, tenure is more secure, and environmental conditions are better. While this formulation is partially borne out by the findings of this survey, the actual situation appears somewhat more complex. For example, some of the railroad communities in Manila, which are very centrally located, have existed for more than thirty years, and residents have built substantial houses. In Quezon City, the presence of large informal settlements on the urban fringe has attracted many new migrants to the city, a number of whom live in poor conditions and have low-paying jobs in such occupations as scavenging and vending.

### **Community Organizations: Leadership and Activities**

The literature on urban community development raises a number of questions regarding CBOs. Do they adequately represent their constituents? What is their political orientation? Are they effective in mobilizing communities? This section will begin to address these questions by describing CBOs in Metro Manila, their activities, and their leadership. It will construct a profile of CBOs, and contrast organizations in Manila and Quezon City. Specifically, following one of the main premises of this thesis, it will argue that the degree and type of community mobilization observed in the two cities have been influenced by locality-specific historical, socioeconomic and political conditions.

The 60 CBOs identified in the survey have existed for an average of 10 years, with 30 percent existing for 15 years or more. The size of areas served by these organizations ranged from five to 10,000 households, but most serve communities of between 50 and 500 households.<sup>2</sup> In large agglomerations such as the National Government Center, Isla Baseco, Parola Binondo, and Parola Tondo, a variety of patterns of community organizing emerged. The predominant model was of a large area divided into numerous geographically defined spaces with a single CBO claiming representation in each area. These organizations were in turn linked to other CBOs through federations. This model prevailed in the National Government Center, where CBO federations, including SAMA-SAMA and SANAPA, had divided the area into communities of between 100 to 400 households, each of which had its own CBO. However, Parola Binondo, an area of about 2500 households, had only one CBO which had divided the area into eleven sections, each of which had its own local leader. In Parola Tondo, an area of similar population immediately across from Parola Binondo, there existed ten different CBOs, each of which claimed to represent the entire area. While it was apparent that there was competition between the CBOs, many also worked together and shared responsibilities. Finally, in Isla Baseco, an area of about 3000 households, the barangay office was the dominant force in community organizing. The area was divided into 18 blocks, each of which had an elected block leader who coordinated with the barangay hall. The residents we spoke to recognized no CBO presence in the area. Thus no dominant logic seems to have asserted itself in the dynamics of community organizing in these large informal settlements.

The organizational structure of CBOs is quite consistent—they generally consist of a president, vice-president, treasurer, public relations officer, sergeant-at-arms, secretary, and perhaps one or two other officer. This structure reflects the registering requirements of government agencies—90 percent of CBOs are registered with one or more government agencies, and 85 percent are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which is responsible for registering all NGOs in the country. It is likely that in most cases this organizational structure does not correspond particularly well to the functional allocation of responsibilities among CBO officers. In all, the 60 organizations reported a total of 355 officers.

In all but one of the 60 communities with a CBO, officers had been elected by members of the CBO. Organizational by-laws in most cases stipulate that elections are to be held every one or two years. However, 20 percent of organizations report

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2 Two of the communities had populations under 40 households despite the fact that areas of this size listed on the censuses were excluded from the sample. One of the communities had experienced a demolition in which the vast majority of residents were relocated to another area. However, five households remained, and one resident maintained a post in the original community's CBO, which now operates in both the original community and the relocation site. In the second case, an area of 90 households turned out to contain three distinct communities, one of which was chosen at random. This community of 11 households had an active CBO which was engaged in a Supreme Court case over their tenure status.

holding elections only when necessary, for example when an officer leaves the community or passes away, or when residents demand a change in leadership. In addition, an examination of the date of the last elections held in each community and the mandated interval between elections reveals that at least 25 percent of organizations have fallen behind in their election schedule. Thus it would appear that only slightly more than half of the CBOs have in fact held regular elections. Elections have been identified as a key litmus test of the ‘accountability’ of CBOs and NGOs, an issue that is of central concern to the community development literature (Edwards and Hulme 1995). While the prevalence of elected leaders seems to indicate some degree of accountability in these organizations, their failure to continue to hold elections raises concerns over whether they remain accountable over the long term.

Another measure of the accountability of CBOs is how widely they define their membership. Berner (1997) and others have raised concerns that minority socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious groups, and particularly renters, are often excluded from membership in CBOs. Community leaders in the survey areas claim that a median of 90 percent of residents are members of their organization. However, the lack of awareness among residents of CBOs, demonstrated by their inability to direct the survey researchers to CBO officers, indicates a need to view this claim skeptically. Many organizations also have requirements for membership, including periods of residency ranging from 6 months to ten years, clearance from the local barangay office, and good moral conduct. Concerns regarding the exclusion of renters appear to be valid—one third of organizations explicitly ban renters from being members. Renters face such discrimination because they are often perceived to have no ties to the community, and because of reluctance among owners to share the benefits of any improvement projects with them.

Numerous studies have noted the strong role often played by women in community leadership (Moser and McIlwane 1997). Much of this literature has asserted that women are better suited to community leadership than men. For example, Racelis (1998) argues that “women’s traditional nurturing and community management roles encourage them to give priority attention to social services and environmental concerns” that are often neglected by men. The survey indicates that women do indeed play a strong role in CBOs in Manila and Quezon City—56.6 percent of the CBO officers are women. Nevertheless, only 39 percent of CBO presidents are women. Thus the role of women in CBOs should not be overstated. While women enjoy a stronger role in the Philippines than in many other societies, they are often stereotyped as weak and incapable of making decisions—allegations of this nature dogged Corazon Aquino throughout her term as president. In CBOs, men are often viewed as more politically astute, and women are often relegated to the position of secretary or treasurer. This is less so, however, in communities that have been influenced by NGOs, a topic that I will return to later.

Table 6.5 shows the percentage of CBOs that engage in various types of collective activities. Two particularly important activities are the development of roads and

drainage gutters. Heavy rains cause flooding and road damage in many parts of Metro Manila during the rainy season, and the digging, paving, and cleaning of gutters, and the improvement and maintenance of roads, are essential activities. CBOs are often responsible for coordinating such activities, soliciting funds from local politicians, and purchasing food and drinks for volunteer workers. Community leaders also often play a key role in security, mediating in disputes among residents. Many also

**Table 6.4: Characteristics of informal settlements in Quezon City and Manila (percent)**

	Quezon City (n=40)	Manila (n=40)	Total (n=80)
% with paved roads	62.5	77.5	70.9
% with houses mostly with concrete walls	60	40	50
Average age of communities	29.4	33.3	31.4
Average number of households	268	656	462
Median number of households	100	200	125
% with household water connection	52.5	60.0	56.2
% of communities with legal electricity connection	97.5	87.5	7.5
% of communities with connection to sewerage	65.0	62.5	36.2

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

coordinate nightly fire and crime patrols, which are referred to as ‘ronda’—a vital task in light of the reluctance of police to patrol many informal settlements, and the threat of arson facing many communities.

The role of CBOs in water provision and garbage collection tends to be more passive. Local governments are more likely to take primary responsibility for these activities, and in only a few cases did CBOs play a direct role in installing water pipes, digging wells, or collecting and disposing of garbage. Community leaders generally play a role in lobbying local officials to put in a water pipe, or undertaking

**Table 6.5: Activities undertaken by community-based organizations (percent)**

	Quezon City (n=35)	Manila (n=25)	Total (n=60)
Water delivery	37.1	44.0	40.0
Drainage canal development	65.7	64.0	65.0
Road development	60.0	36.0	50.0
Garbage collection	57.1	36.0	48.3
Security	74.3	64.0	70.0
Microlending/livelihood	22.9	12.0	18.3
Social service delivery	37.1	28.0	33.3

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

public information campaigns to inform residents of garbage collection times or to stop them from polluting a local canal.

Other activities that communities are involved in include running microcredit projects, soliciting donations from politicians for destitute members, building local chapels or multipurpose halls, and organizing sporting events or community festivals. In sum, these organizations play an important role in linking communities to resources and delivering a variety of basic infrastructure and services that are being neglected by government.

In addition to the provision of services, some CBOs also engage in political activities. A total of 30 of the communities surveyed, or 37.5 percent, report that community residents had participated in some form of demonstration or political rally. In most cases (17 of the 30), these demonstrations concerned community issues, most notably protests against planned evictions or rallies for legalization of tenure, or to request government assistance in community improvement. However, a number of other issues sparked resident activism: in seven communities residents rallied over political issues such as opposition to the ongoing conflict between Muslim separatists and government forces in the southern Philippines, to oil price hikes, or to proposed changes to the constitution; residents of four communities have joined mobilizations to stop demolitions in other communities, usually at the behest of a CBO federation; and in two areas leaders claim that residents have been paid to join rallies sponsored by politicians.

