

PEASANT COALITIONS AND THE STATE IN POST-MARCOS PHILIPPINES: THE CASE OF THE CONGRESS FOR PEOPLE'S AGRARIAN REFORM (CPAR)

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Introduction

The Congress for People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR) was formed in 1987 at the height of the need for a unified peasant lobby for the post-EDSA legislation on agrarian reform. It was the most ideologically varied and most enduring coalition of national peasant groups in the history of the Philippines. CPAR consisted of peasant groups aligned with the leftist National Democratic Front (NDF), with the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, as well as with the center and left-of-center peasant groups which supported Aquino in the 1986 snap elections. In half a decade of existence, CPAR had interacted with the Aquino and Ramos administrations in legislative, public policy (both national and local), and electoral arenas. This article discusses this interaction, and what it says about peasant organizations in a new democracy such as the Philippines.

Forming the Coalition

Until the 1987 Constitution was drafted and the new Congress convened, Corazon Aquino, thrust into power by the peaceful 1986 EDSA Uprising, temporarily held total executive, legislative, and judicial authority. Any act of hers during this transitory period was considered binding, even after she would lose some of her powers to the new Congress and Judiciary. In anticipation of a landlord-dominated Congress, Aquino's Executive Order (EO) on agrarian reform became the barometer of her sincerity as far as the organized peasantry was concerned.

In the hope of consolidating the then disparate pro-peasant efforts to influence the EO drafting, some non-government organization (NGO) leaders organized a conference in May 1987 in which a wide array of peasant federations could come together to discuss their ideas, and test the

waters of unified action. More than 200 leaders from some 70 NGOs and POs, and people from the academe, the church, and even the government and business sectors participated. Three days of negotiations yielded consensus over an eight-point People's Declaration of Principles of Agrarian Reform, and led to the coalescing of twelve peasant federations, the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR), which would lobby for agrarian reform guided by these principles. (See Table 1.) The affair culminated in a dialogue with Aquino, in which they presented their policy recommendations.

To their dismay, the resulting EO 229 left to Congress the crucial matter of retention limits for landlords. CPAR's National Consultative Council (NCC) leaders still remember the insult of having discussed policy recommendations with the President, only to end up with such a toothless agrarian reform measure from her. Leaving the retention limit issue to be settled by what in all probability would be a landlord-dominated Congress meant that whatever strong points the EO had (i.e., comprehensive coverage of agricultural lands and the provision of support services) were sitting ducks before weakening

Table 1. Peasant Organizations Represented in the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR)

National Democratic (ND) Orientation:

Amihan	Pambansang Pederasyon ng Kababaihang Magbubukid
KMP	Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas
NFSW-FGT	National Federation of Sugar Workers-Food & General Trades
PAMALAKAYA	Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas

Aligned with the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP):

AMA	Aniban ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura
KABAPA	Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina

Democratic Socialists (DS) Orientation

KAMMMPI	Kapatiran ng Malalayang Maliliit na Mangingisda ng Pilipinas, Inc.
LAKAS	Lakas ng Magsasaka, Manggagawa at Mangingisda ng Pilipinas
LMP	Lakas ng Magsasakang Pilipino [aligned with Partidong Demokratiko-Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDPS)]
PAKISAMA	Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka
PASFFI	Philippine Association of Small Farmers and Fishermen, Inc.

Independent

KASAMA	Katipunan ng Samahang Mamamayan
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amendments which would surely be introduced by the legislature.

Lobbying in Congress

To lobby for a pro-peasant agrarian reform law, CPAR picketed Congress' session hall, held public meetings, press conferences, marches, and even a peaceful walk-out from the session hall of the House of Representatives to protest the slow progress of agrarian reform legislation. The peasant lobby also took on a pro-active slant. CPAR and NGO leaders held frequent dialogues with lawmakers and government officials, and even produced a draft agrarian reform bill based on the coalition's eight principles. Because CPAR sat in the Technical Committee of the House Committee on Agrarian Reform, many provisions from the CPAR draft were incorporated into the progressive bloc's House Bill (HB) 400. Although CPAR was not quite happy with this bill (it had a seven-hectare retention limit for landlords while CPAR preferred only five, and allowed non-tillers to own land), HB 400 fared better than any other House or Senate Bill when evaluated against the coalition's Declaration of Principles, and so it was this bill for which CPAR campaigned.

As CPAR and their allies had anticipated, a battery of killer amendments to HB 400 was introduced in the House of Representatives. The retention limit was stretched from seven hectares, to five hectares plus three more for every heir of the landlord who is at least 15 years old and actually tilling or "directly managing" the farm. Many allowances for exemption were also added. The composite effect was that HB 400 was extensively altered or "mangled", as it was commonly described

-prompting authors of the bill to withdraw their sponsorship of the proposed law. Nonetheless, three days later, the orphaned bill was passed on third reading, with the progressives outnumbered 112 to 47 by conservatives.

Denouncing pro-landlord force in Congress, CPAR launched the Agrarian Reform Express. For three days, two teams of peasant leaders, NGO leaders, progressive lawmakers and agrarian reform advocates traveled by bus to several urban areas to bring first hand accounts of the lobbyists' travails in demonstrations outside Metro Manila. At all their stops, they were welcomed by crowds of supporters. CPAR's most publicized campaign stunt generated a dramatic show of support for the coalition's work.

