Culture and Urbanization:
The Philippine Case[1]   Ma. Cynthia Rose Banzon-Bautista

Introduction

Technological innovations, the globalization of economic production and the breakdown of trade barriers, are expected to spur urbanization and lifestyle changes in developing societies at the turn of the century. Economic dynamism in particular segments of major metropolitan areas will mean more employment opportunities for low-skilled labor as well as professional and technical workers. This translates, on one hand, to growing in-migration and the proliferation of slum areas, as neither the market nor the state has adequate mechanisms to provide decent housing. On the other hand, it would lead to greater purchasing power and the adoption of middle- and upper-class lifestyles common to developed economies.

The free flow of material and cultural goods and services raises concern over the homogenization of culture, particularly in cities and urban areas of the developing world which form the nexus of the emerging global society (Berner 1995:9). Rapid developments in telecommunications are seen to be displacing local institutions through the spread of culture, sold via world cable television.

There are, however, countervailing tendencies to the projected convergence of socio-cultural life in different parts of the world. The contradictory processes taking place in urban areas, which universalize practices at the highest financial and management centers while producing a metropolitan economy subsidized by squatter colonies, profoundly influence the development of diverse cultural communities. The common geographic space designated as urban in a country like the Philippines – with its given landscape, environment, set of opportunities and problems – is experienced differently by its residents. Their sense of it depends on their place in the urban hierarchy; the particularities of their locality or of other imagined communities involving networks of people in the metropolis with whom they relate; and the way they collectively and individually weave the norms and values of "non-present and generalized cultural communities" that reach out to them through education, media and pressure groups (Healey *et al.* 1995:17).

The culture of people in urban communities - what they do, their manner of doing things, the language they use to describe their thoughts and experiences – is far from homogenous

and will not likely be so, even with the onslaught of global communications. As melting pots of diverse groups and contradictory interests, cities and megacities in developing nations are more appropriately characterized by cultural hybridization "encompassing manifold and multiple modernities and traditions," than by homogenization (Escobar 1995:218). For instance, although the lifestyles of the poor in slum areas are those of the urban lower class, they nevertheless exhibit characteristics associated with folk qualities (Racelis 1988:240).

But while the urban is an "ensemble of diverse social relations with different cultural referents and spatial dimensions" (Healey *et al.* 1995:18), there are worrisome problems in major metropolitan areas that cut across delineations of ethnicity and class. To illustrate, worsening pollution plagues Metro Manila. Already four of its major river systems were considered biologically dead in 1989, or only a decade after three of these were classified as capable of sustaining aquatic life and one as a good source of water supply (DENR 1990:115). Regardless of social class, residents of the metropolis feel burdened by heavy traffic (SWS Survey, Mangahas 1995:95-112) and floods during the rainy season. The demand for potable water has not been fully met while the agency in charge of water allocation loses more than half of its daily supply to leakage and illegal connections (Manasan and Llanto 1994:79).[2]

Housing remains inadequate as slums continue to proliferate, with living conditions below United Nations standards. Kidnapping and syndicated crimes remain unabated, although official figures have registered a slight decline in the last decade.

Addressing the imperatives posed by such problems requires a concerted effort. In light of the complexity of the country's urban problems, the presence of diverse cultural communities and opposing interests (e.g., land developers/owners/speculators vs. squatters), and the formation of more local organization with advocacy thrusts, urban governance, or the relationship between civil society and the state, require more than a top-down model. While they are key players, metropolitan, city or municipal governments can no longer be the sole locus of urban management. The political order in the metropolis is more and more negotiated in the politics and micro politics of government agencies, the private business sector, non-government organizations and local communities. The management of urban life, therefore, entails bringing together the concerns of various interest groups and establishing common cause among disparate elements where these are warranted (as in the case of environmental degradation). It is filled with tensions and dilemmas.