What factors have influenced residents of these communities to engage in such political action? The case studies identified three main factors that seem to have encouraged activism in communities: the development of a strong collective identity based on social ties within the community; the experience of successful instances of collective action; and the influence of NGOs in providing resources, political support and assistance in organizing. The factor that stands out most prominently in the survey data is the influence of NGOs. In all but one of the 30 politically active communities leaders state that they were encouraged to participate in demonstrations by NGOs. Sixty percent of CBOs that have engaged in demonstration have received leadership training from NGOs, as opposed to only 8 percent of those that have not engaged in demonstrations. In addition, leaders of 87 percent of politically active communities report having come under threat of demolition, as opposed to only 54 percent of the remaining organizations. In sum, it would seem that communities that engage in political activities have been politicized by the threat of demolition and by a hostile political environment and have been influenced by the training and political conscientization of NGOs.

This book has argued that the extent of organizing in communities is influenced by the political climate of the locality. The qualitative data from the case studies provides evidence for this assertion, and this is further validated by the data from the survey. As noted earlier, Quezon City communities are much more likely to form CBOs than are those in Manila. The difference between the number of communities with CBOs in the two cities is statistically significant (Table 6.1). In addition, five of the Manila communities and only one of the Quezon City communities reported

engaging in none of the seven community improvement activities discussed earlier. Thus half of the Manila communities have no CBO or an inactive CBO, as compared to only fifteen percent of the Quezon City communities. This is true despite the long history of community organizing in Manila—the first major CBO federation, the Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO), was formed in Manila in the early 1970s.

The greater extent of community organizing in Quezon City is also apparent in the number of meetings held by CBOs in the two cities, and in community leaders' views on CBO agency. Of the 80 communities surveyed, 74 had held community meetings in the preceding year, with a median number of 9 meetings in Quezon City and 5 in Manila. When asked to state who was responsible for major improvements in the community, leaders of the Manila communities were most likely to name barangay officials (Table 6.6). In contrast, leaders of Quezon City communities were much more likely to name the local CBO as the entity responsible for improvements. It is also worth noting that Quezon City leaders named a greater number of improvements per respondent than Manila leaders—2.6 to 1.9. While the possibility of bias must be taken into account, as respondents are themselves community leaders, the indication is that Quezon City CBOs have been more effective and enjoy a better reputation in their communities than do those in Manila.

**Table 6.6: Community improvements named by community residents, and who they felt was responsible for improvements (number of responses)**

Name of Community	Improvements (number of responses)	Who was responsible for improvements (number of responses)		
Quezon City	Roads	23	Community-based organization	54
	Electricity	20	Community residents	15
	Water	16	City government agency or official	14
	Houses	9	Barangay official	11
	Telephones	5	National government agency or official	8
	Livelihood	5	Non-governmental organization	4
	Sewers	4	Other	1
	Schools	3		
	Street lighting	3		
Manila	Other	16		
	Water	13	Barangay officials	27
	Roads	11	Community residents	21
	Electricity	10	Community-based Organizations	18
	Houses	7	National government agency or official	5
	Cleanliness	5	City government agency or official	4
	Schools	4		
	Garbage	4		
	Telephones	3		
	Sewers	3		
	Basketball Court	3		
	Cooperation	3		
Other	10			

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

There are several possible reasons for the lesser extent of community organizing in Manila. One interpretation is that the relative lack of tenure security in the Manila communities and the tense history of state-community relations have created cynicism among residents regarding the potential for collective action and have consequently frustrated attempts at community organizing. A second possible reason is that barangay level government tends to maintain stronger control over political mobilization in Manila than in Quezon City. There are two main reasons for this. First, many informal settlements in Manila are large agglomerations. In such agglomerations, the political base of barangay leaders comes predominantly from informal settlements, and barangay leaders must therefore cater to their interests. Second, patronage politics is much more prevalent in Manila, and barangay level officials often have strong political and financial backing from mayors who depend on them to deliver votes. A final reason for the discrepancy in organizing between the two cities is the strength of Quezon City's NGO sector, which is largely attributable to the presence of major universities in the city.

While CBOs are more prevalent in Quezon City, however, organizations in Manila are more likely to engage in politically oriented activities. Leaders of 15 communities in each city reported residents engaging in demonstrations or political rallies. This indicates that, where Manila communities do organize, they are more likely to be engaged in political activism, while Quezon City communities are more likely to organize around a self-help agenda or to cooperate with government agencies. This is to be expected considering the contentious relations between local government and communities in Manila, and the greater openness of Quezon City government to political participation by CBOs.

### **CBO relations with NGOs**

The case studies have highlighted the key role that NGOs can play in helping CBOs to stabilize their organizational structure and increase their capacity to undertake projects. The results of the survey indicate that NGOs also have a significant impact on the formation of CBO leadership, the types of participation CBOs engender, and their political orientation.

Of the 60 CBOs identified in the survey, 44 had received some type of assistance from NGOs. In many cases, however, this assistance consisted of one or two minor programs, such as microcredit or the donation of money or food for poorer families. This was particularly the case in Manila, where charitable organizations seem to have concentrated their efforts. In other communities, however, NGOs have explicitly geared their intervention towards tenure legalization and shelter improvement, and have taken a stronger role in strengthening CBOs and empowering them politically. Among the activities undertaken by such NGOs are:

- Conducting seminars and lectures on leadership, community organizing, and tenure legalization.
- Consultation with CBOs on legal matters, and in the processing of documents related to tenure legalization.
- Researching land title status.
- Providing materials, equipment, funding, and technical assistance in community improvement efforts.
- Assisting CBOs in lobbying and negotiations with government.

The data indicate that NGOs, particularly those that engage in politically oriented organizing, tend to target their assistance at certain types of communities. For example, of the 20 communities that have received assistance from NGOs in community organizing, 19 report having experienced a threat of eviction. In comparison, 23 of the 39 communities that have not received such assistance report having been threatened by eviction. This indicates that NGOs tend to target communities that have already experienced a certain amount of political radicalization through confrontation with government. In addition, 70 percent of CBOs that have received organizing assistance are located on national government land, often in large agglomerations of informal settlers. This suggests that NGOs tend to target large agglomerations in an effort to maximize the impacts of their efforts and take advantage of the possibility of any ‘contagion effect’ their organizing activities might have on surrounding communities.

**Table 6.7: CBOs receiving various types of assistance from NGOs (percent)**

Type of assistance	Quezon City (n=35)	Manila (n=25)	Total (n=60)
Leadership training	40.0	32.0	36.7
Community organizing	37.1	40.0	38.3
Legalizing tenure	40.0	28.0	35.0
Housing development	5.7	0.0	3.3
Infrastructure development	14.3	4.0	10.0
Microlending/livelihood	8.6	36.0	20.0
Social services	5.7	32.0	16.7
Legal services	28.6	28.0	28.3
Lobbying and negotiation	28.6	40.0	33.3

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

The influence of NGOs on CBO leadership has largely been unexplored in the community development literature. This influence is exercised through various means. Most obviously, NGOs conduct training in leadership and community organizing to inculcate leaders with the skills and values (political, moral, or religious, depending on the orientation of the NGO) that they believe contribute to good leadership. Perhaps more significant, however, is their day-to-day interaction with active residents in communities, and the informal influence they exercise over the selection of community leaders. Many community organizers employed by NGOs make the identification of potential leaders—people who are active in

community affairs, who agree with the objectives of the NGO, and who do not have political agendas that compete with those of the NGO—one of their primary initial goals upon entering a community. Identifying such leaders is particularly imperative when existing community leaders oppose intervention by NGOs. These individuals then become the organizer's point of contact in the community, and the foundation for an attempt to establish an organization, or usurp authority from an existing organization where deemed necessary. NGOs target potential leaders for training, and put them in charge of community improvement efforts and political activities. This inevitably raises their stature within the community, making them viable candidates for elected community leadership posts.

Leaders weaned under NGO tutelage differ from those who emerge in the absence of an NGO. Most notably, they are much more likely to be women. In 52.3 percent (12 of 23) of communities that had received assistance in leadership training from NGOs, the president of the CBO was a woman. This compares with just 22.9 percent (8 of 36) in CBOs that had not had such training. This is particularly remarkable considering the fact that all but one of these leaders was elected by community residents, indicating that NGOs have significantly altered community residents' perceptions of their leaders through the types of interventions mentioned above. NGO organizers focus organizing efforts on women because they believe they are more likely to work in the household and spend more time in the community, and therefore tend to have a stronger interest in community affairs. Furthermore, many within NGOs argue that women are somewhat less inclined to seek personal financial or political gain from their leadership positions.

NGOs also appear to have some impact on the membership of CBOs, and on the degree of community participation in CBO activities. CBOs that have received assistance in leadership training have a median of 12 community meetings per year, as compared with 6 meetings in CBOs that have not received such assistance. In addition, these CBOs appear to be more inclusive—only 19 percent exclude renters from membership, as compared to slightly more than 40 percent for CBOs that have not received leadership assistance. Nevertheless, the data do not indicate that these CBOs engage in significantly more collective activities—both organizations that have been assisted by NGOs in leadership training and those that have not engage in an average of slightly more than three of the types of collective activities listed in Table 6.4.

