

# The Struggle for the Right to the City in Metro Manila<sup>1</sup>

Jon Goss

*The concept of "social space" possesses as its dominating instance culture, so that the analysis of local neighborhood must focus on the confrontation between use and exchange values. That is, the complex articulation between symbolic universes of meaning, capital accumulation, and space (Gottdiener 1984:215).*

## Introduction

Access to urban space, whether conceived in the physical sense as land or in the social sense as territory, is critical to the survival strategies of the urban poor. It serves as a means of production for urban subsistence agriculture and market gardening that supplement household incomes; as a condition of production for many "informal sector" activities that are based upon negotiated claims to an unoccupied stretch of sidewalk or an itinerary through a neighborhood; as a condition of household and community reproduction in homes and settlements, often leading to the occupation and development of idle or marginal lands; and as a condition for territorial association and representation in urban politics. Although land is undoubtedly the central human settlement issue (Oberlander 1985), it is therefore much more than that: the strategies adopted by the relatively poor to gain access to urban living place and working space are part of their struggle for their "right to the city," and over the meaning of urbanism itself (Lefebvre 1976; see also Friedmann 1987).

In this paper, I examine this struggle in the context of Metro Manila, focusing particularly on the nature and meaning of claims to urban space, and what might be called "the geography of everyday life" of the relatively poor. My research was conducted in 1986-1987, a period of some uncertainty for squatters and vendors. On the one hand, there was the prospect of progressive reform by a new government responsive to "people's power." Indicators were, among others, a metro-wide moratorium on "inhumane" evictions; President Aquino's appointment of a special commission headed by a representative of the urban poor; and "urban land" provisions in the "New Constitution." On the other hand, squatter and vendor evictions continued in the name of order and progress, and the administration and congress stalled on the repeal of legislation criminalizing squatting and urban land reform. Despite progressive credentials, newly-appointed officials were inconsistent in their policies towards the urban poor to whom they owed no political debts. A series of coup attempts and national strikes further destabilized an

economy already in shambles. That time could best be summarized as one of great hardship, but also of great hope for the urban poor.

Today, of course, it is different. Progressive legislation has been passed and some creative solutions to both squatting and hawking have been introduced, if only on a modest scale. The political situation has stabilized and the economy is expanding. But the population that builds homes on illegally-claimed land and works on the streets continues to grow, and the government and its development discourse still effectively belong to the elite and the middle classes. Ironically, the expanding economy is most evident in construction projects and surges in urban land prices, and is accompanied by a widening gap between the rich and poor. While there is a rhetorical commitment to the alleviation of landlessness and poverty, those who "get in the way" are still evicted or hidden behind hastily-constructed fences. Thus, the urban poor still live in both hardship and hope, and this situation is unlikely to change without a fundamental transformation of property relations.

With urban development and the progressive commodification and rationalization of urban space, the housing and income-generating activities of the urban poor are inevitably displaced to make way for more competitive and more efficient uses. The struggle of the urban poor for living place and working space can

best be understood in the context of the progressive displacement of a popular form of land allocation, by the capitalist style of land allocation. Under the capitalist mode of land allocation, urban space is fragmented into discrete parcels where activities are determined by the inalienable rights of private property and subject to a rational system of land-use controls. Moreover, access to urban space is determined by economic capacity in the market and political capacity *vis a vis* the state. Under the popular form of land allocation, uses of space are multiple and contingent, and rights are determined by a criteria of need, usufruct, custom, kinship or other particularistic relations.

The existence of multiple property markets in developing cities has, of course, long been recognized. John Turner (1969:511) famously distinguished between shelter provided by "autonomous urban settlement" and housing supplied by "institutional society," and the notion of a "dual city" persists in formal and informal land markets (Durand-Lasserve 1990), legal and illegal development (Baross 1990), and regulated and organic settlement (Baross and Van der Linden 1990). Such dualistic conceptions, however, ignore the complex interpenetration of the forms of land allocation and reduce difference in ways of life to a matter of legality, suggesting that the problem of shelter provision and income generation can be effectively legislated away by a benign state granting tenure and thus

by fiat, incorporating popular property into the capitalist property regime (Burgess 1978). Policies developed in the 1980s based on this assumption soon revealed their limitations as costs of land consolidation and infrastructure provision escalated (Doebele 1987, Baross and Van der Linden 1990). Evidence mounted that, while security of tenure and the right to trade is often the immediate demand of squatter and vendor representatives, the formalization of popular property rights benefits only a relatively few and cannot itself solve problems of shelter and employment provision. Development policies have often ironically accelerated the commercialization and bureaucratization of popular property (Baross 1983, Durand-Lasserve 1990), or the "penetration" of the popular form of land allocation by capitalist relations (Leontidou 1985:535).

I don't have any simple solution, for surely it does not exist, but I suggest that understanding the "structural" nature of the problem is a necessary first step. I want to show how the urban poor employ multiple and diverse strategies to obtain access to vital urban space. They sometimes operate in the market to purchase rights, appeal to the state to subsidize them, and invoke the law to protect them. Sometimes (even at the same time), they appeal to patrons for favor or protection, claim rights on the basis of need or long-term occupation, and/or mobilize organizations to explicitly resist both the market and state.

How do we begin to make sense of such an apparently contradictory situation?

### **The capitalist mode of land allocation**

This dominant mode of land allocation is the foundation of capitalist spatiality - that is, the conception and organization of space necessary to the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of capitalist social relations. It consists of two moments: the first and primary moment is the market, where rights to property are conferred according to economic capacity, or the ability to pay; meanwhile, the second moment is the state, where rights are conferred according to political capacity, or the ability to exert legitimate demands upon and conform to regulatory requirements of state institutions. Although conceptually distinct, the two forms overlap in "actually existing" capitalist societies such that alienable right to land is conferred by private ownership, paid for in the market, but subject to conditions imposed by the state's juridical and administrative agencies. In everyday practice, this means that allocation of land depends upon both the market and political capacities of agents and institutions, most obviously when political influence is evoked to increase the market value of land and economic resources are deployed to obtain favorable political intervention in the land market.

## The market form

In the market, land is fragmented into parcels, rented, taxed, bought and sold according to the exchange value, a process that empties space of social, cultural and personal meaning. Land use is allocated according to competitive bidding where the price that is paid tends to represent an appropriation of a portion of surplus value potentially created by that use. While of course the growth of urban population plays its part by increasing overall demand, it is the speculation upon the differential exchange values under present and future uses that drives up prices of the urban land. Within the contemporary global economy, an increasing proportion of socially-produced surplus value is being "switched" from the primary circuit of production (the immediate cycle of production-circulation-consumption) to the secondary circuit or built environment (the long-term cycle involving non-synchronous periods of production, circulation and consumption) (Harvey 1982), fueling speculative real-estate development. Relative to the level of development of the national economy, enormous amounts of "over-accumulated" global capital have been invested in land and property development in the second-tier "world cities" such as Metro Manila, escalating land prices beyond the means of much of the urban population (Keyes 1983). Estimates suggest that land prices increased by 27 times in the City of Manila and 50 times in the surrounding metropolitan

cities and municipalities between 1940 and 1970 (AID 1978), between 50-135 percent from 1978 to 1980 (MHS n.d.:19) and by over 350 percent in the years 1988-1990 (Pinches 1992:396). There are a number of reasons why the land market is particularly distorted in the case of Metro Manila.

First, is the inheritance of a markedly skewed distribution of land from the colonial era and the failure of subsequent national governments to institute serious urban land reform. Within the metropolitan area, an essentially colonial pattern of land ownership still prevails (Solon 1987: 5-6) with a few families controlling vast tracts of prime urban real estate (Mendiola 1983). What were once Spanish and mestizo land holdings are now the basis of family corporations which have parlayed their landed capital and political influence into powerful diversified business empires (see Anderson 1988).

Second, throughout much of the developing world there has been a consolidation of class interests in property development through mergers of finance, land, construction and commercial capital engaged in real estate development into powerful monopolies incorporating the various stages of land development from finance and land assembly, to construction and sale (Doebele 1987:14-15). These are typically dominated by powerful financial interests that appropriate value through interest

charged on loans and depend upon controlled absorption of developable land into the urban real estate market. Particularly significant are national and regional banks, and Chinese capital from Taiwan, Hong Kong and to a lesser extent from other Southeast Asian countries, which combines with Chinese-Filipino capital to dominate the national construction sector (Friedland 1990:54; Pinches 1992: 398)<sup>2</sup> Oligopolistic suppliers orient to the middle-class and elite markets, and as peripheral and marginal lands are drawn into the commercial market, in the form of subdivisions and condominiums, the range of opportunities for low-income tenants and home-builders are increasingly restricted (Doebele 1987:15).