Against the backdrop of urbanization in the last two decades, this paper explores in broad strokes some of the

issues of metropolitan governance in the Philippines. Its broader agenda, however, are: 1) to assess the impact of urbanization on various aspects and sectors of urban life, with special emphasis on the urban poor who constitute a significant group; 2) to describe current forms of urban dwellings, documented lifestyles, and organized initiatives of some of the myriad cultural communities in the metropolis; and 3) to raise some issues of metropolitan governance.

Urbanization in the Philippines

Urbanization trends

The Philippines urbanized rapidly from 1960 to 1990. Its urban population grew at 5.15 percent per annum in 1990 (Blunt and Moser 1996:2),[3] a rate which was double the annual population growth rate of 2.33 percent. This resulted in an increase in the share of the urban population from 30 percent in 1970 to 49 percent two decades later (Sobrepeña 1994:5, see Table 1). By the year 2010, the level of urbanization is expected to increase to 55 percent (Endriga *et al.* 1996:1).

The level and rate of urbanization in the Philippines, as shown by the figures in Table 2 for Metro Manila, are higher than those of Jakarta and Bangkok. It should be noted, however, that the entries in Table 2 are merely indicative of the standing of the Philippines relative to two of its Southeast Asian neighbors, as assessed from comparable statistics compiled in existing publications. However, quite apart from the fact that the six percent annual urban population growth rate in Table 2 is double the 2.9 percent growth rate of Metro Manila in the last decade as reported by Blunt and Moser (1996:2), levels and rates of urbanization are generally not comparable across countries as these figures are based on each nation's definition of what constitutes an urban center.[4]

As in other Southeast Asian countries, a megacity has maintained its primacy over other urban centers in the Philippines. Expanding from the colonial capital of the Spanish and American period, Metro Manila, with its population of 7.9 million in 1990 was 620 percent bigger in that year

Table 1. Pace of Urbanization, 1960-1990

Indicator	1960	1970	1980	1990
Total Philippine Population (in millions)	27.09	36.64	48.20	60.68
Growth per Annum	3.06	2.78	2.33	
Urban population (in millions)	8.07	12.07	17.94	29.64
Growth per Annum	4.11	4.04	5.15	
Share of Total %	29.8	32.9	37.2	48.8

Source: Sobrepeña, Aniceto 1994:5

Population Characteristics	INDONESIA Jakarta	PHILIPPINES Manila	THAILAND Bangkok
Metropolitan Population	7,347,800	7,928,867	5,468,915
Total Urban Population of Country	53,400,000	32,000,000	6,800,000
Metropolitan Population as % of Total Urban Population	13.26	24.77	32.55
National Population	179,321,641		64,906,990
5,524,352			
Metropolitan Population as % of National Population	4.10	12.21	9.85
Total Urban Population as % of National Population	31.00	50.00	30.00
Population Growth Rate: Urban %	5.4	6.0	3.0
Population Growth Rate: Country % (1980-1987)	1.95	2.3	1.7

than Metro Cebu, the second largest metropolis in the country (Endriga *et al.* 1996:1). It had close to 30 percent of the country's total urban population (Blunt and Moser 1996:2) and by 1995 was home to 9.5 million people (*Philippine Statistical Yearbook 1996*).

While Metro Manila's share of the Philippine population was about 14 percent in 1995, it clearly functioned as the primate city, producing 32 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and more than half of the output of the manufacturing and services sector in that year. About three out of four telephone connections in the country were found in the mega-city. Its financial center, Makati, hosted 57 percent of all banks in the Philippines, approximately 90 percent

of all international banks, and 48 out of 56 embassies and UN agencies (Berner 1995:15,19). The concentration of important activities in Metro Manila included those associated with the lower end of the social and economic hierarchy. About half of the squatter population in the Philippines (Berner 1995:24) and nine out of 10 slum communities in Metro Manila, Metro Cebu and Davao City were in the primate metropolis (Ramos-Jimenez and Chiong-Javier).[5]