Back in Congress, the bicameral conference committee was constrained to produce something which the President could enact before she left for Europe on 13 June 1988 to solicit aid for Philippine government programs, agrarian reform included. On 10 June 1988, Aquino signed Republic Act (RA) 6657, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL).

NCC leaders recognized immediately that RA 6657 fell short of what the coalition lobbied for. Had there been no peasant lobby at all, however, the law would have been more pro-landlord. Admittedly, RA 6657 was preferable to any previous Philippine agrarian reform law.

Yet, why was the resulting social justice measure way off the mark aimed at by the coalition? Why did the peasant lobby fail? A first major clue may be found in the fact that CPAR operated within a new demo-

cracy. That environment may be conducive to grassroots movement formation, but ending authoritarian rule does not easily translate into changes in social structures. This is not guaranteed by movement formation or by regime change. In the Philippine case, the institutions and processes of mass participation and empowerment are not entrenched and are overridden by forces such as a landlord sector which has retained its hold on political power.

Second, two decades of suppression stunted the peasant movement's knowledge of how to best go about a parliamentary struggle of this nature and magnitude. CPAR had limited itself to two main activities: the information drive for agrarian reform, and lobby work. In terms of tapping mass media and of showing numbers in the streets, CPAR's efforts were quite impressive. In terms of legislative lobby work, however, it seemed that CPAR reached out mainly to those legislators who already sympathized with the peasants' cause. Most of CPAR's dialogues were with Senators and progressive members of the House of Representatives, and were aimed at producing the initial bills for debate. There was no comparable reaching-cut to non-sympathizers in Congress whom CPAR considered right at the outset to be the source of pro-landlord provisions.

Despite the inexperience, however, this first jab at lobby work had been a rite of passage which promoted friendships and unity among NGO and peasant leaders of different ideological blocs, investments which helped carry the coalition for five years.

Challenging the 1988 Agrarian Reform Law

Understandably, CPAR rejected CARL. Fifteen days after the President signed RA 6657, it formally declared this rejection in a two-day gathering of 600 peasant and NGO leaders and agrarian reform advocates. The People's Agrarian Reform Code (PARCode), the draft bill developed within CPAR, was approved in the conference as the rightful alternative to CARL. Two avenues through which genuine agrarian reform as enshrined in PARCode could be implemented were adopted. First was the outright recall of CARL and its replacement with PARCode using the framework for popular initiative provided for in the 1987 Constitution. To this end, Regional PARCode Campaign Committees (RPCCs) were installed. In each region where at least two political blocs within CPAR had a presence, multi-sectoral conferences regarding PARCode were held. The network of RPCCs was supposed to emerge from these conferences as the primary mechanism for the gathering of signatures endorsing the recall of RA 6657 and its replacement with PARCode.

The second recognized mode of implementing PARCode was peasant initiatives, which chiefly refers to direct land and fishpond occupation, but also rent boycott, planting boycott, farm wage hike campaigns, cooperative building, the development of appropriate farming technology, and savings mobilization.

By the end of 1988, a number of peasant initiatives were clearly underway.¹ However, these were simply sporadic and isolated cases, rather than a prevalent and

mainstream option taken up by peasants all over the country. Also, within a few months after RPCCs were launched, it became evident that signatures were not being retrieved at the expected feverish pace. To address the dismal performance of RPCCs, all NCC leaders agreed in late 1988 that each CPAR member federation was to collect signatures for PARCode.² A quota and a deadline were set: one million signatures, due on the first anniversary of CARL,³ with each federation required to collect at least 100,000 signatures. When the coalition dissolved in 1992, the PARCode campaign yielded merely 500,000 signatures,⁴ or one-sixth of the minimum required by the Constitution. Most of these were collected by the CPAR Secretariat, AMA, PAKISAMA, and KABAPA. The contribution of the rest was minuscule.⁵

There were many reasons for the signature campaign's failure. One factor was logistical difficulty. The signature campaign needed full time personnel well-equipped with materials all over the country, something CPAR did not have. Another factor was strategic in nature. First, a regional (rather than provincial) center for signature collection later proved inappropriate in a culture where people more readily identified with their province rather than with their region. A second issue of strategy involved the absence of an enabling law for the people's initiative. The 1987 Constitution provided guidelines, but also mandated that Congress still had to legislate the actual mechanism for recalling laws. Perhaps the more logical concern, then, would have been to work for this enabling law, prior to the actual signature gathering. Still another factor contributing to the ineffectiveness of RPCCs was the

milieu within which CPAR operated. As public interest for agrarian reform waned, it became increasingly difficult to drum up support for the signature campaign.

Influencing Local Public Policies

Encouraged by the prospects of small victories with local level agricultural issues, of the stronger articulation of peasant concerns to local governments, and of boosting the PARCode signature campaign, CPAR adopted a Regionalization Program in February 1990. Local coalitions were formed in provinces where more than one political bloc within CPAR had member organizations which were willing to participate. They were tasked to apply the national level positions of CPAR to the specific issues felt on the local level.

Most local CPAR coalitions thrived and held dialogs with politicians, local governments and line agencies. As 1991 ended, it was clear that local coalitions had assumed a life of their own. Their initiatives were not dictated by national peasant leaders or by CPAR personnel, and achieved for them gains which would not have materialized had their efforts been sporadic and uncoordinated. On the macro level, these local initiatives had seemed useful in projecting CPAR as having a mass base all over the country, and therefore as the main peasant formation that the state should deal with.