Third, land speculation has become a vital pursuit of the contemporary economic and political elites in developing countries (Lim 1982:61) since real estate investment is an easy and safe investment. The Philippines is perhaps the prime exemplar of "ersatz capitalism" in Southeast Asia, a form in which the manufacturing sector is undeveloped and where the indigenous capitalist class prefers comprador, speculative and rent-seeking activities (Yoshihara 1987). Moreover, given the volatility of political fortunes, elected and appointed representatives may also seek to convert their political capital into relatively low-profile and long-term investments in real property. This predilection for accumulation through interest and rent-bearing assets leads to the tying up of potentially

productive capital in idle land holdings (Karaos 1993). Economic growth in the Philippines, especially during the boom of the late 1980s, has led to an expansion of the middle classes whose lifestyles and social status depend upon private suburban home ownership and who often make modest investments in urban property as a hedge against inflation and as a form of "social security" (Laquian 1980, Strassman and Blunt 1994). Given the notorious tendency of returning overseas workers to invest in land and housing and other consumption items, a significant proportion of the working class are thus also allied with the land elites in a broad-based resistance to the legislation and enforcement of effective reform in land and housing markets.

Finally, and partly as a result, the Philippine state lacks the political will and administrative capacity to effectively regulate the land market, and control speculative activity, whether directly through planning or indirectly through taxation (Strassman 1997). Land-use planning is limited due to a lack of technical and administrative skills, and political opposition by land-owning classes. Despite the fact that the government is expressly committed to urban land reform by provisions of the "New Constitution" of 1987, it is inevitably constrained from extensive expropriation of land for social purposes by a contradictory commitment to the preservation of the rights of private property, particularly that of just compensation or "fair market prices" (ADB 1989). Given the

litigious nature of Philippines society, expropriation is a time-consuming and expensive process. Despite pressure from international agencies, real property taxes have long been inadequately assessed and collection notoriously inefficient (Gueverra 1981, Strassman and Blunt 1994:281) due to the influence of a well-organized real estate lobby and the fear of political protest by the propertied middle-classes.<sup>3</sup> An "idle land tax" developed in the 1970s has not been applied and recent laws for appropriation of large unimproved lands lack provisions for implementation (Strassman and Blunt 1994:272). Without an effective penalty on land speculation – aside from the threat of squatter invasion (Solon 1987) – vast areas of land in Metro Manila lie idle (Murphy 1993:42, Strassman and Blunt 1994:270).

Consequently, land acquisition in Metro Manila accounts for a higher percentage of housing costs than in other Southeast Asian world cities (Strassman and Blunt 1994:282) and in squatter settlements, the land on which it sits may be worth as much as 300 times the cost of the *barong-barong* or a shanty (Keyes and Burcroff 1976). As a result, 35-40 percent of the population, perhaps three million people or more, are forced to obtain access to urban land outside the formal market, illegally occupying marginal or contested private and public lands without possession of title and vulnerable to eviction, often violent and surely

always profoundly disturbed psychologically and socially (Murphy 1993, Berner 1995). In addition, untold numbers of the relatively poor labor illegally in streets, alleyways and on sidewalks in diverse "informal sector" activities subject always to petty extortion and occasionally to organized eradication drives (ESCAP 1993:3.22). These squatters and vendors are accused of disrupting "orderly" urban development, that is the efficient distribution of commodities and development of real estate, and their unsightly residences and economic activities undermine the symbolic value of modern urbanism. There is, as Keyes (1979:229) argues, "a subtle [*sic*] presumption on the part of those who can afford to participate and compete in the present economy that it is really *their* city, and the poor, somehow, do not equally belong." Those who cannot afford to pay the exchange value of the urban space that they are occupying are put under economic pressure to yield to those who can, and agencies of the state are called upon to eliminate, relocate or temporarily hide them.

### **The state form**

The state produces and regulates urban space in order to maintain the conditions of capital accumulation and reproduction of labor, subject to contradictory demands for both efficient and socially-just development. The "role of the state" is to manage the contradictions of capitalist spatiality, mediating in the conflicts over urban

space between fractions of capital, and between capital and labor, and this inevitably produces inconsistency as the state responds to the changing balance of political interests. In addition, however, the state pursues its own structurally-defined interests, that is the maintenance and expansion of bureaucratic power through the systematic rationalization of urban space. The formalization of property relations is a means to expand tax revenues while the fragmentation and hierarchization of social space enhances the state's capacity for surveillance and regulation of everyday life (Lefebvre 1976). The state is not a monolith, however, and agencies and individual representatives pursue particular institutional and personal interests, such that public agencies in Metro Manila, for example, have been accused of hoarding land as a means to increase their economic assets while municipal and city officials regularly derive rents for favors provided to squatter communities. Politicians typically protect or "coddle" squatters in exchange for votes, and "punish" those who fail to show support. In the locality of my research, for example, the municipal government attempted to evict a long-established squatter community and to close down a scrap business of a squatter leader, when the mayor discovered that residents had voted for the opposition candidate. This, of course, only leads to further contradictions and inconsistencies in state land allocation.

Capital accumulation under the market form of land allocation depends

upon the exercise of the rights of private property protected by the state through the legal system. It has been questioned whether Roman property is appropriate in a context where a large minority of the urban population is forced to break the law as they go about their daily lives (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1981:31), but despite sustained campaigns for its repeal, squatting remains a criminal offense and 100,000 squatters have been evicted each year in Metro Manila in the name of private property rights and orderly urban development (Murphy 1993:9). In this manner, capitalist spatiality is forcibly imposed across the city.

The state intervenes directly in land allocation most obviously in housing programs, although in the Philippines, due to the general weakness of organized labor and the lack of a developed welfare state, both direct housing construction under the Philippine Homesite and Housing Corporation (1949-1979) and the Urban BLISS program, and indirect provident fund schemes such as Pag-IBIG and GLAD, have had negligible impacts on overall housing provision, and they have generally favored middle-income groups, and especially government workers, even at the direct expense of the poor (see Ruland 1989:13-18, Balisacan 1994). For example, in 1980, 250 families in one locality were evicted and relocated to make way for a BLISS housing project. They were all promised that they would be given priority in the distribution of the 244 units; however, only one man's

family gained access to a unit and he was not a squatter but a municipal worker. As the characteristically clever local adage goes, "BLISSed are those with *palakasan* (influence)." This has also proven to be the case with slum upgrading, and sites and services promoted and sponsored under the World Bank's "enablement approach" in the 1970s and 1980s, which sought to co-opt the popular form of land allocation with security of tenure, municipal infrastructure and services, and limited credit. In upgrading projects, the high costs due to "overdesign" and administrative diseconomies, together with commitment to cost recovery, resulted in regular payments that were beyond the means of a significant proportion of intended beneficiaries, and the formalization of property rights encouraged "downward raiding" by middle classes (Murphy 1992, Lindaeur 1981). Site and service schemes, on the other hand, are typically located on the urban periphery where transportation expenses going to work strain household budgets and consume precious productive and reproductive time. In these isolated settlements, there are fewer opportunities for informal retailing and other petty productive activities vital to supplement household income.

State housing reproduces modern, technocratic ideologies of space, imposing a standardized rational order upon everyday life through instruments of land use zoning, building codes, and licensing regulations. Such "artificial" standards are obviously

"inappropriate" for the level of development (Keyes 1979), so observers have called for a reduction of minimum standards (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1981), such that the relatively poor may enjoy the "freedom to build" (Turner 1972). It is true that these standards are invoked in evictions or upgrading of poor communities, but they can hardly be enforced throughout the metropolitan area where perhaps the majority of people live in substandard housing, so they seem to focus primarily to protect the spaces of the middle class from the negative externalities of urban development. The codes are not merely the product of middle-class aesthetic bias, however, since they reflect, and are in part a means to realize a process vital to capitalist development. That is, the separation of workers from independent means of production, and the isolation of the workplace from household and community where other demands might be made upon their time. It is for this reason that most industrial and many commercial enterprises are prohibited within designated residential areas, and that in public housing both the physical design and by-laws prohibit activities such as vending, livestock raising and other petty enterprises.