Urban growth in different parts of the country with a primate center is a significant feature of Philippine urbanization that is shared with other Southeast countries. Historically, the spatial expansion of urban areas in the Philippines followed the textbook

pattern. Growth began in the core city and radiated to the periphery. The rates of urbanization and population growth in the periphery eventually approximated the core as new businesses were located in these areas to take advantage of their proximity to the center. When the quality of life in the core city deteriorated, it became less attractive to residents and businesses, leading them to relocate to suburban areas. Over time, a division of labor emerged with parts of the city serving as commercial districts, industrial zones, educational centers and residential areas (Cariño, Ledivina 1997:5). People traveled to different sections of the expanded city to perform various social, economic and political functions, ignoring political boundaries. As they did, they virtually defined themselves as living in a metropolitan area. The official designation of the city of Metro Manila as a metropolis merely institutionalized the process of metropolitanization.[6]

Factors behind urbanization in the Philippines

The reclassification of expanding areas at the periphery of urban centers accounted for more than half of the urban growth in the last two decades (Balisacan).[7] The literature attributes the increasing urbanization to migration. Migrant share of urban growth from 1975 to 1990 was reported to be as high as 49 percent (Findley 1993: 15).[8] The sluggishness of the economy in the 1980s, when its average growth was slower than the 20 severely indebted countries (Philippine Human Development Report 1994:33) and the displacing effects of natural disasters like the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo accelerated rural to urban migration during this period (Nuqui 1994).

The attractiveness of urban life reinforced the stream of migration from rural areas. The decision of Filipino migrants to start life anew in the city was bolstered by perceptions of better employment opportunities and accessibility to services and facilities in urban areas. Empirical data corroborated some of these perceptions. Despite images of urban blight and squalor, poverty incidence in 1991 was much lower in urban areas (14.9 percent in Metro Manila as opposed to 32.2 percent for the country as a whole); life expectancy was higher (68.6 compared to 64.9 for the Philippines); the literacy rates and mean rates of schooling were also higher (99.09 percent versus 93.54 percent and 9.73 years versus 7.05 years, respectively) (Sobrepeña 1994: 6-7). Table 3 clearly shows, for instance, some of the advantages of living in urban areas insofar as access to basic services is concerned.[9]

But perhaps more than the material benefits, the existence of social networks in the place of the migrant's destination is an important determinant of migration (Blunt and Moser 1996:3).[10] Recently, other networks that are not based on kinship ties have emerged. For as long as friends or relatives avail themselves of the services of organized networks that facilitate their land occupancy in

Table 3 Percent of Philippine Households with Access to Basic Services[11]

Basic Services	Urban All Households 1990	Total All Households 1990
Safe water supply	85	65
Toilet Facilities	84	63
Organized Garbage Disposal	31	16

*Adapted from Banzon-Bautista, Cynthia (1996) Table 2.

squatter colonies, or refer them to such networks, the perceived risks of migration are considerably diminished.[12] The assurances of migrant friends and kin who finally settled in the city, in turn, help firm up the would-be migrants' decision to relocate (Rebullida and Endriga).

While migration has been a major determinant of urbanization in the postwar years, recent findings suggest that natural increase is also a significant factor. In areas like Quezon City's second district, a 1996 survey reveals that 50 percent of the population were second- or third-generation migrants. Many of the respondents in the survey have also been living in the metropolis for more than 10 years (*Aninaw* 1997:4-7).

Impact of urbanization

The rapid increase in the number of people living in urban areas in the wake of demographic and socioeconomic processes, has affected the spatial arrangements and lifestyles in cities, and exerted pressure on infrastructure and the environment. The documented changes, however, cannot be attributed solely to urbanization. Distinguishing the effects of urbanization from those of economic growth and development is difficult. It is therefore important to note that the following salient impacts of urbanization may be a consequence of the interplay of forces rather than of urbanization per se.