Curiously, within a year and a half, most NCC leaders shirked support for the Regionalization Program, leading to its termination in October 1992. Two blocs within the NCC decisively moved to delegitimize the program. These were the LAKAS-LMP-KAMMMPI bloc, and the ND bloc.

LAKAS, LMP and KAMMMPI leaders complained that CPAR Mindanao personnel were undermining, "knowingly or unknowingly," the loyalty of local organization leaders to federation leaders. They contended that their local leaders had become more loyal to CPAR personnel than to them.⁶ They also made allegations that the CPAR coordinator for Mindanao had schemed to set up his own NGO for his personal gain, and that most in the CPAR staff were ideologically more compatible with PAKISAMA, thereby tending to serve that federation more than the others. In addition, they suspected that local coalitions were meant to evolve into bodies separate from CPAR.⁷ The bloc also argued that socio-economic programs initiated by local coalitions tended to divert the loyalty of local leaders. The bloc stressed that because the primary purpose of localization should be the strengthening of the federations, all the money intended for local organizations should first be channeled through national federation leaders, so that local organizations would associate the benefits with their respective federations and not with CPAR.

Although AMIHAN, NFSW and PAMALAKAYA shared some of the allegations of the LAKAS-KAMMMPI-LMP grouping, the ND bloc opposed the program on much different terms. Led by the KMP, the NDs argued that since the primary task of CPAR was national-level advocacy and its militance on this count had been weakening, CPAR had no business diverting its energies to a localization program.⁸ In addition, the ND leaders argued that the program had been a top-down process, and not the pure initiative from below that it should have been. In October 1992, on the basis of these grievances regarding the

Regionalization Program, AMIHAN, PAMALAKAYA-Visayas, PAMALAKAYA-Mindanao, and KMP-Mindanao withdrew from CPAR.⁹

When base consultations regarding these allegations were held, no account of undermining federation unity or of corruption by local CPAR personnel emerged. Local coalition leaders basically did not associate weaknesses experienced by their federations and local organizations with the performance of the local CPAR staff. All affirmed the need for local level linkages.¹⁰

Still, the LAKAS-LMP-KAMMMPI and ND blocs succeeded in having the Regionalization Program recalled and the local secretariat dissolved in CPAR's October 1992 Inter-Federation Conference of national and local peasant leaders. CPAR personnel in the provinces were re-assigned to assist a particular federation each. The money pegged for the Regionalization Program and already piped into the coalition's bank account by donor agencies was equally divided among the eleven federations still within CPAR. This somewhat alarmed funding agencies which supported CPAR, prompting them to send letters of concern and requests for clarificatory dialogues with the NCC.¹¹ Many local leaders were at a loss as to whether they should proceed with much needed local coalition initiatives, or yield to the prohibition of their respective federation leaders.¹²

Six federations opted to sustain the linkages of their local organizations. These included PAKISAMA, AMA, KABAPA, PASFFI, and even KASAMA and KAMMMPI which did not have very positive assessments of the program. AMA,

KABAPA and PAKISAMA officers explained that they did not sense that their leadership had been undermined by local CPAR personnel, perhaps, they said, because they typically accede to decisions of local leaders and base groups anyway.¹³ KABAPA Chairperson Trinidad Domingo questioned the whole notion that CPAR should primarily be concerned with strengthening member federations, countering that coalition building presupposes the existence of already strong federations, and that it is in such federations that a national coalition such as CPAR should find its strength, not the other way around.¹⁴ KAMMMPI, for its part, claimed that it was unable to consult its base groups because of time and resource constraints, and could not therefore prohibit member organizations from participating in local coalitions. KASAMA on the other hand chose to let its member groups decide in the light of their unique local circumstances. LAKAS, LMP, and the ND groups respected the six federations' option to continue with local linkages, but cautioned them against identifying their local formations as those of CPAR.¹⁵

It is important to note that allegations against the Regionalization Program do not seem well founded. The general observation of local leaders was that, contrary to charges of undermining and corruption, the localization process had been supported by a dedicated staff. Had these charges been established, however, the mere replacement of the person or persons concerned would have solved the matter. It was no reason to altogether cancel the program. Moreover, contrary to suspicions of ideological bias, a run down of the personnel's political allegiances reflected a mix, rather than a homogeneous tendency.¹⁶ The conspiratory

theory of the LAKAS-LMP-KAMMMPI bloc that the secretariat intended to diminish the power and influence of national peasant leaders, and eventually reconstitute CPAR federations into independent local coalitions also seems unlikely. CPAR personnel were never decision makers but merely implementing agents. Also, although CPAR's national level advocacy had indeed been weakening, the need for local level linkages clearly remained. It seemed uncharacteristic of professed believers of democratic decision-making to declare by themselves that local level gains should be foregone for the sake of national level advocacy. Lastly, concerning the argument that the Regionalization Program was not a bottom-up process, it had seemed clear enough from base consultations on the matter that local coalition participants generally preferred to maintain their linkages.