Marxists point out that state promotion of housing is also a means of "practical incorporation" of workers - that is, "the expansion of commitment to the prevalent social order by the development of personal stakes in its survival" (Agnew 1981:459), an effective strategy in "the class struggle" since



property-owning working classes are politically conservative (Baross 1983, Burgess 1985, Harms 1982), and their property provides a means to appropriate value at the expense of other workers, thus dividing class experience and loyalties (Harvey 1976:273).<sup>4</sup> The promotion of home ownership and "sedentarization" of hawkers, moreover, locates solutions to structural problems of shelter provision and employment generation in individual endeavor or fortune, and imposes a spatial order that, while not determining, at least promotes a "modern" way of life. That is, physical design, construction standards and regulation of activity assume the universal desirability of the nuclear family, personal privacy, and capitalist enterprise, based on values of deferred gratification (saving and investment), the work ethic, and competitive individualism. Hence, for example, the state screens potential beneficiaries of its housing or market projects qualifying only those who demonstrate their commitment to this dominant residential and retail order.

The state promotes a predictable and "transparent" urban space, where every social agent, action or interaction, ideally "has its place" which is fixed and monitored by surveillant institutions. Space is fragmented into functional "districts" that effect the segregation of public and private, individual and collective, and productive and reproductive activities, and "open up" social life to observation, measurement, and prediction necessary to regulate these functions.

The monofunctional, static, rational and hypervisible space of the state form manifests a "design for living" consistent with a physically and mentally well-conditioned wage labor workforce (Castells 1983, Harvey 1985), contrasting markedly with the multifunctional, adaptive, dynamic, sensuous, and often labyrinthine spaces of popular property. This is not to say that popular spaces are necessarily a threat to social discipline but the configuration or space and social relations does have a non-determining effect, if only "encouraging" lifestyles and values that are antithetical to capitalist urbanization.

In the context of my research, for example, wage laborers living as squatters were notorious for absenteeism, and could be found working on house construction, pursuing other income-generating opportunities, or simply "hanging around" during the workday. They had the worst reputation for lateness, insubordination, pilfering, and other acts of "everyday resistance" in the workplace. Their opportunism and "disloyalty" in elections frustrated local politicians, and municipal officials identify their communities with crime, "communist elements," and are constantly conducting surveys to differentiate the "deserving poor" from "spongers." Local middle classes denounce insalubrious living conditions and an immorality of biblical proportions, forbidding their children and fearing themselves to venture into the dangerous and corrupting depths of the settlement. Stereotypes are invidious, but it would be hard to

deny that they have more than a little basis in reality.

Recognizing these corollaries of poverty and illegality, the dominant ideology blames the victims themselves, and thus communities of the relatively poor pursuing their right to a living place are said to be "ripe for political agitators who play on their weaknesses" (Laquian 1972:17), and more famously, "more criminal than murderers and forgers...because they even blackmail, coerce and intimidate those in power" (Marcos cited in Tanedo 1982:1).<sup>5</sup> There is nothing particularly weak or venial about the relatively poor resisting capitalist spatiality, however, for they have quite ordinary everyday economic, political and social reasons for maintaining their own "heterotopic" spaces (Foucault 1986). Their control over urban space for economic activities, housing construction, the provision of communal services, and affective identity is vital to household and collective survival strategies.

### **The popular form of land allocation**

Under the popular form of land allocation, rights to urban space are sustained by appeal to a combination of need, usufruct and particularism. That is, urban space is claimed on the basis of relative deprivation such that those without land or territory necessary for effective survival may claim unused space owned by the state or others who are manifestly not in such need. The legitimacy of a claim increases in effect with the length of

peaceful, uninterrupted occupancy and use of land, and with sustained improvement such as the construction of housing or trading stands, especially using permanent materials. Claims typically also invoke kinship, patronage or other social relationships with established right holders, power brokers or other "backers" who can represent claimants in the informal court of popular opinion, or to the leadership of the community.

This form of land allocation is the basis of a social space that is dominated by use value. It is organic, its boundaries ill-defined and adaptive, its uses personal, communal and heterogeneous (see Lefebvre 1976). Although market and state have penetrated it, the space created is neither private, in the sense that right to access is alienable and exclusive, nor is it public in the sense that any citizen enjoys access and it is formally regulated. It is a *community* space in which access is always conditional and negotiable, and the configuration of rights is dynamic, responding to changes in need, length of occupation, and social status. It is flexible and dynamic, a living space that adapts to new uses and absorbs new users who can demonstrate these rights. It is a social space that is the basis of diverse production and reproduction, intense everyday interaction among its heterogeneous inhabitants, and the focus for intense place-bound loyalties.

If squatters and vendors appropriate state and private property by evoking the informal rights of communal social

space, most observers have been fooled by appearances, for instance, explaining the *apparent* "disdain for public space" (Mulder 1994:34) in terms of the persistence of traditional cultural values. Stone (1971:161), for example, in an examination of the "politics of public and private property" in Metro Manila argues that contemporary values and action are "simply a continuity of role and role behavior which goes back to pre-Spanish Philippines." The emergence of a secondary legal system that allows "private transitory ownership of public property" is ascribed to "a conscious, articulated game situation whereby the Filipino views life as a series of contests, or games, which may be pleasant, tedious, and most often, serious" (Stone 1971:143). Hollnsteiner (1976) suggests Filipinos evince an "*horror vacui*," or an abhorrence of open space, and that squatters' disregard for capitalist property rights is inherited directly from rural traditions, in that:

The same custom law that allows a *kaingero*, or slash and burn farmer, to carve out a plot in what is to him a communally-owned forest likewise permits a city man in need to move onto government land by the railroad tracks or any empty, unmarked lot (Hollnsteiner 1976:180).

Hollnsteiner at least adds disclaimers to her "folk model": That traditional values are not necessarily static; that

sociological generalizations do not explain individual behavior; and that these traditional values are not necessarily exclusively Filipino. But others continue to evoke an ahistorical, reductionist and relativist notion of "tradition," including continuity in the importance of land to Filipino subsistence peasants (Solon 1987) and as the basis of political power in the colonial era (Turner 1976). Of course, feudalism and colonialism have left a powerful material and symbolic legacy, but even if marginalized populations evoke "tradition" in order to legitimate claims to urban space, the contemporary actions of the squatter and street vendor cannot be understood in the same way as that of the peasant or *kaingero* whose cultural worlds historically allowed for only limited conceptions of private property, the exchange value of land, and of the legitimate supra-authority of the modern state. The contemporary urban poor are only too well aware of the exchange value of real property, the laws of private property, and the institutionalized political power that sustains them. As they struggle for a place in the city, however, they evoke alternative and even oppositional notions of property and of urban spatiality (Leontidou 1985:536). They negotiate new, complex and sometimes contradictory meanings for popular forms of property, always penetrated by, and articulated to, the dominant capitalist mode of land allocation.

*The meaning of the popular form  
of land allocation*

Many observers have remarked on the aspiration for home ownership expressed by the urban poor (Turner 1972, Abrams 1964), and the apparently extreme form this takes in the Philippines (Laquian 1983, Hollnsteiner 1976). In the absence of systematic research on its meaning (Ward and Macoloo 1992), this is primarily ascribed to a universal psychological need for "ontological security" or roots in a family home (Turner 1972, Doebele 1987:7). I do not wish to debate on this matter here, although it is obvious that home ownership may also be a means to accumulate wealth, enhance consumption, and display social status, and that the urban poor are also subject to the powerful ideologies promoting "modern" lifestyles. I want to argue, however, that for the urban poor the goal of home ownership is particularly significant because it guarantees access to urban space and unequivocally establishes right to the city. In the meantime, however, although it does not provide the juridical security of "title" to urban space, popular property is vital to the survival and accumulation strategies of a significant proportion of the population, and may even be the means by which a smaller proportion do ultimately realize their dreams.