Proliferation of squatter/slum communities

About a third of urban dwellers in the Philippines were poor in 1991 (Nuqui 1991:29). This figure is much higher than the 20 percent urban poverty incidence in Indonesia (which had a slightly lower per capita income in 1990), seven percent in Thailand, and eight percent in Malaysia (UNDP 1995:78). A more disturbing observation, however, is that for the Philippines, seven to eight percent of the population living below the poverty line do not have the minimum income needed to purchase food that satisfies 80 percent of their nutritional requirements.

Of greater concern, for purposes of this paper, is the proliferation of slum or squatter communities. Estimates of the population living in these places vary considerably; the wide discrepancies are due to overlaps in the definition of squatters, urban poor, landless settlers and makeshift dwellers that are used interchangeably,[13] as well as in differences in the computation of the poverty threshold.[14] Nuqui estimates that squatters made up 17 percent of the country's total population in 1990 and 40 percent of its urban population (Nuqui 1991:29). In Metro Manila, the proportions varied from 33 percent to about 50 percent of the metropolitan population.[15] Nevertheless, it is clear that those who live in slums or squatter communities constituted a substantial group, leading a World Bank team to assert that there are "significantly more people living in squatter areas in Metro Manila than the international average for countries with equivalent GNP per capita" (World Bank 1996: 31).[16]

The growth of squatter communities was even more dramatic in Mindanao's urban areas. Davao City's 40 squatter colonies in 1977 doubled to 89 in 1992 while the population living in slum areas in General Santos City almost tripled in only three years, from 12,000 families in 1991 to between 35,000 and 43,000 families in 1994 (Cariño, Ledivina 1997:7).

Apart from the proliferation of squatter communities, a growing number of extremely poor families who have "neither resources to rent a room nor build a shanty" (Yasay 1994:4) are also heart-rending outcomes of urbanization. Classified as permanent homeless, these families "live in push carts, on the sidewalks, along seawalls, under bridges, flyovers and the light rail transit tracks" (Yasay 1994:4). In 1992, the Housing and Development Coordinating Council estimated that 77,000 people residing in urban areas were homeless (Cariño, Benjamin 1997:3).

Increasing pressure on basic and functional services

The proliferation of squatters, many of whom live in makeshift houses,[17] reflects a serious housing problem in urban areas. Aggravating this situation is the physical shortage of land and more importantly, the exclusion of a large part of it from the formal land market. The extremely low real property tax, which accounted for only two percent of total taxes from 1986 to 1990 (Porio 1996:27) and .6 percent of the assessed market value (World Bank 1996:38), has encouraged land speculation. In a country where land is culturally valued as a major source of wealth, the elite clings to it as a secure form of investment with a high rate of return. As a consequence, land prices for a 1.0 square meter of serviced land on the edge of developing urban centers have risen from 1975 to 1991 by 2.5 to 3.65 times the gross domestic product per capita (Straussman and Blunt 1993),[18] making the cost of land

prohibitive. It is important to note that even in 1975, land prices in the Philippines were "incongruously high" by international standards (World Bank 1996:35).

Government has tried to address the problem through various lot acquisitions and socialized housing schemes,[19] the latest of which demonstrates the outcome of strong pressure from non-government and peoples' organizations (Karaos *et al.* 1995). The Community Mortgage Program (CMP), launched in 1989, provides squatters the opportunity to purchase the land they are occupying with state loans that are repaid within 25 years. The passage of the Urban Development and Housing Act in 1992, on the other hand, establishes a systematic program for allocating lands for socialized housing to the underprivileged. The law requires local government units to allocate land for socialized housing. The inability of some extremely poor beneficiaries of the CMP (Berner 1995:33) to pay for the lot and the lack of political will to implement the UDHA provisions on socialized housing have undermined the potential impact of these responses (Porio:26).[20] As to housing schemes, financing has generally been inadequate and government's lending schemes have fallen below targets (Rebullida).[21]

The increasing population in urban areas has not only made it difficult for the government and private sector to keep pace with the demand for housing but for basic necessities as well. Only 85 percent of all urban households had access to safe water supply in 1990 (see Table 3). Although nine out of 10 Metro Manila residents had access to safe water, the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System served only 62 percent of them. Those outside the coverage of MWSS had to put up their own pumps, set up private connections or purchase water (Cariño, Ledivina:11). Eight out of 10 urban households had toilets in 1990 but only 31 percent disposed of their garbage through organized collection (see Table 3). Metro Manila generated 4911 tons of garbage daily in 1993, of which 15 percent to 20 percent were uncollected. The rest were thrown in official dumpsites, streets, canals and rivers.