It was curious that even after their charges were questioned by other leaders and contradicted by more concrete evidence, the ND and LAKAS-LMP-KAMMMPI blocs only obstinately reasserted their arguments. This seems to suggest that behind the discussed reasons for recalling the Regionalization Program were other issues which could not be openly articulated. In particular, one cannot help but notice that the blocs which opposed the program involved federations whose thin base was being bared in the process. In a number of instances during the localization drive, contact persons from their local organizations could not be identified or located.¹⁷ In contrast, PAKISAMA, AMA and KABAPA, whose constituents had been most easily found and most visibly involved in the activities of local coalitions all over the country, were also the federations most

insistent about sustaining the provincial coalitions of their member groups. Hence, to some extent, the posturing of national peasant leaders vis-a-vis the Regionalization Program may be diagnostic of the membership size of their respective federations during that time.

Apart from this, the regionalization program also revealed different levels of internal cohesion of CPAR federations. During the base consultations conducted as prerequisite to local coalition building, CPAR staff found that local organizations had not heard of much of CPAR's national-level involvements. Moreover, even CPAR and PARCODE had to be introduced, as some local groups had simply not learned of these from their national leaders.¹⁸ The fact that information does not flow freely from leaders to constituents implies that the national level consensus among heads of peasant federations did not completely permeate the rank and file in the provinces.

The regionalization experience also revealed the differing leadership styles employed by peasant federations. On the one hand, the national and regional leadership of PAKISAMA, AMA, KABAPA, and KASAMA yielded to the decisions of their base organizations in the matter of their involvement in local coalitions. On the other hand, in the case of ND groups and LAKAS, the pullout of base groups from local coalitions seemed to have been decided by national and regional officers. There were instances when this was formalized not only against the preference of the base groups themselves, but without the knowledge of the base groups involved.

Finally, the opposition to the Regionalization Program in order to cut off the

money sourced for local coalitions was likewise indicative of the weak organizational cohesion of some CPAR federations. The implication is that it would take only money to win local organizations away from their parent federations. CPAR was not the only avenue of such funds. Politicians can fund socio-economic projects. So can government agencies. To say that the loyalty of the base groups' leaders shifted to the CPAR secretariat primarily because of money is tantamount to saying that the local leaders' loyalties were really contingent upon who hands them the buck.

Influencing National Public Policies by Forming New Peasant Coalitions

Basically, CPAR had not been affiliated with the state. In 1990 however, some of its member federations began to participate in newly formed national peasant coalitions, which were either encouraged or directly initiated by government. Interestingly, separate coalitions were forged to coordinate with separate government units: the Kalipunan ng Maliliit na Magsasaka sa Pilipinas (KAMMPIL) coordinated with Malacañang; the National Peasants' Council (NPC) dealt with the Department of Agriculture (DA); and the Sangguniang Pambansa sa Repormang Panakahan (SPRP) linked up with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). The composition of these three new coalitions are almost identical. They included CPAR member federations, as well as groups which worked with the Marcos administration. Also, they all function as consultative bodies for public policy formulation and implementation, differing only in the government agencies that they link up with. KAMMPIL operates on a Congress approved budget, while the NPC

is using a Dutch grant channeled through the DA.

It has been the observation of the CPAR Secretariat that the efforts of the new coalitions merely duplicated the work of CPAR, and that the existence of different coalitions did not speak well of the credibility of the federations involved. For one thing, the same leaders represent their federations in KAMMPIL, NPC, and SPRP. The impression was that only one loose grouping was actually formed, but with three names and two separate budgets. In addition, as building and leading the new coalitions dissipated the attention of peasant federation leaders, issue advocacy of the type practiced by CPAR became neglected. Amidst peasant leaders' denials of having been coopted by government, active position to laws and policies which were damaging to their sector stopped, or were dramatically scaled down, while well-funded coalitions initiated or merely encouraged by the state began to sprout. Understandably, this lull in advocacy aroused suspicions of cooptation, especially from the ND federations and the CPAR Secretariat.

Formal ties between the state and the peasant movement had effectively blurred the line distinguishing cooptation and resource mobilization. This blurring made questionable the credibility of the new coalitions' participants to the non-participants, thereby contributing to the polarization of the peasant movement.

Attempting Unified Electoral Participation

In its mid-1991 assessment and planning, the NCC decided that CPAR was to take part in the national and local

elections of May the following year. The initial goal had been for CPAR to endorse candidates for President, Vice-President, and for twelve of the 24 senatorial slots. To this end, NCC leaders agreed upon issue-based criteria for the selection of a common set of candidates. Foremost of these, of course, was the candidates' stand on agrarian reform.¹⁹

Because CPAR had been recognized as most competent and equipped to initiate the united electoral participation of rural base groups, the NCC instigated the formation of the United Rural Sector Electoral Coalition (URSEC). URSEC was a broad tactical and multi-sectoral alliance of groups which shared the criteria lined up by the NCC, and which tried to endorse candidates who measured up to this common criteria. It was intended to continue existing even after the May 1992 polls to monitor the adherence of elected endorsees to the rural sector's interests.²⁰ From the straw voting of URSEC delegates on 28 February 1992,²¹ Senate President Jovito Salonga and Senator Aquilino Pimentel emerged as the official alliance candidates for President and Vice President, respectively. Thirteen senatorial candidates from different political parties were likewise endorsed by URSEC.