Finally, Berner (1997) argues that the names of CBOs provide insights into the impact of NGO organizing. Specifically, he argues that, when left to their own devices, residents tend to be rather conservative in naming their organizations, choosing English language names, most often dubbing themselves a 'homeowners association', and avoiding names with political connotations. Organizations that have been influenced by NGOs, on the other hand, tend to choose 'high sounding Tagalog names' that have political connotations, often containing the terms 'kilusang' (movement), and 'maralitang tagalunsod' (a term for urban poor that has connotations of extreme poverty and destitution). The survey data indicate that, while NGOs certainly appear to have an influence on the political orientations of

CBOs, this does not seem to be manifest in their names—50 percent of those that have received organizing and leadership assistance had Tagalog names, as compared to 57 percent of those that had not.

In sum, the survey data indicate that NGOs generally have a positive impact on the variables associated with ‘accountability’ of CBOs—the degree of participation, the make-up of membership, and the types of leaders chosen. In addition, they play a critical role in fostering political activism in informal settlements. What little light the survey sheds on the actual activities of CBOs, however, does not indicate that NGOs have a significant impact on their role as service providers.

### **Community Relations with Government**

This section will address two questions. First, what relations do the surveyed communities have with government agencies at both the local and national level? Second, how do leaders in the communities view their relationship with politicians at various levels of government? Finally, how do Quezon City and Manila differ with regard to state-community relations?

One measure of relations between governments and communities is the frequency with which community leaders report approaching government officials at various levels—barangay, city and national—to request assistance (Table 6.8). The data indicate that, as might be expected, the tense nature of state-community relations in Manila results in less frequent interaction between local leaders and government officials. Paradoxically, leaders in Manila report less interaction with barangay officials than do leaders in Quezon City, despite the fact that Manila leaders are much more likely to attribute local improvements to barangay officials, as noted in Table 6.6. This indicates that communities vary significantly in their relations with barangay government in Manila—while some CBOs interact with their barangay frequently and receive substantial assistance, others have almost no relations with the barangay.

The survey also asked what types of assistance community leaders request from officials at various levels. CBO officials report approaching barangay government to address peace and order issues, to request funding for social service or infrastructure development programs, or to request permission to undertake construction projects. They approach city government to request funding and materials for community improvement projects, to discuss issues related to planned demolitions or to request assistance in tenure legalization, and to request funds or gifts for funerals, weddings, or Christmas. Visits to national government agencies are generally related to issues of tenure legalization. They express the greatest degree of satisfaction in their dealings with city governments—90 percent are satisfied with the response of city officials to their requests, as compared to 70 percent for barangay officials and 78 percent for national government officials. These figures probably represent the greater financial capacity of city governments in addressing community needs.

**Table 6.8: Frequency of interaction between CBOs and government agencies in Quezon City and Manila in the previous 12 months (percent)**

Number of visits	Quezon City (n=40)	Manila (n=40)	Total (n=80)
<b>Barangay</b>			
0	20.0	47.5	33.8
1-5	45.0	22.5	33.8
6+	35.0	30.0	32.5
<b>City government</b>			
0	30.0	39.5	34.8
1-5	42.5	23.7	33.1
6+	27.5	36.8	32.2
<b>National government</b>			
0	65.0	55.0	60.0
1-5	32.5	30.0	31.3
6+	2.5	15.0	8.8

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

An argument that state-community relations in Manila are much less cooperative than in Quezon City implies that community leaders in Manila should be more critical of government than those in Quezon City. However, this is not substantiated by the survey data. Tables 6.9, 6.10, and 6.11 show respondents' views regarding barangay, city and national government agencies. What is most notable is the remarkable similarity of views of leaders in Manila and Quezon City communities.

**Table 6.9: Community leaders' assessment of the performance of the local mayor (percent)**

	Quezon City (n=40)	Manila (n=40)	Total (n=80)
Excellent	2.5	2.5	2.5
Good	50.0	47.5	48.8
Mediocre	30.0	32.5	31.3
Poor	5.0	15.0	10.0
DK	12.5	2.5	6.3

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

There are a variety of possible interpretations of these findings. One is that the similarities between Quezon City and Manila are an anomaly created by the political changes that have taken place in Manila in recent years. Specifically, the survey results from Manila may indicate the relatively positive views of residents of the Mayor Lito Atienza, who came to power two years before the survey was implemented. Mayor Atienza initially made a concerted effort to gain the political loyalty of the poor by initiating new poverty alleviation projects. The results

**Table 6.10: Community leaders' assessment of the performance of the local mayor (percent)**

	Quezon City (n=40)	Manila (n=40)	Total (n=80)
Very positive	12.5	12.5	12.5
Somewhat positive	27.5	37.5	32.5
No effect	42.5	20.0	31.3
Negative effect	12.5	30.0	21.3
Do not know/ No answer	5.0	0	2.5

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

**Table 6.11: Community leaders' assessment of the helpfulness of barangay officials to their community (percent)**

	Quezon City (n=40)	Manila (n=40)	Total (n=80)
Very helpful	27.5	30.0	28.8
Somewhat helpful	42.5	40.0	41.3
Not very helpful	20.0	17.5	18.8
Not helpful	7.5	7.5	7.5
Do not know	2.5	5.0	3.8

Source: Sample survey of community leaders

may also indicate the success of politicians in maintaining support in low-income communities through patronage and politically popular projects. Former Mayor Lim of Manila, for example, was quite popular in poor communities due to his success in lowering crime rates, despite his reputation for favoring development at the expense of poor communities. Another interpretation is that the results reflect different levels of expectation. In Quezon City, where opportunities exist for state-community cooperation, expectations of community leaders for government have increased accordingly. In contrast, Manila residents expect little from government, and consequently are inclined to view any support favorably.

In sum, the findings of the survey regarding state-community relations are similar to the findings of the case studies. While there are significant differences in state-community relations in Quezon City and Manila, community residents' views of government are tempered by the practical necessity of working with existing politicians. Thus community leaders seem to temper their assessments of politicians even where relations with local government are strained.

## Conclusion

The data from the survey of CBOs provides a useful overview of the extent and nature of community organizing in Manila and Quezon City. The findings validate what researchers have long suspected—that the vast majority of communities do

have an organization, and that these organizations play a vital role in community maintenance. However, the survey data also testify to the fragility and lack of capacity of many organizations, and issues in the accountability of CBOs.

In addition, the survey validates two of the main findings from the qualitative data from the case studies. The first concerns the impact of contextual factors on the extent and nature of community organizing. As with the case studies, the survey data indicate that CBOs are less likely to form in restrictive political environments, but that, where they do form, they are more likely to engage in radical political action. Community leaders in Manila are much less likely to see CBOs as having a positive impact on community affairs. CBOs in Manila are more likely to engage in protest and less likely to engage in community improvement efforts than communities in Quezon City. In other words, communities in Quezon City are more likely to develop a transformative political identity, while those in Manila are more likely to develop a defensive or dependent identity. Second, the survey validates the findings of the case studies that NGOs play a critical role in fostering and sustaining collective action in informal settlements, and in making CBOs more accountable to their communities. While issues emerge in NGO influence on CBOs, their presence is positively associated with indicators of accountability and participation.

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## Chapter 7

# A Comparative Perspective on Collective Action and Community Change

In their essay on the dangers inherent in the trend towards localism in development theory and practice, Mohan and Stokke (2000) differentiate between two interpretations of the term 'participatory development'. The first is a 'revisionist neoliberal' interpretation which sees participation as based on a 'harmony model of power' which implies that "the empowerment of the powerless [can] be achieved without any significant negative effects upon the power of the powerful" (249). This is the interpretation embodied in the 'enablement' discourse that has emerged from the World Bank, and it is operationalized through a political agenda that divorces participation at the grassroots level from a discussion of a policy or planning agenda focused on redistribution of political or economic power. The context of a globalizing city like Metro Manila highlights the contradictions in this perspective, as intense competition and conflict over limited central land, and a struggle for state resources and patronage, infuse all interactions between state, community, and private sector interests. This book has argued that the revisionist neo-liberal theory of participation as interpreted by many powerful actors and institutions in the Philippines has led in most cases to the exclusion of communities from meaningful decision-making in the implementation of reform.