The extremely low proportion of poor households belonging to the bottom 30 percent of the urban income distribution who have access to organized garbage disposal (nine percent) is alarming (see Table 4). Considering that 16 percent of urban households live in danger areas[22] which include riverbanks and canals (Philippine Commission in the Urban Poor 1993),[23] the solid wastes disposed of in such waterways have aggravated the pollution of river systems that run through or around urban areas. Contrary to public perception, industrial wastes, pesticides and oil spills from gasoline stations are only secondary sources of water pollution. About 70 percent of the pollutants come primarily from domestic sewage and garbage that have been allowed to flow into river systems (UNDP

Table 4 Percentage of Philippine Households with Access to Basic Services[*]

Basic Services	Bottom 30% of Income Distribution Urban Households (1992)	Urban Households (1990)
Safe water supply	76	85
Toilet Facilities	63	84
Organized Garbage Disposal	9	31

*Adapted from Banzon-Bautista, Cynthia (1996) Table 23

1994:99). The same garbage thrown in canals and river tributaries is also largely responsible for the flooding problems in the metropolis.

Environmental impact

Water pollution is only one among the environmental effects of congestion and poverty in urban areas. Sanitation problems in Metro Manila, which has one of the highest population densities in Southeast Asia – 14865 persons per square kilometer in 1995 – (Philippine Statistical Yearbook 1996: Table 1.1), have resulted in the rapid spread of communicable diseases like measles or waterborne afflictions such as Hepatitis A. The traffic situation is also worsening and seems to be insurmountable in the metropolitan areas. With 13 percent of the country's population found in only .02 percent of its land (Berner 1996:1) and 43 percent of all registered vehicles concentrated in two percent of its total road network (Cariño, Ledivina: 7), Metro Manila's traffic problem is by far the worst in the Philippines. The average annual growth rate of vehicle registration at 10.5 percent between 1985 and 1995 (Cariño,

Ledivina:8) clearly outpaces the megacity's population growth of 3.1 percent from 1990 to 1995 (UNDP 1995:99).

The increase in the volume of vehicles in urban areas is a direct consequence of urbanization. The sheer rise in population levels has been enough to dwarf the achievements of government or the private sector in the provision of infrastructural facilities. For instance, the flyovers and circumferential roads that have been constructed after 1986 could ease traffic only for a few years (Banzon Bautista 1996).

Combined with industrial pollutants, the volume of vehicular emission in megacities has degraded their atmosphere. The worsening air pollution in Metro Manila is reflected in the levels of pollutants breathed by jeepney drivers who ply the roads of Metro Manila for more than eight hours a day. A study revealed that the lead, carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide particulates inhaled by this group were 100 percent higher than those indirectly exposed to vehicle emissions (UNDP 1994:99).

A glimpse of some urban cultural communities

All urban residents share the deteriorating physical environment of Philippine megacities. They, however, differ in the way the problems affect them and the actions they are willing to take to address the pitfalls of urbanization. Where they live and work, and their position in the social hierarchy are among the factors that account for the differences in exposure to problems. The urban Filipinos' willingness to participate in collective activities is mediated by the communities they have affinity with.

Some of the classical works on social change[24] posit a transition from an ideal type of society dominated by deeply felt personal relationships where undifferentiated individuals are bonded by common tradition, to one where impersonal relations prevail impelled by a complex division of labor to depend functionally on one another. Philippine metropolitan societies, particularly Metro Manila and Metro Cebu, reflect the characteristic anonymity and impersonality of contemporary urban life.