For example, in my survey of urban poor households, 35 percent of respondents stated that obtaining or

improving urban residential property was their first priority among their "life goals." This was followed by improving standard of living (25 percent), providing for children's futures (14 percent), and obtaining or improving employment (14 percent). More than two-thirds (70 percent) included residential property among their three life goals. The remainder anticipated returning to their province of origin, preferred to invest in businesses or education of children, and, in one case, preferred the flexibility that tenancy offers.<sup>6</sup> Property is the most important goal overall, in part because it is often seen as a means to realize other goals. Thus, for example, regular wage workers would often risk and sometimes lose their jobs by staying at home "sick" in order to work in their homes, or to defend their claims against eviction. A squatter tenant attests to the existential significance of the *possession* of housing:

For me I would rather have a place to live [than a steady job]. That is most important. There is work all around, although you might have to "hang out" (*is-tambay*).<sup>7</sup> But you cannot "hang out" for a house. You see, you can "hang out" if you have a house, if you don't have to pay rent. You can borrow money from the usurer, maybe for a small store or pigs, and ask for food from your relatives. Or you can rent out [rooms], that is a good business

here. But if you do not have your own living place, and you must rent and rent, then it is difficult to live.

Why is a place to live, and a place to “hang out,” so important?

### **The economic value of popular property**

First, and most obviously, urban poor households with low and unstable incomes are not able to make regular payments required for rents in land or housing provided under the dominant mode of land allocation. Regular wage and salary workers may be able to bear the costs of transport from the periphery where rents are cheaper, but actual and opportunity costs are prohibitive for most of the relatively poor. The survival strategies of the urban poor depend upon flexible, adaptable and cheap shelter, but, above all, upon “staying where the action is” (Guerrero 1997). It is essential for those whose occasional employment is opportunistic, whose income depends upon established personal “presencé,” or whose incomes depend upon fixed or semi-mobile means of production in a densely-settled urban community. The co-spatiality of residence and workplace is often a key condition for their survival strategies.

Second, popular property is a critical condition of existence for productive activities that literally could not “*take place*” if capitalist spatiality were

fully established. Subsistence production of vegetables and livestock, for example, are important even in dense inner city squatter settlements where households grow green vegetables, and raise chickens and pigs.<sup>8</sup> Although market gardening was negligible in this dense urban community, almost one-third of squatter households engaged in some form of livestock rearing, even to the extent of raising pigs within their crowded homes. More importantly, 59 percent of houses provide working space for petty enterprises, including “backyard industries,” or micro-scale manufacturing (such as sauce-making, goldsmithing, cobbling, tailoring, joinery, furniture-making and anodizing), handicrafts (baskets, needlework and notions), repairs (electric fans, refrigerators, watches), food preparation and sale, retailing, beauty parlors and barber shops, gambling “dens” (mahjong and cards) and scrap dealerships (see also Balisacan 1994). Such activities only exist or can only compete effectively with large-scale capitalist enterprise if they are located in illegal spaces where producers can temporarily claim and use vacant land for their own purpose, where they can modify their dwelling unit for production with relative ease, where business, labor and health regulations are not effectively applied, and where neighbors are not particularly concerned with the preservation of amenity and property values, and are willing to turn a blind eye to shady activities.

This is not to argue that the relatively poor are not concerned about crime, since they are much more likely to be its victims, and are sensitive to the reputation of their communities (see Goss 1990:272). But criminalized activities such as gambling are more likely to be tolerated, if reluctantly, in recognition of "right to make a living." I do not mean to romanticize here since these activities exploit the very lack of regulation that protects workers and communities in the formal spaces of the city, and the larger proportions of profits are often generated by capital external to the community. However, in the absence of adequate income opportunities in the formal sector, the informal spaces of popular property provide a diverse means to make a living.

Such flexibility and diversity also create income opportunities for those with restricted mobility, and particularly for women, to combine reproductive and productive labor. While capitalist spatiality isolates the domestic sphere, separating women, the elderly and the infirm from income opportunities and supportive community, an informal settlement provides a communal social space where enterprise can be integrated with domestic activity, and services are mutually exchanged in regular social interactions. Women with young children, for example, are able to operate petty enterprises in or at their homes, while grandparents or neighbors can mind and feed children, or temporarily tend stores, freeing

adult women's labor for more distant productive activities.

The particular ecology of informal settlement also concentrates and opens up opportunities for informal trade, particularly since hawkers must pay licensing and other "discretionary" fees, where they are not excluded by law or by-laws from making their living in public spaces or in private subdivisions. In popular settlements, itinerants are unlikely to be harassed or charged informal rents in cash or kind by property owners or state agents. They are accommodated and accommodate each other such that individual property rights are generally subordinated in recognition of the "right to make a living" (see Szanton 1972:129-30). Thus, hawkers and scavengers typically depend upon establishing a regular clientele socially defined by a preferred trading relationship (*suki*), and spatially defined by regular routes (*rota*) and places of trade (*puwesto*), negotiating among themselves rights to trade, and resulting in complex patterns and paths in time and space (Goss 1990:355-65).

Third, popular property in land and housing is an important means of generating income through rent and sale. There is an extensive literature debating the proper theoretical status of housing on popular property (Burgess 1985 and 1987, Conway 1982, Gilbert 1986, Gilbert and Van der Linden 1986), in part the result of a confusion or conflation of the distinct moments of land acquisition,

and housing construction and consumption (Amis 1990:17). In practice, it is difficult to differentiate these moments and their different forms for any community. Sometimes even individual houses that were claimed by original settlement and usufruct combine with those that subsequently have been inherited or purchased; housing produced with varying degrees of household labor, communal labor and waged labor; and housing occupied by builder/owner, by relatives or employees, and by tenants.

While I agree with the Marxist argument that under conditions of generalized commodity circulation, popular land and housing (in whatever way it is produced) always at least potentially embodies and can realize surplus value (Pradilla and Jimenez 1985:197), I think that the form of the land acquisition, housing production and occupancy does make a difference. While it is precisely the ease of its conversion between use and exchange value, and adaptability in combining both functions - in accordance with changing household needs and opportunities over time that underlies the existential significance of land and housing in the popular form of land allocation - there are socially imposed limits to the convertibility of values and full commodification of land and housing.

For example, and not surprisingly, given the ideology that sustains the *right to living place* and the relative

insecurity of tenure, the leasing of land itself in squatter settlements is not common. First, claims to popular property are established by constructing houses, and only where an individual has considerable political capacity will it be possible to claim vacant land. Second, if housing construction and continual residence increase the legitimacy of a claim then the home-owner may eventually challenge the holder of the land right.

In this case study, for example, land rent within the community only began after houses had burned in a 1963 fire, and the original owners allowed others to build homes on the cleared lots. This applies to 6.1 percent of all housing units, particularly those owned by three powerful individuals: a wealthy doctor living in the United States who had established fictive kinship relations with his principal tenant and property manager; a professional landlord who had been employed as a lawyer by the municipal administration; and a petty thief who was the lieutenant of the residents' association president. Holders of land rights who did not build nor protect their claims soon lost them. After a second fire in 1987, for example, empty lots were ceded or even invaded and rapidly built on particularly by previous tenants of absentee homeowners (previous tenants were, in fact, building on more than two-thirds of all rental properties) whose long-term residence and relative need established their right to living place (see Goss 1990:501-

13). The sale of land rights is also limited. According to a survey of squatter right holders, only 27 percent of land rights were purchased. The largest proportion of rights (32 percent) was acquired through original settlement of the land, with caretakers' permission and nominal rental payment; about 20 percent were subsequently claimed with permission of the resident association or a patron; 18 percent were inherited from relatives or given by the original right holder; and four percent were provided by employers for their workers. The majority of residents, therefore, still acquire land rights outside of the market.

The house itself is a flexible vehicle for investment since the absence of regulation allows incremental or periodical improvement and expansion, according to the need for residential space and the availability of capital and labor within the household. Houses develop "organically," typically beginning with a wooden platform resting on concrete pillars sunk in the swampy ground and a single room erected on a platform. The ground below is gradually re-claimed by filling in with household wastes, and aggregate and rooms are eventually constructed on the ground floor, after which an extension, partition or a second floor is added to accommodate new households or tenants. Extension and improvement work is continuous; the more permanent the materials used and the more the structure conforms with the standards

of formal property, the more psychologically secure the squatters feel about their claim to land. And, of course, the property becomes more valuable.

According to my survey, the majority of homeowners (87 percent) had made substantial improvements over the last 10 years (Goss 1990:332), including cementing the ground floor (35 percent), extending or adding a partition (35 percent), adding a second floor (15 percent), and roofing with zinc (14 percent). For the vast majority, this represents the principle form of saving and potential for capital accumulation.