The second interpretation is what Mohan and Stokke (2000: 249) call a 'post-Marxist' perspective that views participation as "'bottom-up' social mobilization... as a challenge to hegemonic interests within the state and the market." This model, which represents the varying perspectives of the Philippine left, implies a reform project that marries grassroots participation with an agenda of social and political change based on redistributive social programming. Measures to address the lack of access to legal and adequate housing and infrastructure among the urban poor must be considered central to such an agenda. The analysis of Metro Manila CBOs presented here has illustrated that this model embodies its own set of contradictions. Confronted with the reality of their limited political influence, the urban poor quite naturally weigh their options in choosing between mobilization in the pursuit of reformist and particularistic goals. The post-Marxist model assumes some degree of partnership between communities, civil society and government in achieving social reforms inasmuch as such partnership is required to achieve the desired outcomes. Where such cooperation is not forthcoming, however, community-based collective action may be muted, and the social reform agenda may grind to a halt. Divisions among NGO, political party, and social movement actors who embrace the 'post-

Marxist' model may hinder the development of a coherent reform agenda that can attract a large constituency. And the interactions between community, NGO and government actors are themselves fraught with power inequities despite the stated, and in some cases actual good intentions of the actors involved. For these reasons, efforts to achieve broad-based mobilization towards reform goals are relatively rare. Hence, in the Philippines, while significant achievements in civil society mobilization and political reform must be acknowledged, these achievements have not measured up to the expectations that were embodied in reform legislation and new shelter programs.

This chapter will review the lessons from the data analysis presented in this book for the project of social and political reform through decentralization and CBO participation, and specifically will revisit the research questions that have informed this study: How and when do CBOs and NGOs mobilize residents and engage in collective action and political mobilization? How and under what circumstances are communities able to translate political opportunity into meaningful change in policy and planning? And, what impact has CBO mobilization had on urban politics, and by extension on broader processes of change in state-civil society relations? It will begin by reviewing the historical and contemporary development of the Metro Manila political economy, and exploring how this political economy has shaped the context in which urban CBOs operate. It will then focus on the two critical relationships that have been the focus of analysis in this book: the relationship between CBOs and government, and between CBOs and community residents. It will elaborate on the importance of these relationships for the prospects of community organizing, and will raise the question of how and why they might encourage successful community-based collective action.

The chapter will also adopt a comparative perspective, examining the roles of CBOs in other contexts in order to gain some perspectives on the distinctive features of the Metro Manila case. There are numerous potential comparison cases, but this chapter will focus on two that I believe provide for a particularly fruitful contrast. The first is Bangkok, a city that shares much in common with Metro Manila in terms of regional context and demographics, but has experienced a very different trajectory for state-civil society relations around housing due in large part to the centralized character of the Thai state. Bangkok provides a useful comparison of the experience of NGOs and CBOs in a context that varies dramatically from the enablement model. The second is the case of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, which is a highly celebrated instance of broad-based participation that resulted in a significant shift in government priorities that had a redistributive impact. It is useful to examine Porto Alegre as a case in which the 'post-Marxist' model of community participation has been achieved to a much greater degree than in Metro Manila, in order to understand the historical, social and political circumstances that allowed this to occur.

## **The Historical Roots of Contemporary State-Community Relations in the Philippines**

The recent focus on the roles of civil society and social capital in development have drawn on a somewhat simplistic interpretation of Putnam's (1993; 2001) work that argues that grassroots associations form the building blocks of sound, democratic governance and social and economic progress. International aid and lending organizations have consequently supported the formation of such associations, and the decentralization of government, as a means to bring decision-making closer to civil society influence. I have argued, however, that the meaning and outcomes of the global 'associational revolution' must be understood with reference to the particularities of the local context. When and why communities mobilize, and whether this results in more accountable government, are powerfully shaped by the history of state-community relations. Furthermore, I have argued that inequities created by global economic integration may also inhibit cooperation between government and civil society, particularly in the context of a globalizing city where pressures for the commodification of land frequently bring about conflict between the interests of government and communities.

In the Philippines, four main factors have shaped contemporary state-civil society relations. The first is the historical dominance of local economic interests in Philippine politics, and the consequent weakness of the national government. This has shaped associationalism in two ways. First, the dominance of local politicians, and the national government's lack of resources, have resulted in a lack of large-scale state support for social service provision, community and economic development, or poverty alleviation. Consequently, many NGOs have emerged to fill this gap through charity or by organizing community-based self-help efforts. Second, local organizations of politically marginalized people have historically emerged during times of upheaval to express political opposition to dictatorial government or local caciques. This was the case towards the end of Spanish colonial rule in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the immediate aftermath of American colonial rule in the early 1950s, during Marcos' rule, and in the period since 1986 (Clarke 1998). Thus the growth of civil society has not necessarily represented the strengthening of social capital and popular participation in government—rather, it has generally represented ad hoc responses of communities to government neglect or oppression.

The second factor is the impact of the colonial experience on the Philippines, and particularly the contradictory legacy of American colonial rule. The Americans arrived in the Philippines after winning control of the colony in the Spanish-American War with the stated intention of pursuing a more benevolent form of colonialism (Wurfel 1988). In contrast to Spanish efforts to close channels for social advancement among Filipinos, the Americans expanded the educational system, and undertook reforms to 'Filipinize' and democratize local and national governments. Yet America's claims of benevolence were belied by the brutality with which it dealt with the Philippine war for independence (Salman 1991). In addition, reforms for democratization had the effect of reinforcing the power of the country's landowning

elite, an outcome that was acceptable to the American colonial government as it suited the United States' economic interests in the country. Thus Philippine politics has been marked by a disparity between the rhetoric of democracy and popular participation in government, fostered by American colonial rule and perpetuated by political leaders today, and the reality of persistent poverty and powerlessness for the majority of the population. The formation of NGOs and CBOs demanding a voice in the political system represents one popular response to that disparity.

The third factor is the experience of Marcos' authoritarian rule, which created popular sentiment for reforms for democratization and decentralization. The severe backlash against the Marcos government has made calls for centralization of government politically taboo. As noted in chapter 2, it also led to the formation of an alliance between the middle class, export-oriented industrial interests, and landowning families around a model of governance based on democratization and decentralization.

The fourth and final factor is the Philippine governments' current emphasis on pursuing a model of development based on export-oriented industrialization combined with the pressures for fiscal austerity that it faces in order to retain access to credit and attract investment. The consequent cuts in the government budget have led the government to encourage efforts at self-help in informal settlements. The growth of the Metro Manila economy and consequent explosion in property values has provided a yet stronger incentive for propertied interests to exercise their influence in local politics.

This history has shaped collective action in urban communities in complex ways. As the empirical data have shown, these organizations function in an atmosphere characterized by contrasts. Politicians at all levels employ the rhetoric of democracy and participation even as entrenched family-based economic and political interests continue to exercise influence through back-room politics. NGOs that claim to represent the poor continue to mushroom, but many avoid efforts to engage government directly to resolve critical issues like land tenure, and those that do often face considerable opposition. Innovative programs like the CMP have transformed many communities physically and socially, yet an overwhelming majority of informal settlements remain unaffected. The globalization of the economy provides opportunity for some, yet local growth-oriented urban regimes have also used the rhetoric of global competitiveness to legitimize policies that often contradict community interests. A diverse and vibrant political left has produced an array of competing proposals for social change, yet divisions have insured that none of these have captured the imagination of important constituencies. The overall result has been a dynamic of state-civil society relations characterized more by antagonism and cooptation as much as by cooperation and trust. While there are numerous civic associations, and many have emerged to express political opposition or to engage in self-help efforts, their presence does not necessarily signify a belief in communities that they will be able to exert influence on political processes.

In Metro Manila, pervasive social distrust has fostered a vicious circle in which lack of positive change deepens mutual suspicion between state, community

and private sector actors, thus perpetuating acrimonious relations. As I will argue below, outcomes for state-CBO relations in Porto Alegre and Bangkok vary significantly from the Metro Manila case. In Thailand, a history of concentration of power in the national government has stifled civil society mobilization until recently. Yet, as civil society has grown in recent years, it has been able to take advantage of opportunities for the formulation of redistributive programming that exist due to the presence of a relatively strong state and a stable and technocratic national bureaucracy. In Brazil, the presence of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), or Worker's Party, a strong left political party with a base in national social movements, has opened significant opportunities for engagement. The experiences of community-based collective action and state-CBO relations in these two cases will be explored further in the next two sections.

### **Community-Based Organizations and the State: Lessons from Metro Manila, Bangkok and Porto Alegre**

The enablement framework argues that governments and organizations of civil society can be expected to endorse enablement reforms out of shared interests. Fiscal and political decentralization provide more influence to local governments while relieving national governments of burdensome responsibilities for infrastructure and service provision. By engaging CBOs and NGOs, local governments can improve the efficiency of service delivery, thus improving their fiscal position and making them more competitive. And CBOs and NGOs have an interest in gaining representation in government in order to have a voice in decisions that affect their fate.

This book has argued, however, that contradictions in this model of reform result in conflict between government and community interests. First, while enablement reforms call for government to encourage the participation of civil society, the underpinnings of the model in neoliberal thought dictate that governments preempt attempts by civil society to curb the influence of market forces. Thus the political space opened by such reforms is inherently limited by political resistance to measures that contradict market principles. The enablement framework implicitly assumes, therefore, that participation should be limited to project-level decisions at the neighborhood scale, or should be steered away from transformative change at the policy or program level.