Filipinos living in the metropolis, however, do not necessarily experience the individuation of life in Western countries. Their attachment to extended families and affinity with locality-based communities or symbolic networks of imagined communities sustained by personal webs of friends and connections, make up

for the temporary sense of anonymity in an unfamiliar crowd. They buffer the functional atmosphere of the workplace by using kin familial idioms, affixing the terms *ate* (older sister), *kuya* (older brother), *tito* (uncle) or *tita* (aunt) to the names of older officemates. It doesn't matter that the interests of their groups and communities may come in conflict with those of others, or their communities are engaged in permanent conflict. The more important point is that they generally have a sense of belonging.

As in other Southeast Asian countries, the Philippine metropolis is a melting pot of diverse residential or symbolic communities. Depending on the vantage point of a painter, the picture of urban life that may be sketched from the way the cultures of these communities mesh, will resemble at one and the same time that of a Western city, any megacity in a developing society, or a megacity in Southeast Asia. The particularities of the cultures surface in the overall picture but when comparisons are made with other places, it becomes difficult to separate unique features from the more common characteristics.

This section explores superficially the cultures of urban localities in the metropolis. It focuses on Metro Manila because much of the literature is about this primate megacity. Localities are socially defined territorial boundaries (Berner 1996) that need not coincide

with administrative units.[25] Diverse cultural communities brought together by webs of informal networks make up localities. The extent and intensity of such informal networks determine a locality's level of social integration (Berner 1996).

One way of drawing a map that can help identify localities in the metropolis is along loosely-defined class lines.[26] In 1990, a team of statisticians classified Metro Manila households into five social classes: AB, C, D and E. They used an indicative scale that combined roofing and wall materials used for the house, the educational attainment of the household head, the number and type of appliances owned, and the floor area per person. In the parlance of market research, AB combines the cream of the upper class and the lower upper class. C, meanwhile, which is further divided into an upper C and a lower C, constitutes the middle classes. Finally, D and E make up the lower classes, albeit in varying degrees.

Table 5 presents the distribution of Metro Manila *barangays* by class.[27] It is interesting to note that six out of 10 *barangays* were easy to classify because the clustering of households in 1990 reflected their relative socio-economic class. The rest had households of mixed classes. For instance, a C/D barangay may be constituted largely by D households but it is classified as C in the Table because it is predominantly C.

As expected, upper class localities constituted less than one percent of all *barangays*. The lifestyles of those who live in upper class localities can easily compete with that of the elite in other parts of the world. Their homes are as spacious and grand as the villas of the rich in Europe and America. They usually own several companies and have extensive landholdings here and abroad.[28] Their children attend exclusive schools in the West and are exposed to the refinements of high culture. Their homes are ringed by fences and protected by gun-carrying security guards.

Table 5 *Barangays* in Metro Manila by Socio-Economic Class, 1990 (in percent)

Socio-economic Class	Pure	Mixed (predominantly)	Total
AB	.4	.4	.8
C	33.2	12.6	45.8
D	21.0	17.6	38.6
E	6.2	8.6	14.8
Total (percent)	60.8	39.2	100.0
Number	1026	663	1689

Source: Constructed from the Philippine Statistical Association, Socio-economic Classification of Barangays in Metro Manila,1995. (Based on the 1990 housing census)

The villages where the elite live exhibit a spatial sense of community that is institutionalized through voluntary organizations rather than face-to-face interactions (Racelis 1988:239). Until the last five years, the affinity of the members of the upper class with their locality or geographic community in the metropolis, had not been apparent. What is obvious are their networks with business groups or other status communities. In the last two years, however, the public has been privy to some locality-based issues that mobilize the upper class. The threat of commercial developments as indicated by the construction of high-rise buildings within or at the vicinity of their villages, has mobilized residents of elite subdivisions to demonstrate against the city government. The struggle of the La Vista Homeowners Association against a high-rise building in front of their subdivision and the controversy over similar commercial developments within Forbes Park are cases in point. Moreover, it has also encouraged key national figures to actively participate in *barangay* politics.