There was trouble ahead, however. First, there were grand inconsistencies between URSEC's list of endorsed senatorial candidates, and that of CPAR. (See Table 2). Only four names were common to both. CPAR found itself unable to reconcile its own list of endorsees with that of URSEC.

Second, the very peasant federations within CPAR which generated the common criteria ended up endorsing different

Table 2. Official candidates of the Congress for People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR) and the United Rural Sector Electoral Coalition (URSEC) in the 11 May 1992 national elections.

	URSEC Candidates	CPAR Candidates
President	Jovito Salonga	none
Vice President	Aquilino Pimentel, Jr.	none
Senators		
- endorsed by both URSEC and CPAR		Florencio Abad Wigberto Tañada Victor Ziga Nemesio Prudente
- endorsed by either URSEC or CPAR	Ramon Revilla Ernesto Herrera Tito Sotto Leticia Ramos-Shahani Edgardo Angara Andanar Ernesto Maceda Teofisto Guingona Santanina Rasul	Alfredo Bengzon Sotero Laurel Lorna Verano-Yap Elfren Cruz

Source: (1) Minutes of the 7 April 1992 NCC meeting at UP School of Labor and Industrial

candidates for President and Vice President. (See Table 3.) A majority officially endorsed the Salonga-Pimentel ticket of the Liberal Party as the less evil option, having come closest to satisfying CPAR's primary agrarian reform criteria relative to other presidential candidates.²² However, LMP and LAKAS turned out to be staunch supporters of Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos.²³ PAKISAMA had not officially endorsed any presidential candidate, but its Chairperson had also supported Ramos, even as many of its constituent groups chose Salonga. KAMMPI had likewise not formally endorsed any presidential candidate, although its Chairperson Arturo Olegario, Sr. (then Fisherfolk Sector

Representative in Congress) had supported the presidential bid of his colleague, House Speaker Ramon Mitra.

Bitter debates ensued within the NCC. Ramos had claimed in televised discussions that he favored a 50-hectare retention limit for agrarian reform. Mitra on the other hand had been known by CPAR as having contributed to the watering down of HB 400 in 1986. In this light, the two could not have passed CPAR's criteria for endorsing candidates. LAKAS and LMP leaders pointed out in defense that Ramos had helped them in the past. They claimed that during and after Martial Law, Ramos had interceded for them on several occasions.²⁴

Table 3. Candidates for President and Vice President officially endorsed by CPAR member federations during the May 1992 elections.

Federation	Official Candidate for President	Official Candidate for Vice President
KMP	Salonga	Pimentel
PAMALAKA	Salonga	Pimentel
NFSW	Salonga	Pimentel
AMIHAN	Salonga	Pimentel
AMA	Salonga	Pimentel
KABAPA	Salonga	Pimentel
KASAMA	Salonga	Pimentel
LAKAS	Ramos	Fernan
LMP	Ramos	Fernan
PAKISAMA	none	Pimentel
KAMMMPI	none	none
PASFFI	none	none

Because there could be no consensus within CPAR regarding which candidates to endorse for President and Vice President, its continued participation within URSEC which endorsed the Salonga-Pimentel ticket became an irritant. CPAR had been identified with a grouping which endorsed candidates whom it did not support as a coalition. The dilemma is easily traced in part to the differing decision making processes of the two bodies. URSEC was propelled by the decision of the majority, while CPAR decided by consensus. Failure to build consensus over a matter disabled CPAR from acting as one coalition regarding that matter. Each federation could act on that issue only as an individual unit, and may not use the name of CPAR. Understandably, therefore, the absence of consensus within CPAR to endorse Salonga for President disabled the coalition from being a member of an alliance which supported Salonga. Only those individual CPAR federations which endorsed him

could be formally considered URSEC members.²⁵

However, CPAR could not also fully and easily divest itself of involvement in URSEC.²⁶ For one thing, it was CPAR as a coalition which conceptualized and operationalized URSEC. Moreover, URSEC was able to source financial grants primarily because of CPAR's leadership and its credibility to funding institutions. In addition, the CPAR Secretariat provided vital administrative support for URSEC.

A third point of division within CPAR concerned the electoral participation of local coalitions. LMP, LAKAS, and KAMMMPI leaders accused the secretariat of trying to influence local leaders into endorsing the Liberal Party's (LP) Salonga and Pimentel. However, there had been no evidence that any local coalition supported a single national candidate outside of the eight senatorial candidates endorsed by the NCC. The local organizations of LMP in

Surigao and Davao del Norte campaigned for Ramos, and KMP's local organization in South Cotabato supported the candidacy of Senator Joseph Estrada for Vice President.²⁷ Moreover, a number of local leaders ran for public office under political parties other than the LP.²⁸ There could have been no local consensus to support Salonga and Pimentel.

Unified electoral participation by organized peasants proved quite elusive. Disunity still was the basic character of the endeavor despite the existence of a common criteria for selecting candidates. A strong peasant vote could not materialize.

Clearly, factors more powerful than CPAR's common criteria determined whether organized grassroots groups would endorse a candidate or not. One was the overriding influence of interpersonal relationships and *utang na loob*, or debt of gratitude. The prior relationships or associations that CPAR leaders had somehow established with the candidates strongly influenced their choice of candidates. Another factor was resource mobilization. By supporting the presidential candidate whom it perceived to have the highest probability of getting elected, a federation increased its chances of tapping the incoming administration for resources and favors.