Second, there is a collective action problem among local governments in large metropolitan regions like Metro Manila that undertake reforms for decentralization. Each of the 17 city and municipal governments in Metro Manila have little incentive to invest in major social programs because, if they do, they will bear a disproportionate amount of the costs of addressing social problems in the metro area, while having to share the benefits. For example, if a Metro Manila city or municipality were to implement a comprehensive mass-housing program, this would simply attract informal settlers from elsewhere in the metro area, expanding the population of the poor and burdening the local government with increased fiscal responsibilities. Yet

neighboring cities and municipalities would reap much of the rewards of such an initiative as beneficiaries of the program would constitute a source of labor for the entire metropolitan region. This collective action problem partially explains why city and municipal governments in Metro Manila have lagged behind their counterparts in other parts of the country in implementing recent reforms in low-income housing delivery.

Of course, local politicians have political incentives to undertake community improvement programs as well—such efforts are a necessary part of building and maintaining an electoral constituency. And indeed, some Philippine cities and municipalities have experienced effective partnership between city government and CBOs (Santos 1998; Etemadi 2004; Robredo 2003). A notable example is Naga City, a city of 140,000 in which a progressive mayor has taken extensive steps to institutionalize civil society participation in decision-making and implemented an ambitious set of anti-poverty policies that have led to significant community improvement (Robredo 2003). The fact that this political agenda has allowed the mayor to develop a formidable political base indicates that there is opportunity for CBOs and NGOs working on issues of poverty to gain political influence in the current framework. Yet in many respects Naga City is the exception that proves the rule of the continued dominance of elite interests—the mayor who brought a reform agenda to Naga City was initially elected based on his ties to an elite political family. In most cases, local politicians have proven extremely astute at formulating programs aimed at maintaining political support in informal settlements while failing to commit the necessary resources to systematically address the housing needs of low-income people. This is apparent in the cases of Quezon City and Makati. In Quezon City, the People's Bureau has functioned as an excellent public relations tool for the local government in dealing with informal settlements, yet has arguably had a marginal impact on the supply of housing due to its lack of project funding. In Makati, the Binays have cultivated a populist image by taking public stands against local developers and landowners, while selectively providing resources and favors to informal settlements. This has muted opposition to the local government's continued exclusion of informal settlers from decision-making. It is also notable that the most celebrated examples of state-civil society collaboration in the Philippines have occurred outside Metro Manila. In Metro Manila, the globalization of the urban economy and the collective action problem among local governments described above provide mayors with a strong incentive to resist civil society participation.

The cases of Bangkok and Porto Alegre provide a contrast to that of Metro Manila. In Bangkok, a more centralized government framework has created both obstacles to and opportunities for participation by urban CBOs. With power concentrated in national ministries and the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority, NGOs and CBOs working with the urban poor have not had the same direct interaction with and influence on urban government as is evident in Metro Manila, where many community leaders have met personally with mayors and city councilors. Nevertheless, the presence of a stable and technocratic bureaucracy that is largely independent of local economic interests has created possibilities for urban community improvement.

Thailand has a long history of intensely centralized governance. This centralization has its roots in late 19<sup>th</sup> century efforts by the Thai monarchy to extend its influence over a formative Thai nation-state (Thongchai 1994; McVey 2000). Until very recently, national ministries dominated planning at the local level, and the Ministry of the Interior had extensive powers over appointed provincial administrators. Decentralization has occurred only since the late 1990s and has been intensely contested by the forces of centralization, notably the powerful national ministries (Arghiros 2001). Bangkok, with a population of about 8 million, is governed by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). While the BMA has an elected governor, considerable powers over urban development are concentrated in national agencies. In this framework, grassroots collective action has been more strongly controlled by the national state, and NGOs have emerged more recently out of grassroots movements and a growing middle class interest in the pursuit of alternative strategies for a more equitable, participatory, and environmentally friendly model of development (Missingham 2003). However in deference to the power of the national bureaucracy and the military, and the influence of the royal family, NGOs have disavowed more radical models of change, and have avoided links with left political movements. Rather, they have focused on critiques of top-down planning, and have called for greater local participation.

As democratic institutions have developed and stabilized, the Thai government, influenced by small-scale self-help interventions undertaken by NGOs in some urban communities, have sought to develop more participatory initiatives in the area of urban shelter provision (Boonyabanha 2005). In 1992 the Thai government created the Urban Community Development Office, which later became the Community Organization Development Institute (CODI) in 2000. CODI is an independent public organization that is governed by a board with representatives from both government and NGOs. It has developed a process of urban community development that starts with community organizing through the development of community-based lending associations, and proceeds to tenurization and improvements to housing and infrastructure. By 2000 the organization had provided improved housing to 6,400 families and infrastructure improvements to another 68,208.

In 2001, the landslide electoral victory of a populist prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, raised the activities of CODI to a new level. Thaksin, who aspired to long term rule and unprecedented political dominance, focused his efforts on using the resources of the Thai state to develop populist programs that would ensure him of an impregnable political base (Pasuk and Baker 2005). While hardly a proponent of decentralization or civil society political influence, Thaksin nonetheless recognized the potential political gains to be realized from an ambitious effort at addressing the shelter needs of Bangkok's urban poor. He therefore agreed to fund a new program, Baan Mankong, to be implemented by CODI employing its model of community redevelopment. The project aims to provide more secure tenure and redevelop housing and infrastructure for 300,000 households between 2003 and 2007, with the government providing funding for infrastructure improvement and the rest provided through local self-help. If this goal is achieved it would mean that Baan

Mankong would have produced twice the housing in five years that the Philippines' Community Mortgage Program has produced in 15 years. Thaksin also pursued a more traditional public housing initiative, Eua Aathorn, which is to provide a similar number of units in the same time frame.

The case of Porto Alegre highlights the conditions that are required for large scale community-based collective action to have a significant influence on policy and planning. It specifically highlights the important role that progressive local regimes can play in such a process. The role of such regimes has been a topic of increasing interest in recent years, with much of the focus being on Latin America, where nine of the twelve largest cities were governed by left or center-left mayors for at least part of the 1980s and 90s, and many experienced significant experiments with broad-based participation in governance (Fox 1995; Chavez and Goldfrank 2004). Porto Alegre has been the most closely watched case (Abers 1997, Baiocchi 2004).

Participatory budgeting was initiated in Porto Alegre with the election of a mayor from the PT in 1989 (Baiocchi 2004). The PT had emerged during the 1970s and 1980s as a social movement based political party. As implemented in the case of Porto Alegre, the process begins with open assemblies in different regions of the city, at which priorities for city budget allocations are discussed (Abers 2000; Baiocchi 2001). Delegates for each region are elected by participants in these assemblies to continue the process of detailing the priorities identified during this meeting, and a Municipal Budget Council composed of representatives of each region is elected to negotiate priorities from each region and submit proposals to the mayor and city assembly. The primary objective of participatory budgeting is to subvert the clientelist manner in which city government has historically allocated resources by providing a forum in which, at least theoretically, each citizen can shape the process of budget formulation at its earliest stages.

The result has been an extraordinary reversal of traditional modes of spending that typically focus on highly visible investments in overpriced tunnels, bridges and soccer stadiums. Over the seven years that the PT has been in power in the city, the majority of investments have been directed to small-scale urbanization and infrastructure projects throughout the city's periphery. The 'black box' of the budget has been opened, with more than 14,000 people now participating each year to determine how the city should invest in their neighborhoods and the formation of an elected municipal budget council that has deliberative powers over all city expenditures. (Abers 1997: 40)

While it is clear that participation has not been equal among neighborhoods and social classes in this process, several studies have argued that participatory budgeting has led to a significant shift in budget priorities towards redistributive goals, and that it has provided a forum for low-income groups to articulate their concerns and to gain experience in community organizing and collaborative planning (Abers 2000; Baiocchi 2001; Nysten 2002). PT mayors have initiated similar experiments with participatory budgeting in several cities, and its popularity at the municipal level was arguably central to the party's later success at the national level, and specifically

to the election of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the PT's candidate, to the presidency in 2002.

As is apparent from this description, the PT administration has been critical to this experience of civil society mobilization. Research has pointed to the administration's role in emphasizing the need for participation by all segments of society in the rhetoric surrounding the budgeting process, and in providing an equity-focused political platform that legitimized participation by the poor (Abers 2000; Baiocchi 2001). It was under the patronage of such an ally in the administration that CBOs and NGOs were able to transcend particularist interests and define common ground in their demands.