Barangays that are purely or predominantly middle class constituted about 46 percent of all Metro Manila local villages in 1990. The localities within or cutting across these *barangays* are quite heterogeneous. Some of these are subdivisions with houses ranging from government low-cost housing projects (with a few variations in architectural design) to some as grand as upper class homes but are interspersed with smaller units.

Others are old and crowded settlements in the inner city.

Racelis aptly describes the community pattern in predominantly middle-class localities in upper C Metro Manila *barangays*. They constitute individual households acting as independent self-contained units. Lodged in single, detached houses, residents build walls to keep strangers out. Their children attend private schools scattered all over the city, finding their personal friends there rather than in their home territory. Their parents similarly operate in comparable cross-city networks of relatives, officemates or co-members of clubs. The possession of a telephone and a car maximizes the potential for activating these networks (Racelis 1988:239). Localities in lower C *barangays,* on the other hand, have single detached houses with very little space between them or apartment units in relatively congested parts of the metropolis. The children of households belonging to this class attend public or less expensive private schools. Their parents also operate in cross-city networks of relatives and officemates although those with small-scale businesses in the neighborhood maintain more established locality-based networks.

Residents of middle-class urban communities usually have a nodding acquaintance with neighbors but their affinity with networks of officemates, relatives, friends or club members are greater than with their geographic communities. However, the increase in the number of subdivisions that are

clearly delineated from surrounding settlements have resulted in the more active participation of residents in the affairs of their community. They have been mobilized to address security concerns as well as the problem of access to basic services like water and garbage collection. In the face of unabated violence and crime, middle-class localities that did not start out as subdivisions have also begun to pool their resources in support of a collective security system. In addition to the voluntary services of roving residents or *tanods* (sentinels or quasi guards), gates have been set up to limit the flow of outside traffic in the evening. One has only to drive through residential areas at night to discover the new roadblocks.

In recent years, neighborhood associations of middle-class households have begun to form coalition networks with other communities to address common environmental problems. For instance, there is a joint effort by subdivisions in the Commonwealth district in Quezon City, in collaboration with government, to devise and implement strategies to ease heavy traffic during rush hours. There are also current attempts to organize against the continued operation of a garbage dumpsite near the Philippine Legislature building. Middle-class localities have not only been the site of organizing for mundane concerns but for spiritual renewal as well. Christian associations such as Couples for Christ have proliferated and are quite effective, with wide lateral and vertical networks. Many of those who

are active in these associations have also become the core of citizens' groups.

The urban lower class localities are found among the D and E *barangays.* (It should be noted, however, that squatters also occupy lands in pre-dominantly C and AB barangays.) In 1990, about 15 percent were purely or predominantly E, that is, their houses were makeshift with a floor area of less than 10 square meters per person. Moreover, they either had no appliance or only had a radio or a television set, and their household head had only an elementary education. Almost four out of 10 households, on the other hand, were purely or predominantly D. This group lived in makeshift houses or in units with walls made of wood, galvanized iron or aluminum and half-galvanized iron or wooden roofs. These were households that only had a television set or a radio for an appliance.

Most squatters are found in the pre-dominantly E and D *barangays.* These communities are heterogenous, with residents representing different walks of life. For instance, not all of the residents are poor. A 1991 survey in the largest slum colony in Metro Manila revealed that the median income of households without legal tenure was almost 20 percent above the poverty threshold (World Bank 1996:32).[29] Nevertheless, life in the slums has not changed significantly in the last two decades.[30] Congestion at home and in the neighborhood renders the street as the hub of activi-

ties in slum areas (Jocano 1975:37). Face-to-face communication is intense and the flow of information through rumor mills is unhampered.