After the second conflagration destroyed virtually all of the houses in the settlement in 1987, I documented the process by which households subsequently rebuilt their homes, including rough estimates of the various sources of labor and capital they used. The situation is somewhat "artificial" but it avoids the problem of incomplete memories and price inflation that bedevils a retrospective study of the construction of popular property. The "lifting" of constraints imposed by preexisting buildings and settlement layout allowed right holders to pursue individual and collective strategies that revealed their orientation toward popular property. Builders availed of multiple and diverse sources of capital to obtain a mean of P24,487 (P20 = U.S.\$1), although this reflected considerable variation. The majority (52 percent) of builders used personal



savings, although this accounted for only one-third (33 percent) of total capital expenditure. A majority (52 percent) also received interest-free loans from employers or patrons that accounted for 15.4 percent of total capital expenditure. About 45 percent also received donations from relatives, most of whom are overseas contract workers, and this accounted for 30 percent of total capital expenditure. Interest-bearing loans were used by only 15 percent of builders and accounted for only 15 percent of total capital expenditure. The majority of construction funds (76 percent), therefore, were also obtained interest-free and outside formal capital markets.

The sources of labor used in construction depend partly on the complexity of the tasks involved and the degree of expertise available within the household or immediate support network. The vast majority, however, were clearly self-designed and predominantly self-built. Only one employed an architect and two others engaged the services of a drafter, but in all three cases the person hired was related to the owner and only partially compensated. Unpaid household labor was used by almost half of the builders (49 percent) and a similar proportion (50 percent) employed unpaid relatives or friends, providing them only with meals, snacks and cigarettes while at work, and perhaps also the expectation of subsequent reciprocity of labor or other service. Some proportion of wage labor was used by just over half of the builders

(51 percent), and exclusively by just under one-third (32 percent) of them. But the majority of laborers (58 percent) were either friends or relatives, so that labor costs were lower than usual. Some builders even recruited cheap labor from their home provinces.

Materials used in construction came from diverse sources, with almost half of the builders (48 percent) using salvaged or scavenged materials, and virtually all (93 percent) using substantial amounts of new materials, including lumber, plywood, and sheet roofing. These materials are, of course, produced by capitalist enterprises and can only be obtained as commodities. Some builders received relatively small donations of materials from relatives (17 percent), employers/patrons (10 percent) or friends (four percent). But inevitably in all these cases, the new materials are industrial commodities produced, if not always distributed, by the "formal sector".

In the construction of popular property therefore, land and labor, if not materials, are not fully commodified and are, in an important part, collectively produced. When the property is rented or sold, the individual owner profits from unpaid household and communal labor, and capital expended in the "consolidation" of the settlement – occupation and reclamation of land, improvements in services, mobilizations to defend claims – as well as in the construction of individual houses. While a discount

is applied due to the real and perceived costs of squatter living – particularly relative insecurity of tenure and social status – the price of popular property is also, however, determined by general conditions of demand and supply in the urban housing market. It is certainly not the case here that the “squatter family that invests its savings in a permanent structure will find it difficult to recover the full value of their investment” (Turner 1968:357). And, indeed, the owner of popular property may make “super profits” that are well above both returns to petty capital from other forms of enterprise and from investment in formal property. In fact, in the context of this case study, according to detailed transaction records, mean squatter land prices increased by about 146 percent (discounted for inflation) between 1965 and 1986, almost twice the mean increase in value (77 percent) on title property in a nearby subdivision.

Even if the immediate goal is providing a living place for the family, and despite their profound attachment to place, squatters are well aware of the potential incomes from rent or sale of their homes. As such, they are increasingly building with this in mind. It is hardly surprising, given its general prevalence and its potential profitability in popular settlements, that “speculation among the urban poor is a well-developed art” (Laquian 1983:29), nor that there has long been a small but perhaps increasingly significant class of professional

landlords or squatter speculators (see Abrams 1964:21). Indeed, as Burgess (1982:87) has argued in another context, there appears to be a “duplication of capitalist interests at the informal level,” and within this community there are slumlords, speculative builders, loan sharks and fixers. Again, however, there are real limits to the degree to which formal and external capital is allowed to penetrate popular property, as the right to a living place may be invoked to stake claims against non-resident right holders or landlords. Consequently, they remain a small minority, and the majority of residents orient towards their property *primarily* as a living and working space – as a means to establish their stake in the city – rather than as an investment.

This is not to say that houses are seen exclusively in such existential terms for they potentially provide a vital supplement to household income through rent in cash or kind. In this locality, the majority of squatter houses (67.1 percent) had some form of tenancy. A few of the units (11 percent) are purpose-built “apartments” but the vast majority are in houses partitioned or extended to accommodate tenants. Again, there are obvious exceptions, but most landlords are relatively poor and supplement household income, or entirely subsist, on modest rental payments. The median rental is just under 10 percent of the minimum monthly wage, and rents are kept low by the mediation of tenancy by

other social relations and informal norms sanctioning petty landlordism (Goss 1991).

Where there is no effective welfare state to provide for old age or ill-health, and where incomes are often unstable, a steady rental income can be extremely important to both present and future household survival strategies. Resident landlords are typically small-business persons and low-ranking professionals with an over-representation of retired government employees, factory workers, and non-working women. A significant proportion of properties (46.4 percent of lots and 39.6 percent of houses), are claimed by women partly as a result of inheritance – reflecting a concern to provide daughters, especially those that have not married successfully, with an independent income – and partly as a result of the individual efforts of single or separated women to obtain ownership of urban property for the relative independence and respectability it gives them. In this context for instance, two lesbians cooperated in the management of their modest rental business while a single mother pawned or sold gold jewelry she regularly received from her “boyfriends” to buy labor and materials for the construction of rental property. For these women, popular property establishes a right to a living as well as a living place in a male-dominated urban society.

Resident landlords share in the conditions of poverty, if not always in

terms of income, at least in the disadvantages conferred by illegality and exclusion from access to services (Asiama 1985). For the most part, they are perceived by their tenants as allies and benefactors in the struggle to obtain and improve living space, and many have become sponsors or fictive kin (*compadrazgo*). Multiple right holders, on the other hand, and particularly absentee landlords who have no direct relations with their tenants, are resented not so much for their direct exploitation of tenants through the rent relation, as for profiting from the collective struggle for the improvement of living conditions and defense of the settlement. Absentee landlords capture a positive externality from the struggle of residents for a right to the city, increasing the exchange value of their property without paying the social costs of residence in the settlement. They are, therefore, most subject to invasions and local court actions when the opportunities arise.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, mention should be made of the use of popular property as collateral to secure loans, although this applied to less than five percent of squatter homeowners partly due to the relative insecurity of tenure and the preference of the relatively poor for unsecured credit. Small loans for business, consumer goods, home improvement or daily needs are typically obtained from usurers. Interest rates are high but they do not require collateral and payments are often negotiable so there is no danger of losing valuable

property through default. Still, owners of informal property are able to secure more credit due to the perceived stability of their residence and indeed, they usually act as informal guarantors for their tenants.

### **The symbolic value of property**

Popular property potentially provides for "functional" accumulation (an increase in wealth, market capacity and political power), and also for "ideological" accumulation (an increase in status measured in terms of metaphysical and ritual values) [Meillasoux 1972]. The need to provide for the children's future is often cited as the primary motivation of squatters (see also Gilbert and Ward 1982). And a home, even on illegally occupied land, is a valuable legacy providing perhaps the material means for inter-generational socio-economic mobility and functioning symbolically as a monument to the achievements of its builder. The social and economic distance between the countryside and the city, and between the propertied classes and the poor, makes this legacy particularly poignant for first-generation urban migrants who often manifest considerable pride at having "made it" in the metropolis.

Similarly, the collective definition and defense of communal living space and workspace under the popular form of land allocation may intensify social relations, and sense of community may serve both utilitarian and existential functions. As a result of the "organic"

growth of housing and settlement (through expansion and infilling to accommodate affinal and fictive kin), the role of particularism in legitimating claims to space, and the high levels of interaction conditioned by residential density and the ecology of illegal space, popular settlements describe a dense network of social relations (Goss 1990:270-75; see also Berner and Korff 1995:211-212). These are critical to urban survival strategies: they provide access to goods, credit, protection, job opportunities, information and advice. Moreover, they provide a basis for collective identity and mobilization to establish or defend rights to the city.