Neither the Porto Alegre case nor that of Bangkok should be held as ideal. At the time of this writing continued funding and political support for Baan Mankong appear to be jeopardized in the aftermath of a coup that unseated the Thaksin government in September of 2006. In addition, critics have begun to raise questions about the quality of community involvement in its implementation and of the resulting community redevelopment. In Porto Alegre, success was highly dependent on the presence of a progressive urban regime, and questions therefore arise as to whether this success can be sustained with a change in local leadership. PT reforms also fared less well in other cities, and the party's electoral success proved more fleeting as a result. Nonetheless, these two cases point to a simple lesson—in order for fruitful state-civil society cooperation to occur, actors in communities, in the private sector, and in the state must have a sufficient stake in such cooperation to overcome apparent conflicts in their agendas for urban development. In Bangkok, state interest in collaboration with civil society came about when a strong central government and a bureaucracy with a developmental bent became centrally concerned with urban poverty alleviation with the emergence of civil society and the election of a populist prime minister. In Porto Alegre, this interest came about with the election of a political party with deep roots in social movements and community-based mobilization.

By contrast, there is little stake for state and private sector actors to collaborate with communities in the Philippines. Left political parties have generally been quite weak in the Philippines, and the link between economic and political interests in urban governance has already been detailed. In the face of intransigent local and national governments, many NGOs and CBOs view a close association with government as a sign of corruption or weakness. When NGO officials do gain government positions, they often find themselves alienated from their former colleagues. This was evident in the tepidity of NGOs' support for Karina David when she was threatened with losing her position as HUDCC chair.

The Bangkok case further reveals that the conventional wisdom that decentralization is a prerequisite to the development of shared interests between the state and communities, and therefore for the strengthening of civil society, is also questionable. What appears important, rather, is government interest in engaging communities and its ability and willingness to expend political capital to do so. Whether in a centralized or decentralized system of governance, grassroots

participation requires political support. In a highly decentralized system such as that of the Philippines, this is most likely to come about with the emergence of a local political leader who either comes from or forms an allegiance with CBOs and NGOs, and uses limited local resources towards redistributive ends. Progressive local leaders have emerged in a relatively small number of smaller cities and municipalities in the Philippines, Naga City being the most notable example. In addition, some left political parties have begun to have small scale success in realizing the potential of local political leadership as an arena of change. A notable example here is *AKBAYAN*, a social movement based political party that has recently focused on developing models of participatory local governance, and currently counts 19 mayors of small to medium sized municipalities as party members. While this nascent trend towards the emergence of new models of participation in government has been relatively modest, it nonetheless deserve much more scholarly attention as it may hold important lessons for the prospects for improved state-civil society relations in the Philippines.

### **Community-Based Organizations and Communities**

The study has raised three familiar concerns about CBOs' accountability to their communities. The first is the fact that leaders of these organizations are often prone to corruption. Given the grinding poverty in many informal settlements, it is not surprising that many leaders take bribes or misuse community funds. The prevalence of corruption limits the capacity of many CBOs to handle financial resources, and creates distrust in communities that makes these organizations fragile. The second concern is that CBOs may not accurately represent the interests of all community residents, and specifically may exclude certain groups, such as renters, the very poor, and ethnic and religious minorities, from participation. This may be due to discrimination or to conflicts of interest between different groups—renters and owners, or newer and older residents—over the distribution of the benefits and costs of improvement programs. Finally, CBOs generally have limited capacity. This is largely a consequence of the classic problem of collective action—people have little incentive to contribute time and resources to collective goals when they will have to share the rewards of the achievement of these goals with others, including non-participants (Olson 1971).

These weaknesses are well known and documented (Desai 1995). However, they should also not be overstated. Many CBOs in Metro Manila engage participation from residents of all backgrounds. Leaders are often truly motivated by a spirit of voluntarism, and conscientiously carry out their responsibilities. Collective action problems are often overcome through the development of strong social ties in communities, and the employment of social sanctions against free riders. Finally, the data from the survey of CBOs demonstrates that they play a vital role in many communities in delivering services and negotiating with government. Rather than dismissing their role, therefore, it is necessary to address two questions: How can the

capacity and accountability of CBOs be enhanced? And, what is their appropriate role in shelter delivery?

This book has paid particular attention to the contextual factors that affect CBO accountability and capacity. In doing so, it has attempted to identify ways that the structural obstacles to the development of effective CBOs can be overcome. The survey and the case studies indicate that three factors tend to enhance CBO capacity and accountability. The first is the presence of social ties in communities, which is largely a function of the historical development of the community. The second factor is the presence of channels for popular participation in government. Where CBOs have opportunities to have a meaningful impact on programs and policies, they have an incentive to engage in political processes. This creates the potential for the development of a 'virtuous circle' in community organizing, in which a CBO's success in working with government to solve community problems creates confidence within communities in the CBO's capacity, and this confidence leads to more effective participation and hence to further success. The case studies also indicate that success in collective action can lead to enhanced community trust both because the shared experience of cooperation can create such trust, and because collective decision making can lead to changes in the built environment of communities, such as enhanced public space, that intensifies social interaction.

The third factor is assistance from NGOs and CBO federations, including technical assistance and training in the areas of community organizing, leadership, and service delivery, and political support in lobbying. Effective NGOs and CBO federations enhance the accountability of CBOs by strengthening their organizational structure and instilling leaders with an ethos of inclusion. They enhance their capacity through technical assistance, and by acting as a channel for learning among CBOs about successful cases in community organizing, thus encouraging community residents to undertake collective action. Of course, NGOs and CBO federations also have issues of accountability and capacity. Their staff frequently do not come from the same socioeconomic class as residents of informal settlements, and therefore may not represent their interests. Issues of sustainability also emerge—NGO representatives sometimes act as surrogate leaders of CBOs. Yet, despite these issues, both the quantitative and qualitative data presented here indicate that their overall impact on the accountability and capacity of CBOs is positive. In order to further enhance their role, established NGOs will have to carefully consider ways to increase the number of communities they reach, and the types of assistance that best meet the needs of CBOs.

Determining the appropriate role for CBOs is complicated by the extreme disparity in levels of capacity among these organizations. This is apparent in the contrast between Kapit Bisig, which has been largely nonfunctional for the past decade, and Nagkakaisa ng Homeowners ng Viloso Compound (NahVCom), which has organized the reconstruction of the community twice in the last seven years, once for the community's CMP project and once following a devastating fire. Recent Philippine government policy has assumed that CBOs can play a primary role in land acquisition and housing delivery. In CMP programs, for example, CBOs must

organize residents to negotiate with landowners and contribute funds for the project, allocate land to residents, develop subdivision plans, engage residents in self-help to develop housing and infrastructure, and organize collection of monthly amortization from residents. While the numerous successful CMP projects demonstrate the strength of many CBOs, the limited reach of the program and frequent failure of such projects demonstrate the weakness of others. Lack of CBO capacity has been a major bottleneck of the CMP program. The potential for corruption among leadership in such programs is great, and debates over who should get what land parcels at what cost, or who should have to relocate, are often bitter and divisive. In addition, the high cost of land often means that some residents cannot participate in such projects. As a result, about 95 percent of eligible communities have yet to initiate a CMP project, and many others that have are far behind on their repayments.

These observations imply that the impact of programs that rely primarily on market mechanisms and highly capable CBOs is inherently limited. I have argued instead that government must play a vital role in addressing the inequities inherent in market economies in order for community participation to be strong, sustainable and effective. As Fainstein (1999) notes in a discussion of popular political participation in Kerala and Amsterdam:

Democratic procedure was crucial to their development but also...was insufficient. Required also was a structural situation of relative material equality as both precondition and outcome of development and a culture of tolerance and commitment to equity. There is a virtuous circle in which the political economy and social structure are conducive to democratic decision-making, and public sentiment supports the continuation of a redistributive state. Citizens of Amsterdam and Kerala possess a set of social rights not just political rights, and it is these social rights that make political participation meaningful.

In the area of housing for low-income people, such a commitment to social rights would entail several things. First, it would entail a commitment to ensuring access to land for housing for low-income people through either subsidies or government acquisition of land. Second, it would require a commitment to equity in the process of economic development through policies and programs to protect labor and provide for social welfare. Finally, it would require measures to ensure local government accountability.

Once again, the cases of Porto Alegre and Bangkok are instructive on the potential alternative roles of government and CBOs in encouraging community-based collective action. In Porto Alegre, the opportunity to influence the allocation of city resources fed collective action around participatory budgeting, and the PT's concern with equity led it to pay explicit attention to designing a process that gave weight to different interests and different modes of participation. This in turn led to a process of social learning in which participants from various backgrounds became increasingly confident in their role, while also coming to appreciate if not always agree with the perspectives of others. It also led to a revitalization of mechanisms of community-based governance and, by one analysts account, more than a doubling of

the number of civic groups in the city (Baiochi 2001). As Abers (1997) argues, the Porto Alegre case indicates that:

Where governments provide returns to participation, new civil associations will flourish. [In addition] the influence of government officials in the day-to-day workings of participatory decision-making can promote more cooperative attitudes and more systematic ways of distributing resources fairly. In doing so, that influence can counter some of the chronic vices of participatory decision-making.