This most pragmatic line of thinking seemed consistent with the earlier consensus within the NCC that it would not matter so much to the lives of the rural poor whichever candidate emerged as President anyway.

Nevertheless, because CPAR was the largest portion of the Philippine peasant movement (in terms of total membership

claimed), and given that the largest part of this coalition campaigned for Salonga and Pimentel, it can be safely said that the Liberal Party bets were supported by the biggest slice of peasant POs. The fact that Salonga and Pimentel both lost in the 1992 race indicates that the peasant movement leaders do not control a volume of votes that can sway national election results.

Analysis and Conclusions

It is apparent in CPAR's case that characteristics internal to the peasant movement greatly affected the dynamics of its relationship with the state. CPAR's string of experiences in influencing legislation, public policy, and electoral outcomes (see Table 4) seems to suggest some of these characteristics:

First, the total combined constituency of the largest federations of peasant groups in the Philippine seems very small. The mere half million signatures collected for PARCode, the weak participation of most of CPAR's member federations in local coalition building, and their clear inability to aggregate a peasant vote massive enough to affect the result of the 1992 national elections seem to bear this out. The actual (as opposed to claimed) membership size of the peasant movement is a significant factor because its increase is also supposed to swell the movement's bargaining power with the state.

Second, the leadership types operative within each federation clearly vary. PAKISAMA, AMA and KABAPA leaders seemed relatively consultative, while decision making appeared rather centralized in federations like LAKAS and LMP. The complaint of LAKAS and IMP leaders that the Regionalization Program had

Table 4. Performance of CPAR federations in the PARCode Signature Campaign, and their Decision track regarding the Regionalization Program, the Presidential candidate to support during the May 1992 elections, and membership in NPC, KAMMPIL and SPRP.

Name of Federation	Able to Collect Signatures for PARCode Better Than Other Federations	National Perception of the Effect of the Regionalization Program on their Federation	Presidential Candidate Endorsed in the May 1992 Elections	Membership In New Coalitions		
				NPC	KAMMPIL	SPRP
PAKISAMA	✓	positive	Salonga (except for PAKISAMA-Batangas which backed Ramos)	Yes	No	No
AMA	✓	positive	Salonga	Yes	Yes	Yes
KABAPA	✓	positive	Salonga	Yes	Yes	Yes
KASAMA	—	ambivalent	Salonga	No	No	No
KMP	—	negative	Salonga	No	No	No
PAMALAKAYA	—	negative	Salonga	No	No	No
NFSW	—	negative	Salonga	No	No	No
AMIHAN	—	negative	Salonga	No	No	No
LAKAS	—	negative	Ramos	Yes	Yes	Yes
LMP	—	negative	Ramos	Yes	Yes	Yes
KAMMMPI	—	negative	associated Mitra PASFFI	Yes	Yes	Yes
		—		Yes	Yes	Yes

undermined their authority because their constituents had become more loyal to CPAR personnel than to them implies a leadership established by maintaining personal loyalties, rather than base consultations. Also, their endorsement of Ramos for president in 1992 was based largely on the personal loyalties of federation leaders, rather than the choice of constituents. The decision making process of the KMP and PAMALA-KAYA on the localization issue

also seemed rather centralized. The significance of this is that there is little assurance that what the national peasant leaders say in behalf of their members is actually shared by the rank and file. Hence, when government relates with national peasant federation leaders, the possibility is that it deals mainly with these leaders, and not with the federations they supposedly represent.

Third, the operative leadership types have a direct bearing upon the internal cohesion of federations, and of the coalition which these federations form. Internal cohesion within CPAR member federations was rather deficient, as suggested by the apparent lack of information flow from the national leaders to the local constituents, and the other way around. There were accounts that CPAR personnel had to explain to local organizations what PARCode was, or what the national level activities of CPAR were, for instance. Of course, this is more pronounced in some federations than in others. It seems that localizing CPAR had been somewhat effective as the mechanism for this information flow.

Fourth, the peasant leaders' differing definitions of the "total rejection of CARL" and their conflicting views of the Ramos administration stem from a deeper disparity in their notions of the state and its role in the process of social change. Consequently, they also have clashing ideas regarding the mode by which the peasant movement should interact with the state. In this sense, the various issues which led to the folding of the coalition were really based on a deep-seated conflict of ideologies. Because the typically discussed conflict experienced by the Filipino farmer is that with the state or the landowners, the intra-class conflicts which divide the peasant movement, and which greatly affect their interaction with the state and with landlords, tend to be overlooked.

It must be mentioned that this ideological heterogeneity is a character of major Filipino peasant federations, and perhaps not of the great majority of peasants

themselves. As Scott and the proponents of Everyday Resistance stress, most peasants are not organized, and as CPAR's experiences seem to show, those small and subsistence cultivators who are considered members of peasant federations do not always share, indeed they do not always know, what their national level leaders do — supposedly on their behalf.