Popular settlements typically divide into sections or "compounds," based on ecological boundaries and/or principal land claims. Such "semi-public" spaces are intensely monitored and protected arenas of everyday practice, where households share in the routines of everyday life and vicariously experience each other's fortunes and misfortunes. The territoriality of informal space is derived in part from the non-segregation of activities and the crowded conditions, the vulnerability of makeshift dwellings to crime, the petty illegality of some activities in which the relatively poor engage, and the need to organize territorially to preserve their insecure tenure and to demand urban services. In this context, the English vernacular "out of place" is used to describe those who infringe upon compounds without manifest

legitimate purpose or occupy space without establishing clear and legitimate right, and one may be asked, told, or forced to leave.

Married women and young children, in particular, maintain extremely high levels of everyday interaction and cooperation with immediate neighbors, and the number and intensity of relations of kinship, fictive kinship, friendship and other forms of association evince a marked "distance decay" (Goss 1990:253-6; see also Berner 1995:72-77). The routinization of intimate activities in the social spaces of informal property reinforces subjective loyalties that the objective needs for cooperation demand, and contributes to a profound "attachment to place." Residents on popular property have often literally together made their homes, their community, and their place in the city. They share a collective history that is rehearsed and revised in reminiscences and circulating stories, and is potentially converted into political organization if its basis in collective popular property is threatened.

### **The politics of popular property**

That communities of popular property are particularly responsive to organizational initiatives is not surprising given the threat of eviction, the need for services, the territorial nature of electoral politics, and the desire to counter negative stereo-typing by outsiders. The squatter settlements of

Metro Manila are highly organized (Aldrich 1985:5) with perhaps 80 percent of communities represented by an organization of some kind (Solon 1987:44). Most are criss-crossed by a confusing proliferation of religious, women's, residents, and other associations, people's organizations (POs) or community-based organizations (CBOs), and branches of national or international non-government organizations (NGOs). These organizations are vulnerable to co-option and particularism, and despite the wishful thinking – or so-called "leftist bias" – of academic observers (Murphy 1990, Berner 1995:148), they are not necessarily politically progressive in the conventional sense. In my experience they are often, but not necessarily, focused on a narrow range of goals, and are chauvinistic, particularistic and opportunist. I agree that it is important to disabuse romantic radicals of their notions of government from below or "peoples' power" (Friedmann 1987).

In this context, men in particular, but by no means exclusively, are responsible for seeking patrons to enhance household strategies and provide communal infrastructure, represent the community in local politics and physically defend popular space against organized attempts at appropriation by state or landed capital. Patron-client relationships are ecologically based, in the sense that political "spheres of influence" are territorial constituencies (*baluwarte*). Political "personality" (again the English

vernacular is used) is typically established by brokering protection of property, services, election money or other "fixes" through electoral candidates, politicians, government officials or other benefactors, who in turn recruit clients at the "street" level for the purpose of political mobilization. Contrary to Leontidou's view (1996: 189), the struggles of the poor certainly do not evade but actually very much depend upon conscious leadership and strategies to manipulate outcomes through "connections" and exchange of favors. However, if authority is individual and hierarchical rather than democratic, and politics are "dirty," this is often the only means by which those without property or wealth and who do not pay taxes are able to obtain representation in their struggle against private capital or agencies of the state.

Residents' associations on popular property usually first seek patronage with established representatives of local government and are more concerned with maintaining a status quo that may provide them with a *de facto* security of tenure than with challenging the rights to private or public property per se. Thus, although activists (and in some cases would-be intellectuals) among the squatters try to promote anti-establishment ideologies – such as somewhat quaintly distributing photocopies of the writings of Henry George or promoting a messianic faith in the "second coming" of Don Mariano San Pedro y Esteban and the distribution

of the land under *Titulo de Probidad* no. 4136 to Manila's urban poor (see Goss 1990:159, n. 35) – they are not inherently anti-property nor possessed of any consistent "anti-planning attitude" (Leontidou 1996: 189). Quite the opposite is often the case, as indicated by a profound desire to own property themselves and a willingness to promote or accept state-imposed rationalization in order to obtain it.

What is particularly remarkable is not so much their disregard of the law in illegal invasion and sustained occupation of another's property, as their fetishization of petty legality in order to ultimately make the property their own. Squatters, for instance, often display what has been called "hyper-legality," mimicking the formal legal system despite their illegal status. In this context, they religiously collect utility bills, certificates of occupancy, promissory notes, rental payments, property tax receipts and even notarized "deeds of sale" as a means to establish "bona fide" occupancy. They file cases of encroachment, trespassing and adverse claim against each other in the *Lupon Tagapayapa*, and they cite human rights declarations or the "urban poor" clauses of the New Constitution in order to justify claims to space. They engage in informal planning or cooperate with municipal workers to obtain services; in this case, voluntarily promoting widening of egress and easement, and informal blocking of properties after the 1987 fire in recognition of (if not quite in con-

formity with) "modern" standards and regulations. If all these seem perverse, it is evidence both of the profound inter-penetration of the dominant and subordinate forms of land allocation, and the fact that the urban poor are motivated not by abstract property systems or behavioral ideals but by practical strategies to realize the material and symbolic value of real estate. Employing whatever strategies seem suited to obtain access to urban space, they combine the criteria of popular land rights with bribery, hyper-legality, political protection and even "muscle" or the threat of violence.

On the other hand, mobilization around popular property is not necessarily opportunistic since there is no essential ideology among its occupants or users and they move comfortably between, or combine, strategies of incorporation and opposition in response to contingencies "over-determined" by the contradiction between forms of land allocation. The struggle for living place and working space generally occurs as a series of local events, dissipating when demands are met or harsh reprisals are set upon them. But this is not to say that they are any less particularistic, sustainable or cumulative than, for instance, a work stoppage, which in this context is just as likely to be partial and parochial (see Goss 1990: 464-73). A labor strike is no more or less necessarily part of the class struggle than a squatter invasion necessarily contributes to an urban

social movement. We must avoid both stereotypes which are the product of a leftist longing for the poor to rise up in resistance, and which result from politics where, as usual, the poor are coopted into and subordinated to the interests of the existing power structure. The urban poor are not vehicles of political ideals but are engaged in a struggle to maintain everyday life in the city. That the ideologies and allegiances of this struggle are inconsistent must be seen as the result of the exploitation of contradictions engendered by the articulation of forms of land allocation.

#### **Conclusion: popular property and the right to the city**

The emergence of a propertyless proletariat is a historically and geographically specific phenomenon. In the contemporary developing world, the exploited classes are not entirely separated from independent means of production and reproduction, nor is the wage relation the existential basis of social consciousness. In the developing city, a varying though significant proportion of the population obtains all or part of its livelihood outside of formal and stable wage employment – in petty commodity, rent capitalist or petty capitalist forms of production. Individuals frequently move in and out of different types of activity and forms of production, or combine them through extensive sidelining. Employment is characterized by opportunism, instability,

informality, illegality, particularism and disguised relations of exploitation. Also, urban workers have retained rural holdings, claimed and built homes on unused urban land, and acquired the tools of petty enterprise. While the property is potentially a commodity, this does not mean that it necessarily functions as a basis for the expropriation or accumulation of value, nor that its effect is equivalent to property produced "purely" under the capitalist mode of production. The functional multiplicity and the material and symbolic heterogeneity of popular property make an important difference. Under the popular form of land allocation, property relations are typically mediated by kinship, propinquity, and particularistic politics, grounded in both material self-interest and sentiment. The resulting sense of community is potentially mobilized into organized attempts to maintain its physical and symbolic basis.

The Marxist argument that property necessarily compromises the political consciousness of workers - that demands for living place and working space manifest "false consciousness" are merely reflection of the "real" contradiction between capital and labor" (Harvey 1985:57) - surely does not apply in a context where capitalist relations of production and state-capitalist spatiality have not been generalized. Given the uneven and limited development of capitalist relations of production, capital diffuses through multiple forms of exploitation or is concentrated in a

few powerful hands, such that labor is unable to confront capital on its own terrain. On the other hand, the ability of the relatively poor to improve their standards of living and to maintain their ways of life and the integrity of their community necessarily involves a struggle over urban space in which territoriality is the strategic basis of organization. In the developing city, where there is limited potential for organization at the point of production, it has therefore been argued that "ownership of the means of reproduction, i.e., urban land, that controls access to urban living space as well as other economic activities, is perhaps more important than the usually assumed class relations" (Evers 1983:24).