The Bangkok case presents quite a different model. Here, an NGO with exceptional capacity and strong ties to the state plays a more direct role in shaping the form and content of community-based collective action. In Baan Mankong, participation is much more restricted than in the case of participatory budgeting or even the CMP, as the objectives and modes of participation are already largely prescribed by the program. The state funding acts as a carrot to stimulate community involvement. Nonetheless, advocates of the program argue that its real success lies not so much in the physical but the social transformation of communities, and particularly in building residents' belief in their own capacity for self-transformation and political agency. This is apparent in the following description of the 'contagion effect' witnessed by CODI, in which success in one community encourages collective action in others.

So [the] first implementation [of Baan Mankong in a city] becomes the university. It becomes the concrete evidence that what is being done together is correct, is the right way—that it works. At this point, the whole city, full of peers, will jump to another level of readiness, enthusiasm, and confidence. (Boonyabanha 2005: 38)

Hence, while political empowerment is not an expressed objective of the program, advocates argue that, because it presents a real possibility for community improvement, it helps to overcome divisions within communities. Furthermore, its mobilizing effect and redistributive outcomes inevitably lead to a new belief in community capacity.

## **Conclusion**

This book has counseled against a cookie-cutter approach to participation and shelter policy, so it will not conclude with a recommended 'model' for the role of CBOs. Rather, it will suggest certain issues that governments, organizations of civil society, and aid agencies are likely to confront as they assess the current vogue model of decentralization and civil society participation in governance.

For national and local governments, the findings of the book suggest two things. First, they suggest that organized and sustained collective action towards community maintenance is not something that can be mandated by law, and neither will it emerge spontaneously from communities. Rather, it involves a complex process in which residents of low-income communities become convinced by the

actions of government actors, representatives of NGOs, their fellow community residents, and others, that their investment of time and effort will make a difference in overcoming the structural obstacles to tenurization, community improvement, and political empowerment. Instilling such confidence may require government to confront powerful interests, to explicitly endorse community interests over those of capital, and to commit significant resources to community development processes. Contrary to the doctrine of enablement, therefore, fostering effective participation may require not a decrease but rather an increase in investment of resources and political will in the achievement of social goals.

Second, the findings suggest that the capacity to incorporate civil society participation is not inherent to any one scale. Once again, contrary to the enablement perspective, there is no indication that municipal or city governments are embracing participation to anywhere near the degree that was envisioned in the reforms, and in Metro Manila they have proven quite resistant. Would a strengthened metro level authority be more accountable and open to participation? The answer to this question is not readily apparent, though there are reasons to believe it might be. Being more distant from and independent of local landowning interests, a metropolitan mayor or governor would be less prone to a clientelist model of politics. A metro authority would also have a larger and more capable bureaucracy that might be better equipped to undertake urban development programs. It might also have more leverage in bargaining with footloose capital. However, it might also be more bureaucratic, and there is no reason to think that it would be less corrupt. Communities would also not have the same opportunities for direct contact with metropolitan officials that they sometimes do with municipal or city officials. In all, the question of the appropriate division of responsibilities between governments at different scales is beyond the scope of the current volume, but it is worthy of much more discussion and debate.

For NGOs that work with urban CBOs, the study suggests that they have a potentially powerful role to play in community redevelopment and social capital building through community organizing, the provision of technical assistance, and through the transfer of ideas of and experiences regarding community change from elsewhere. However, it also suggests that NGOs walk a fine line as mediators between communities and government. In a condition of social distrust such as exists in the Philippines, there are substantial gains to be realized from engaging government in effective participatory practices where such opportunities exist, but the dangers of failure, cooptation, or community disaffection are real. NGOs therefore must be strategic in their interactions with government, and constantly assess and reassess opportunities for engagement. They are likely to be most effective when they maintain a dialogue with the communities they work with to come to a common understanding of the objectives of collective action and the possibilities and pitfalls of engaging government. The experience of Metro Manila NGOs reveals the dangers of maintaining a doctrinaire stance and remaining closed to engagement with government based primarily on ideological grounds.

Finally, for representatives of international aid and lending organizations, the findings raise questions both about the assumptions inherent in the enablement

model, and more generally about the appropriateness of the application of abstract models of community-based planning from one context to another. If anything, the Philippine case illustrates the power of deep-rooted social forces to undermine the good intentions of reformers. Any process of urban community development must be understood as part of a broader process of political, social and economic transformation that has deep roots in the particularities of a given society. The first step towards addressing the dilemma of urban inequality is to understand these historical roots.

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## Appendix

# Excerpts from Laws Related to Affordable Housing and Civil Society Participation in the Philippines

The following are summaries of some of the key provisions in post-Marcos legislation that have set the framework for civil society participation in shelter provision, along with some explanatory notes.

### **The Constitution of the Philippines (1987)**

*Commentary:* The Philippine Constitution not only defines a general framework for the country's governance, but also takes explicit stands on issues related to urban and rural poverty alleviation, labor rights, the rights of women, and the role of 'people's organizations'. In the area of urban poverty, it spells out certain basic principals concerning the conditions of an eviction, and the roles of the public, private and non-profit sectors in housing and infrastructure delivery. It further mandates a strong role for local government in service provision. The following are some of the key provisions regarding affordable housing and civil society participation in governance.

#### *Article XIII: Urban Land Reform and Housing*

Section 9 The State shall, by law, and for the common good, undertake, in cooperation with the private sector, a continuing program of urban land reform and housing which will make available at affordable cost, decent housing and basic services to underprivileged and homeless citizens in urban centers and resettlement areas. It shall also promote adequate employment opportunities to such citizens. In the implementation of such program the State shall respect the rights of small property owners.

Section 10 Urban or rural poor dwellers shall not be evicted nor their dwelling demolished, except in accordance with law and in a just and humane manner.

No resettlement of urban or rural dwellers shall be undertaken without adequate consultation with them and the communities where they are to be relocated.

*Article XIII: Role and Rights of People's Organizations*

Section 15 The State shall respect the role of independent people's organizations to enable the people to pursue and protect, within the democratic framework, their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means.

People's organizations are *bona fide* associations of citizens with demonstrated capacity to promote the public interest and with identifiable leadership, membership, and structure.

Section 16 The right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making shall not be abridged. The State shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms.

**Local Government Code of the Philippines (1991)**

*Commentary:* The Local Government Code sets a framework for a highly decentralized system of governance. It devolves significant powers and responsibilities for local infrastructure and service provision to city, municipal, provincial and barangay (neighborhood or village) level governments, provides for the transfer of 40 percent of national government revenue to these entities, and provides localities with enhanced powers for revenue generation. It also mandates the creation of powerful local development councils (LDCs) with at least 25 percent representation by non-government organizations. However, it leaves several loopholes open that many local governments have used to exert influence on civil society participation. For example, local governments retain the right to define the terms of eligibility of non-governmental organizations for service on LDCs, thus allowing them a means to exclude oppositional groups.

*Title Six. - Local Development Councils*

Section 106 *Local Development Councils.* - (a) Each local government unit shall have a comprehensive multisectoral development plan to be initiated by its development council and approved by its sanggunian. For this purpose, the development council at the provincial city, municipal, or barangay level, shall assist the corresponding sanggunian in setting the direction of economic and social development, and coordinating development efforts within its territorial jurisdiction.

Section 107 *Composition of Local Development Councils.* - The composition of the local development council shall be as follows:

(a) The barangay development council shall be headed by the punong barangay and shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) Members of the sangguniang barangay;
- (2) Representatives of non-governmental organizations operating in the barangay, who shall constitute not less than one fourth (1/4) of the members of the fully organized council;
- (3) A representative of the congressman.

(b) The city or municipal development council shall be headed by the mayor and shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) All punong barangays in the city or municipality;
- (2) The chairman of the committee on appropriations of the sangguniang panlungsod or sangguniang bayan concerned;
- (3) The congressman or his representative; and
- (4) Representatives of nongovernmental organizations operating in the city or municipality, as the case may be, who shall constitute not less than one-fourth (1/4) of the members of the fully organized council.

(c) The provincial development council shall be headed by the governor and shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) All mayors of component cities and municipalities;
- (2) The chairman of the committee on appropriations of the sangguniang panlalawigan;
- (3) The congressman or his representative; and
- (4) Representatives of nongovernmental organizations operating in the province, who shall constitute not less than one-fourth (1/4) of the members of the fully organized council.

(d) The local development councils may call upon any local official concerned or any official of national agencies or offices in the local government unit to assist in the formulation of their respective development plans and public investment programs.

Section 108 *Representation of Non-Governmental Organizations.* - Within a period of sixty (60) days from the start of organization of local development councils, the nongovernmental organizations shall choose from among themselves their representatives to said councils. The local sanggunian concerned shall accredit nongovernmental organizations subject to such criteria as may be provided by law.