Behind these characteristics of the peasant movement (as indicated by the experiences of its largest chunk, CPAR), is the fabric of culture and values in which the movement is enmeshed. CPAR was a coalition of groups which identified and continue to identify themselves as "progressive," largely because of the fact that they associate themselves with agrarian reform, and with other primary elements of genuine social change. However, a closer look reveals that, for all the professions of progressiveness, much of the value system which determined the outcome of decisions which the coalition made on several issues had in fact been traditional. Endorsing Ramos in 1992 was greatly determined by the *utang na loob* of some federation leaders. KAMMMPI's identification with Mitra was because he had been Olegario's colleague in the House of Representatives — "*may pinagsamahan*." In these cases, traditional cultural values and interpersonal relations seemed to have overridden the coalition's "progressive" agenda and sectoral concerns. The primacy of values outside the common criteria set by POs was also indicated by the URSEC's endorsement of Revilla and Sotto (neither of whom had an agrarian reform platform) for Senators Revilla and Sotto won in the URSEC's straw vote because they were popular actors.

What did CPAR achieve? Perhaps it would be superficial to assess the gains of the POs and NGOs involved purely in terms of whether or not a genuine agrarian reform law was passed, or what the results of the various national and local campaigns for rice price increases were. It would be more significant to see what strengths or advantages peasant groups now carry because of CPAR's having existed.

- a. *The Experience of Peasant Leaders.* All the NCC leaders agree that one of the benefits of their federations' involvement in CPAR was the enriched experience of their leaders in attempting to unify the organized peasantry on the national and local levels. After being part of CPAR, they are more attuned to the degree of their readiness for national and local coalition building. Experiences with CPAR have also given them exposure to and a deeper understanding of the ideological persuasions of other peasant federations, and the political dynamics that will rule the combined action necessary for the realization of the peasantry's aspirations.
- b. *Solidarity incentives for federation leaders.* Those in the NCC all agree that the friendship shared among them had been an important factor which helped sustain the coalition through times of great stress and conflict, and that this, too, will help make their reunification possible.
- c. *Recognition for the fisherfolk.* A special gain achieved by CPAR was the recognition of the fisherfolk as a distinct sector. It was CPAR's Fisherfolk Committee (FishCom) which brought together the different fisherfolk POs of different ideological blocs. The FishCom

metamorphosed into a whole other coalition distinct from CPAR, the Nationwide Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reform (NACFAR), which continues to exist today.

- d. *Institutional Recognition.* Despite its limitations, CPAR had built some measure of prestige, generating considerable increase in government's awareness and knowledge of the largest Filipino peasant networks and the sectoral interests for which they struggle. Government agencies under both Aquino and Ramos sought CPAR as the peasant group to consult regarding various actions affecting agriculture, and as a network to tap for relief and rehabilitation operations for victims of natural disasters. Especially as the Regionalization Program progressed in confluence with the implementation of the Local Government Code, CPAR groups figured into various local consultative and planning bodies. Hence, the institutional recognition was both on the national as well as on the local level.

Even when the coalition no longer existed, CPAR member federations continued to benefit from this recognition by the government. In fact, all former NCC representatives identified the projection of their federations and leaders as their primary benefit from having been part of CPAR. Of course, the less radical leaders of the peasantry were the ones who gained more, in terms of material benefits, as a result of state concessions for the newer coalitions that they formed.

In a structural sense, institutional recognition is the crucial gain within a new democracy, and not simply the passage of laws and policies for genuine agrarian

reform, although this is also important. It must be considered that, even though they are passed, the implementation of such laws or policies will be contingent upon the degree to which the political and economic elite has succeeded in entrenching itself, even after regime transition from authoritarian rule. In other words, if the democratization process does not advance, the implementation of pro-poor laws and policies will be hampered. Hence, in the context of *continuismo* typical of many new democracies, institutional recognition of grassroots sectors in general seems to be the significant achievement for a coalition like CPAR, as the increase of this institutional recognition will help to democratize political culture in the future.

Footnotes

1. See the following for documentation of peasant initiatives: (a) CPAR, *Popular Grassroots Initiatives: Towards Genuine Agrarian Reform, (A Descriptive Report), with Assessment of the First year Implementation of Republic Act No. 6657*, June 1989; (b) CPAR, *Pagbibinhi: Grassroots Initiatives Toward Genuine Agrarian Reform in the CARL's Third Year*, June 1991; (c) PAKISAMA, *Four Peasant Initiatives Towards Agrarian Reform*, Monograph No. 1, Manila 1990.]

2. CPAR, *Congress for People's Agrarian Reform: 1988-1992*, 1992, p. 16.

3. CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 20 February 1989, p. 5. (Mimeographed).

4. CPAR, Minutes of the KMP-NEC and CPAR-NCC dialogue of 25 August 1992, p. 7. (Mimeographed).

5. Interview with CPAR National Secretariat Coordinator Corazon Juliano Soliman, PARFUND/COTRAIN Offices, Quezon City, 9 March 1994.

6. CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 14 March 1992, p. 1-2. (Mimeographed).

7. See (a) CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 14 March 1992, p. 1-2 (Mimeographed); (b) CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 19 March 1992, p. 5. (Mimeographed).

8. CPAR Luzon Regional Coordinator Jocelyn R. Hermoso, "Memorandum to CPAR Luzon Secretariat regarding Changes in Plans Concerning the Second Congress," p. 1. (Mimeographed).