I think, however, that *de facto* possession is a more immediate concern than ownership and that space is necessary for production as well as reproduction. This means that we need to recognize the simultaneity of the struggle for living space and workplace in the developing city, particularly since the conventional separation and hierarchization of their politics depend precisely upon the spatial segregation of production and reproduction of the capitalist mode of production and its dominant spatiality, while exploitation of labor takes place in simultaneously both spheres (see Leontidou 1996: 187). Moreover, if it is the case even in advanced capitalist societies that "...most people still live their lives locally and their consciousness is formed in a distinct geographical



place" (Massey 1984:117), this is more so in developing cities where geographical as well as socio-economic mobility is circumscribed, and where the location and timing of everyday activities of household and collective survival are inseparably intertwined.

What is at stake, then, is the material basis of a way of life grounded in a specific form of socio-spatiality – the popular form of land allocation – which is articulated to and subordinated by the capitalist mode of land allocation. It is not just a matter of land, nor especially land ownership even if this is the immediate focus of political demands, but as Castells argues, "the quest for a new secure space is a major step in the search for preserving cultural identity, improving their living conditions, and ensuring political self-determination. *The*

*growing urban population of the Third World is clearly oriented toward the building and preservation of spatially-defined communities* (1980:94, *original emphasis*). It is about what Henri Lefebvre calls *le droit a la ville* – the right to remain in one's place in the city and to retain control over allocation of time and space – and the intimately-connected *droit a la difference*, the right to distinction and heterogeneity of social life that resist the reduction of place to exchange value and the exercise of bureaucratic rationality. At stake is the fundamental unity of production and reproduction, multiple and flexible combinations of activities in various times and spaces, according to need and desire rather than imposed or learned regimes. Above all, therefore, it is about the definition of urban community and its appropriate form of spatiality.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Research for this paper was conducted in Metro Manila in 1986-1987 under a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (SES-855 12683). This paper is partly based on Jon Goss' dissertation *Production and Reproduction Among the Urban Poor of Metro Manila: Relations of Exploitation Conditions of Existence*.

<sup>2</sup>Goldberg (1985) argues that the networks of Chinese business connections, the cultural importance of providing for subsequent generations, the persistent fear of discrimination

and/or displacement the Nanyang Chinese feel, and the cultural value attached by the Chinese to the institution of land and property, lead to an environment favoring massive intra-regional real estate investment.

<sup>3</sup>For example, a national property-taxation assessment undertaken in 1984 and due to take effect in January 1985 was postponed by the weakening Marcos administration. Then in 1987, it was suspended by Aquino's government after a sustained publicity campaign by real estate interests (including the Subdivision Owners

Association of the Philippines, the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Association, the Real Estate Brokers of the Philippines, and the Metro Realtors Board Presidents League), who ironically claimed to be acting only in compassion for small property owners – those who supposedly “live frugally and even borrow money just to pay their land taxes” (*Manila Bulletin*, December 10, 1986:29).

<sup>4</sup>The Marxist account has been rightly criticized for its determinism, its lack of substantive empirical research, its inability to inform praxis and its lack of specific predictive capacity (Gilbert 1986, Gilbert and van der Linden 1986, van der Linden 1986). If it is in a general sense true that “no matter how self-help housing activities are organized, they are all *articulated* by the dominant capitalist mode of production and exchange as well as its broader ideological and political structures” (Burgess 1985), such inevitabilist generalizations show little regard for the diversity of conditions of articulation and particularly for variability among state regimes.

<sup>5</sup>Of course, the fear of the poor also motivates international agencies as evidenced in a speech by Robert McNamara introducing new urban policies at the IMF-World Bank Conference in September 1975, when he said: “Historically, violence and civil upheaval are more common in cities than in the countryside. Frustrations that fester among the

urban poor are readily exploited by political extremists. If cities do not begin to deal more constructively with poverty, poverty may well begin to deal more destructively with cities” (cited in Bello *et al* 1982:102).

<sup>6</sup>This survey was distributed to a sample of 148 “poor” households within an urban barangay. A second survey was conducted among a sample of 90 homeowners in a squatter community within this barangay.

<sup>7</sup>*Istambay* is derived from the American English term “stand by,” and in this context means roughly to “hang around” or “hang out” while waiting for a commission.

<sup>8</sup>Using a complex methodology, Evers (1981) estimates that subsistence production contributes 18 percent of household income in peri-urban Jakarta, and accounts for 24 percent of productive labor time in urban Bangkok (Evers and Korff 1986). Figures for parts of Metro Manila may be of a similar order of magnitude.

<sup>9</sup>Interestingly, although dominated by formal property owners, the local “people’s” court (*Lupon Tagapapaya*) includes squatters and long-term tenants active in local politics. Cases are usually resolved in compromise such that squatter landlords generally try to have these referred to higher courts where they argue cases in terms of contract law rather than land entitlements.

## References

- Abrams, Charles  
1964 *Housing in the Modern World: Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Asian Development Bank  
1989 *Philippines Urban Sector Profile*. Manila: Asian Development Bank
- Agnew, John  
1981 "Homeownership and the Capitalist Social Order." In M. Dear and A. J. Scott (eds), *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*. London: Methuen.
- Agency for International Development  
1978 *Philippines Shelter Sector Assessment, Volume 1: Country Report*. Office of Housing. Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development.
- Aldrich, B.C.  
1985 "Habitat Defense in Southeast Asian Cities," *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 13: 1-14.
- Amis, Philip  
1984 "Squatters or Tenants: The Commercialization of Unauthorized Housing in Nairobi," *World Development*, 12(1): 87-96.
- 1990 "Key Themes in Contemporary African Urbanization." In Philip Amis and P. Lloyd (eds), *Housing Africa's Urban Poor*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Anderson, Benedict  
1988 "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams," *New Left Review*, 169:3-31.
- Asiama, S.O.  
1985 "The Rich Slum Dweller: A Problem of Unequal Access," *International Labor Review*, 124(3):353-362.
- Balisacan, A.M.  
1994 "Urban Poverty in the Philippines: Nature, Causes, and Policy Measures," *Asian Development Review*, 12:1.
- Baross, Paul  
1983 "The Articulation of Land Supply for Popular Settlements in Third World Cities." In S. Angel, R.W. Archer, S. Tanphiphat and E. Wegelin (eds), *Land for Housing the Poor*. Singapore: Select Books.
- 1990 "Sequencing Land Development: The Price Implications of Legal and Illegal Settlement Growth." In P. Baross and J.

- van der Linden (eds), *The Transformation of Land Supply Systems in the Third World*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and J. van der Linden  
1990 "Introduction" In P. Baross and J. van der Linden (eds), *The Transformation of Land Supply Systems in Third World Cities*. Brokkfield: Avebury.
- Bello, Walden, D. Kinley, and D. Elison  
1982 *Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines*. San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy.
- Berner, Erhard  
1995 *A Place to Live in the City of Man: Localities and the Struggle for Urban Land in Metro Manila*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Faculty of Sociology, University of Bielefeld.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and R. Korff  
1995 "Globalization and Local Resistance: The Creation Of Localities in Manila and Bangkok," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 19:208-222.
- Burgess, Rod  
1982 "The Politics of Urban Residence in Latin America," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 6(4): 465-80.
- 1985 "The Limits of State Self-Help Housing Programmes," *Development and Change*, 16:271-312.
- 1987 "A Lot of Noise and No Nuts," *Development and Change*, 18: 137-146.
- 1978 "Petty Commodity Housing or Dweller Control? A Critique of John Turner's Views on Housing Policy," *World Development*, 6:1105-1133.
- Castells, Manuel  
1983 *The City and the Grassroots*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Conway, Denis  
1982 "Self-Help Housing, the Commodity Nature of Housing and Amelioration of the Housing Deficit: Continuing the Turner-Burgess Debate," *Antipode*, 14(2):40-46.
- Doebele, W.A.  
1987 "The Evolution of Concepts of Urban Land Tenure in Developing Countries," *Habitat International*, 11 (1):7-22.
- Durand-Lasserve, Alain  
1990 "Articulation Between Formal and Informal Land Markets in Cities in Developing Countries: Issues and Trends." In P. Baross and J. van der Linden (eds), *The Transformation of Land Supply Systems in the Third World*. Aldershot: Avebury.

- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific  
1993 *State of Urbanization in Asia and the Pacific 1993*. New York: ESCAP United Nations.
- Evers, Hans-Dieter  
1981 "The Contribution of Urban Subsistence Production to Incomes in Jakarta," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 17:89-96.
- 1983 *Urban Landownership, Ethnicity and Class in Southeast Asian Cities*. Sociology of Development Research Center Working Paper No. 14, University of Bielefeld.
- 1984 "Land Ownership, Ethnicity and Class in Southeast Asian Cities," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 8:481-496.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and R. Korff  
1986 "Subsistence Production in Bangkok," *Development: Seeds of Change*, 4:50-55.
- Foucault, Michel  
1986 "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics*, 16:22-27.
- Friedland, John  
1990 "High-Rise Greed," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11/20:54.
- Friedmann, John  
1987 "The Right to the City", *Development Dialogue*, 1:136-51.
- Gilbert, Alan  
1986 "Self-Help Housing and State Intervention: Illustrated Reflections on the Petty Commodity Production Debate." In D. Drakakis-Smith (ed), *Urbanization in the Developing World*. London: Croom Helm.
- Gilbert, Alan and J. Van der Linden  
1986 "The Limits of a Marxist Theoretical Framework for Explaining State Self-Help Housing," *Development and Change*, 18:129-136.
- Gilbert, Alan and P. Ward  
1982 "Low Income Housing and the State." In A. Gilbert (ed), *Urbanization in Contemporary Latin America: Critical Approaches to the Analysis of Urban Issues*. New York: Wiley.
- Goldberg, M.A.  
1985 *The Chinese Connection: Getting Plugged in to Pacific Rim Real Estate, Trade and Capital Markets*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Goss, Jon D.  
1990 *Production and Reproduction among the Urban Poor of Metro*

- Manila: Relations of Exploitation and Conditions of Existence.* Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky.
- 1991 *Landlord Tenant Relations in a Metro Manila Squatter Settlement.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association of Geographers, Miami, April 14. Mimeo.
- Guerrero, Sylvia H.  
1977 "Staying Where the Action is: Relocation Within the City," *Philippine Sociological Review*, 25:51-56.
- Hardoy, Jorge and D. Satterthwaite  
1981 *Shelter Need and Response: Housing, Land and Settlement Policies in Seventeen Third World Nations.* Chichester: Wiley.
- Harms, Hans  
1982 "Historical Perspectives on the Practice and Purpose of Self-Help Housing." In P. Ward (ed), *Self-Help Housing: A Critique.* London: Mansell.
- Harvey, David  
1976 "Labor, Capital and Class Struggle Around the Built Environment in Advanced Capitalist Societies," *Politics and Society*, 3:265-95.
- 1982 *The Limits to Capital.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- 1985 *The Urbanization of Capital.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hollnsteiner, Mary R.  
1976 "The Urbanization of Metro Manila." In Y.M. Yeung and C.P. Lo (eds), *Changing South-east Asian Cities: Readings on Urbanization.* Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Karaos, Anna M.A.  
1993 "Ramos, the Elite and the Urban Poor," *Intersect*, 6/6:5-17.
- Keyes, William J.  
1979 "Economic Development and the Housing Problem," *Philippine Studies*, 27:210-230.
- 1983 *Metro Manila: A Case Study of Policies toward Urban Slums.* Makati: Ministry of Human Settlements Series 1.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and M.C.R. Burcroff  
1976 *Housing the Urban Poor: Non-Conventional Approaches to a National Problem.* New York: United Nations Center for Housing and Urban Planning.
- Laquian, Aprodicio A.  
1972 *Slums and Squatters in Six Philippine Cities.* Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

- 1980 "The Role of the Government, Private and Popular Sectors in Providing Housing in the Philippines." Paper presented at the Second Andres Soriano Lecture on Government and Business. Quezon City: University of the Philippines. Mimeo.
- 1983 *Basic Housing: Policies for Urban Sites, Services and Shelter in Developing Countries*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
- Lefebvre, Henri  
1976 *The Survival of Capitalism*. London: Allison and Busby.
- Leontidou, Lisa  
1985 "Urban Land Rights and Working Class Consciousness in Peripheral Societies," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 9:533-66.  
1996 "Alternatives to Modernism in (Southern) Urban Theory: Exploring the In-Between Spaces," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 20(2):178-95.
- Lim, William S.  
1982 "Major Differences Between Developed and Developing Countries in Application of Land Policy Instruments." In M. Cullen and S. Woolery (eds), *World Congress on Land Policy*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Lindauer, David L.  
1981 "The Tondo Project: Whom Have We Served?" *Philippine Journal of Public Administration*, 25:280-87.
- Massey, Doreen  
1984 *Spatial Divisions of Labor: Social Structures and Geography of Production*. London: Methuen.
- Meillasoux, Claude  
1972 "From Production to Reproduction: A Marxist Approach to Economic Anthropology," *Economy and Society*, 9:93-105.
- Mendiola, Ernesto C.  
1983 "Urban Land Reform in the Philippines." In S. Angel, R. W. Archer, S. Tanhiphat and E. Wegelin (eds), *Land For Housing the Poor*. Singapore: Select Books.
- Mulder, Nils  
1994 *Philippine Public Space and Public Sphere*. Sociology of Development Research Center Working Paper No. 210, University of Bielefeld.
- Murphy, Denis  
1990 "On the Politicization of People's Organizations," *Intersect*, 4(8):4-19.

- 1992 "Tondo Slums: Everything Has Changed Except the Poverty," *Manila Chronicle*, March 27, 1992.
- 1993 *The Urban Poor - Land and Housing*. Bangkok: Asia Coalition For Housing Rights.
- Oberlander, H. Peter  
1985 *Land, the Central Human Settlements Issue*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Perdomo, R.P. and P. Nikken  
1982 "The Law and Home Ownership in the Barrios of Caracas." In A. Gilbert and J. Hardoy (eds), *Urbanization in Contemporary Latin America*. New York: Wiley.
- Pinches, Michael  
1992 "The Philippines: The Regional Exception," *The Pacific Review*, 5:390-401.
- Pradilla, Ernesto and C. Jimenez  
1985 "Architecture, Urbanism and Neo-Colonial Dependence." In R. Bromley (ed), *Planning for Small Enterprises in Third World Cities*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Ruland, Jurgen  
1989 "Housing Policies in the Philippines." In E. Schmidt (ed), *Squatters' Struggles and Housing Policies in Asia: Experiences from Five Countries in Southeast and South Asia*. Dortmund: IRPUD.
- Solon, Orwell  
1987 *An Essay in the Theory of Urban Squatting and Land Development*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Quezon City: University of the Philippines.
- Stone, Richard  
1971 "'Lagay' and the Policeman: A Study of Private, Transitory Ownership of Public Property." In *Modernization: Its Impact on the Philippines*. Institute of Philippine Culture Paper No. 10. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Strassman, William P.  
1984 "The Timing of Urban Infrastructure and Housing Improvements by Owner Occupants," *World Development*, 12:743-53.
- 1997 "Oversimplification in Housing Analysis with Reference to Land Markets and Mobility," *Cities*, 11:377-383.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and A. Blunt  
1994 "Land Prices and Housing in Manila," *Urban Studies*, 31: 267-285.



- Szanton, Maria C.B.  
 1972 *A Right to Survive: Subsistence Marketing in a Lowland Philippine Town*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Tanedo, Victor M.  
 1982 "Squatters Liable For Sabotage," *Times Journal*, June 1982.
- Tiglao, Roberto  
 1992 "Big Fish, Small Net: Manila Must Fight Tax Evaders, Says World Bank," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 26, 1992:50-51.
- Turner, John F.C.  
 1969 "Uncontrolled Urban Settlements: Problems and Policies." In G. Breese (ed), *The City in Newly Developing Countries*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- 1972 "Housing as a Verb." In J.F.C. Turner and R. Fichter (eds), *Freedom to Build*. New York: Macmillan.
- Turner, Mark M.  
 1976 *Aspects of Inequality in a Philippine Town*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hull.
- Ward, Peter M. and C. Macoloo  
 1992 "Articulation Theory and Self-Help Housing Practice in the 1990s," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 6(1):60-80.
- Yoshihara, Kunio  
 1988 *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in Southeast Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.