Section 109 *Functions of Local Development Councils.*

(a) The provincial, city, and municipal development councils shall exercise the following functions:

- (1) Formulate long-term, medium-term, and annual socioeconomic development plans and policies;
- (2) Formulate the medium-term and annual public investment programs;
- (3) Appraise and prioritize socioeconomic development programs and projects;
- (4) Formulate local investment incentives to promote the inflow and direction of private investment capital;
- (5) Coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of development programs and projects; and
- (6) Perform such other functions as may be provided by law or competent authority.

(b) The barangay development council shall exercise the following functions:

- (1) Mobilize people's participation in local development efforts;
- (2) Prepare barangay development plans based on local requirements;
- (3) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of national or local programs and projects; and
- (4) Perform such other functions as may be provided by law or competent authority.

### **The Urban Development and Housing Act (1992)**

*Commentary:* The Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) is unusual in the degree to which it explicitly provides for the protection of rights of informal settlers, and mandates local governments to plan proactively for the provision of affordable

housing. It has proven highly controversial, particularly among property owners and lobbyists for real estate interests, who chafe at requirements for relocation of occupants of their land and inclusionary zoning provisions. It has also proven difficult to implement due to opposition from local government and within the Philippine court system. The following are some key provisions regarding the responsibilities of local governments in affordable housing provision, and the conditions for eviction. Many of its key provisions, notably regarding the requirement for local government to set land aside for affordable housing and to register eligible beneficiaries of housing programs, have remained unimplemented or halfheartedly undertaken.

*Article IV: Land Use, Inventory, Acquisition and Disposition*

Section 7 Inventory of Lands. — Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, all city and municipal governments shall conduct an inventory of all kinds and improvements thereon within their respective localities. The inventory shall include the following:

- (a) Residential lands;
- (b) Government-owned lands, whether owned by the National Government or any of its subdivisions, instrumentalities, or agencies, including government-owned or controlled corporations and their subsidiaries;
- (c) Unregistered or abandoned and idle lands;
- (d) Other lands.

In conducting the inventory, the local government units concerned, in coordination with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board and with the assistance of the appropriate government agencies, shall indicate the type of land use and the degree of land utilization, and other data or information necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

For planning purposes, the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council shall be furnished by each local government unit a copy of its inventory which shall be updated every three (3) years.

Section 8 Identification of Sites for Socialized Housing. — After the inventory the local government units, in coordination with the National Housing Authority, the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, the National Mapping Resource Information Authority, and the Land Management Bureau, shall identify lands for socialized housing and resettlement areas for the immediate and future needs of the underprivileged and homeless in the urban areas, taking into consideration and degree of availability of basic services and facilities, their accessibility and proximity of jobs sites and other economic opportunities, and the actual number of registered

beneficiaries. Government-owned lands under paragraph (b) of the preceding section which have not been used for the purpose for which they have been reserved or set aside for the past ten (10) years from the effectivity of this Act and identified as suitable for socialized housing, shall immediately be transferred to the National Housing Authority subject to the approval of the President of the Philippines or by the local government unit concerned, as the case may be, for proper disposition in accordance with this Act.

*Article VII: Urban Renewal And Resettlement*

Section 26 Urban Renewal and Resettlement. — This shall include the rehabilitation and development of blighted and slum areas and the resettlement of Program beneficiaries in accordance with the provisions of this Act. On-site development shall be implemented whenever possible in order to ensure minimum resettlement of the beneficiaries of the Program from their existing places of occupancy shall be undertaken only when on-site development is not feasible and after compliance with the procedures laid down in Section 28 of this Act.

Section 28. Eviction and Demolition. — Eviction or demolition as a practice shall be discouraged. Eviction or demolition, however, may be allowed under the following situations:

- (a) When persons or entities occupy danger areas such as esteros, railroad tracks, garbage dumps, riverbanks, shorelines, waterways, and other public places such as sidewalks, roads, parks, and playgrounds;
- (b) When government infrastructure projects with available funding are about to be implemented; or
- (c) When there is a court order for eviction and demolition. In the execution of eviction or demolition orders involving underprivileged and homeless citizens, the following shall be mandatory:
  - (1) Notice upon the effected persons or entities at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of eviction or demolition;
  - (2) Adequate consultations on the matter of settlement with the duly designated representatives of the families to be resettled and the affected communities in

the areas where they are to be relocated;

- (3) Presence of local government officials or their representatives during eviction or demolition;
- (4) Proper identification of all persons taking part in the demolition;
- (5) Execution of eviction or demolition only during regular office hours from Mondays to Fridays and during good weather, unless the affected families consent otherwise;
- (6) No use of heavy equipment for demolition except for structures that are permanent and of concrete materials;
- (7) Proper uniforms for members of the Philippine National Police who shall occupy the first line of law enforcement and observe proper disturbance control procedures; and
- (8) Adequate relocation, whether temporary or permanent: Provided, however, That in cases of eviction and demolition pursuant to a court order involving underprivileged and homeless citizens, relocation shall be undertaken by the local government unit concerned and the National Housing Authority with the assistance of other government agencies within forty-five (45) days from service of notice of final judgment by the court, after which period the said order shall be executed: Provided, further, That should relocation not be possible within the said period, financial assistance in the amount equivalent to the prevailing minimum daily wage multiplied by sixty (60) days shall be extended to the affected families by the local government unit concerned.

This Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council shall jointly promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the above provision.

**Implementing Rules and Regulations to Ensure the Observance of Proper and Humane Relocation and Resettlement Procedures Mandated by the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (1992)**

*Comment:* These regulations, issued by the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Committee, provide a detailed and comprehensive set of requirements regarding government consultation with communities affected by eviction, the conditions of the resettlement process, and the services to be provided in relocation sites. The wording of the rules and regulations is notable in the degree to which it places the onus for justifying an

eviction and providing for humane resettlement on the government agency involved. The wording also reveals some arguably unrealistic assumptions about the nature of government-community relations—see, for example, the requirements under the heading ‘Community Relations Operation’ that officials should develop ‘rapport’ with community leaders and educate them on government law regarding the urban poor. The role of community-based leadership and organizations is referred to throughout. In fact many of these provisions are frequently violated, and research by one NGO during the late 1990s found that, several years after the passage of UDHA, one-half of evicted communities received no provision for relocation. Below is a selection of some of the key requirements for eviction.

### *I. Pre-relocation Phase*

(a) Identification of Resettlement Site. Negotiations and arrangements are finalized between the proponent LGU or government agency authorized to demolish and the recipient LGU on the resettlement site and their corresponding roles and responsibilities.

#### (b) Pre-Census

##### 1.0 Completion of Data Requirements

The LGU or government agency authorized to demolish shall ensure that the following documents are readily available prior to any conduct of demolition:

##### 1.1 Certified Xerox Copy of Title

##### 1.2 Tax Declaration or Tax Receipt

##### 1.3 Location Plan or Vicinity Map showing the boundary and illegal constructions

##### 1.4 Pictures of the area (before operation)

##### 1.5 Certification from LGU or other concerned agency that the area is included in the list of danger areas and subject for clearing, if applicable

##### 1.6 Certification from LGU or concerned agency that the area is the site of an infrastructure project with available funding which shall commence within

sixty (60) days after clearing the said area, if applicable

1.7 Copy of the Writ of Demolition, if the clearing of the area is decided by the Court

1.8 Development plan of the property

2.0 Community Relations Operation

The LGU or concerned agency shall undertake the following:

2.1 Establish communication and rapport with recognized resident community leaders;

2.2. Meet the affected families to explain the following:

2.2.1 the government's shelter program for the low and marginal income families including squatters;

2.2.2 the need to relocate families from danger areas and infrastructure project sites, or a writ of demolition, if applicable;

2.2.3 procedures and guidelines on relocation and resettlement; and

2.2.4 objectives and schedule of the census and tagging operation.

2.3 Introduce the project team and census enumerators to the Barangay Chairman and community leaders. The LGU or concerned government agency may request the National Housing Authority to provide technical assistance in the conduct of pre-relocation activities.

### *III. Post Relocation Phase*

#### **(b) Resettlement Site**

1.0 Organized community-based structures shall be strengthened so as to facilitate the delivery of sites and services in the site. The identified leaders with the assistance of the NGO shall be trained and equipped with proper organizational skills and attitudes necessary to effectively manage the affairs of the community.

2.0 To promote the general well-being of resettled families, adequate social services in health, nutrition, education, responsible parenthood, environmental sanitation, etc., shall be provided in the resettlement sites jointly or under the

auspices of cooperating agencies such as, but not limited to, the DECS, DOH, DSWD, and NGOs.

- 3.0 To generate employment and income opportunities for the resettled families, the resettlement project shall act as a conduit for the families to avail of manpower training and livelihood programs through sustained networking and resource syndication activities.

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