9. See (a) Felipe Ramiro, Jr. to Corazon Juliano Soliman, 9 July 1992; (b) PAMALA-KAYA-Mindanao to MRCC Members, 22 June 1992; (c) PAMALAKAYA-Mindanao to MRCC Members, 24 July 1992; (d) PAMALAKAYA-Visayas to VCC Members and Secretariat, 30 July 1992; (3) KMP Mindanao Regional Charter, "Position Paper: *Baruganan sa KMP-Mindanao Kabahin sa CPAR-Mindanao*," 6 August 1992 (Mimeographed); (f) AMIHAN National Council to the NCC, 28 September 1992 (Mimeographed); (g) Interview with former AMIHAN representative to the NCC Loreta Ayupan, GABRIELA Office, Quezon City, 2 March 1994.

10. See (a) CPAR Visayas, Minutes of the VCC meeting of 24-25 April 1992, IRC, Cebu City (Mimeographed); (b) CPAR Luzon, Minutes of the NCC-LSC dialog of 4 June 1992, Hasik Diwa, Ateneo de Manila Campus (Mimeographed); (c) CPAR Mindanao, Minutes of the MRCC-NCC Dialogue of 24 June 1992, Mindanao Training Resource Center, Bajada, Davao City (Mimeographed); (d) CPAR, Summary of the NCC's Dialogues with Regional Bodies, VCC April 24-25, LSC June 4 at MRCC June 24, 1992. (Mimeographed).

11. See (a) CPAR, Minutes of the Oxfam-NCC dialogue of 23 January 1993 (Mimeographed); (b) CCOOP Representative Jess Agustin to CPAR, 12 March 1993; (c) South East Asia Oxfam Representative Daisy Leyva to the NCC, 23 March 1993.

12. See (a) CPAR Laguna, "Pahayag ng Pagtutol," 10 October 1992; (b) Mindanao Regional Coordinating Council to the NCC, 9 October 1992; (c) Transcript of the Inter-Federation Meeting of 24-26 October 1992, pp. 63-64.

13. CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 19 March 1992, p. 24. (Mimeographed).

14. Interview with KABAPA President Trinidad Domingo, Quezon City, 14 October 1993.

15. Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform, "Proceedings of the 5-9 October 1992 Inter-Federation Conference," p. 1. (Mimeographed).

16. See CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 19 March 1992, pp. 20-21. (Mimeographed).

17. See (a) CPAR Mindanao, "*Pagtatasa at Pagpapalano ng mga Gawain ng Congress for A People's Agrarian Reform sa Mindanao*," City of Springs Resort, Los Baños, Laguna, 2-3 July 1990; (b) CPAR Mindanao, "*Taho sa Local Coalition Building Program*," Door #1 Casa Esperanza, Malvar Ext. cor. Quirino Ave., Davao City, 16 January 1992; (c) CPAR, "Secretariat-NCC Dialogue," Transcription, 24-26 October 1992, p. 2; (d) Interview with Corazon Juliano Soliman, PARFUND/COTRAIN Offices, Quezon City, 9 March 1994.

18. See (a) "Narrative Report on the Outcome of Project Ref. No. Min90-009" (Mimeographed); (b) CPAR-Agusan/

Surigao, "Year End Narrative Report (January-June 1991)" (Mimeographed); (c) CPAR-Cavite, "*Isang Taong Ulat ng CPAR-Cavite (Agosto 1991-Agosto 1992)*," p. 7 (Mimeographed); (d) CPAR National Secretariat, "Secretariat-NCC Dialogue," Transcription, 24-26 October 1992, p. 7.

19. See (a) CPAR, "*Gabay sa Talakayan para sa: Usapang Elektoral*," 20 January 1992, p. 3 (Mimeographed); (b) CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 19 March 1992, p. 3. (Mimeographed).

20. CPAR, "URSEC Update," 10 February 1992, p. 1. (Mimeographed).

21. See (a) URSEC, "Press Release," 6 April 1992 (Mimeographed); (b) CPAR, "Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform 1987-1992," 1992, p. 42. (Mimeographed).

22. CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 3 April 1992, pp. 2-3. (Mimeographed).

23. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

24. See (a) CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 3 April 1992, p. 2. (Mimeographed); (b) Minutes of the KMP-NEC and CPAR-NCC Dialogue of 25 August 1992, CPAR Office, p. 4 (Mimeographed); (c) Transcription of the Inter-Federation Meeting, 24-26 October 1992, p. 36; (d) Interview with LAKAS Chairperson Florentino Bascug, National Peasants' Council (NPC) Office, Quezon City, 6 April 1994; (e) Interview with LMP Chairperson Gregorio Nazarrea, National Peasants' Council (NPC) Office, Quezon City, 13 January 1994.

25. CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 7 April 1992, University of the Philippines School of Industrial Relations, Quezon City, p. 5. (Mimeographed).

26. CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 19 March 1992, pp. 28-29. (Mimeographed).

27. See (a) Felipe Ramiro, Jr. to the NCC, 19 March 1992; (b) CPAR, Minutes of the NCC meeting of 19 March 1992, p. 10. (Mimeographed).

28. See Felipe Ramiro, Jr. to the NCC, 19 March 1992. LMP Representative to the MRCC Jun Mabaso ran as Councilor of the Municipality of Pangantucan, Bukidnon. KASAMA Representative to the MRCC Joel Humabad ran for Mayor in the Municipality of Libungan in North Cotabato.

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