Contrary to impressions created by images of urban violence, social relations in the slums are quite close. Most of the slum dwellers are related to each other by blood or kinship ties.[31] These relations have helped tide households over temporary crises as poverty-related problems are shared with others in an overlapping network of friends, neighbors and relatives. For indeed, the burdens of poor slum dwellers in the Philippine metropolis are many. They are packed in homes that are less than 10 square meters and built in filthy surroundings;[32] more than half of them share a common faucet while a fourth have to purchase water from peddlers (Endriga et al.: 25);[33] they have more young children who are vulnerable to malnutrition and health hazards compared to the general population (Endriga et al.:29);[34] the circumstances of their lives push their children to work in the service sector, doing odd jobs like vending cigarettes, newspapers and sampaguita flowers, washing cars, scavenging, or even doing sexual favors (Yasay 1994:4);[35] they are prone to be victims of domes-tic and street violence (World Bank 1996:34).[36] These are only among the illustrative problems of the urban poor. There are enough documents and poverty studies to expand this list.

The intensity and array of social networks and relations[37] that are formed in the face of problems common to most squatters or slum dwellers, have facilitated the development of a "local we-consciousness" (Berner 1995:141). This, in turn, has made it easier to establish locality-based organizations, ranging from cooperatives to issue-oriented groups. In the last three decades, land and housing have been major issues galvanizing the participation of urban poor associations. Advocacy of these issues has led to the formation of lateral coalitions or formal networks of other urban poor associations and the establishment of links with social movements and non-government organizations (NGOs).[38]

Management of metropolitan areas and some issues of governance

The struggle for land against competing and multiple interests has been arduous. But there have been crowning achievements, the most salient of which is the passage of the 1992 Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), with its provisions favoring the urban poor. An outcome of the successful lobby of NGOs, locality-based organizations and the church, the passage of this act and the land reform advocacy which formed the context of the collaborative efforts of elements of civil society,[39] is a good starting point for discussing issues of governance in Philippine metropolitan areas.[40]

The UDHA represents the first successful effort of the kind undertaken by NGOs and peoples' organizations. It reflects the growing assertiveness of particular sectors and civil society groups in influencing urban policy. The character of the struggle for urban land reform in the 1990s that ended with the passage of UDHA, is a consequence of decades of mobilization among the urban poor and the changes in the perspectives and strategies adopted by development NGOs since the end of authoritarian rule in 1986. The prior experience of the urban poor in organizing for sectoral demands has given them confidence to assert their rights as citizens. The involved NGOs, on the other hand, replaced the mainly confrontational approach that has marked the struggle against authoritarianism in the 1970s and early 1980s with strategies to exert pressure on government in the language of "bargaining, compromise, and accommodation" (Karaos *et al.* 1995).

It is important to note, however, that the organizations and associations advocating urban poor interests constitute only one segment of civil society in urban areas. Those with interests conflicting with the articulated positions of urban poor organizations and the NGOs that support them are also organized and are now posing an effective resistance to the implementation of the law. Furthermore, as suggested in the previous discussion of social classes in the metropolis, more organized

locality-based and sectoral groups are emerging for different reasons, ranging from the defense of particular causes to the provision of services the state cannot deliver. Their motivations also vary – some are political in origin; others are prodded by moral and even religious goals. Some are structured, capable of sustained action; others are more episodic in their behavior.

The point, however, is that with experience, the more empowered citizens of the Philippine metropolis are becoming "quite capable of turning to those forms of organized action allowing them to apply pressure where they themselves are affected.[41] The multiplicity of these forms of action, their cross-fertilization and potential for confrontation create an enormous vitality within the social fabric (The Independent Commission on Population and the Quality of Life 1996: 269). The constitution of civil society, with its multiple and sometimes conflicting interests, and their interaction with the state, is at the heart of governance in general, and the governance of metropolitan and other urban areas, in particular.

Devolution of power is critical to the participation of civil society. It is, however, not sufficient to ensure participation. The 1991 Local Government Code provides for people's involvement in the formulation of municipal ordinances, recall of officials, as well as in the planning and monitoring of government projects. It devolves central powers and respon-

sibilities to local governments and increased their revenue share. Initial assessments of the implementation of the Code reveal constraints to peoples' participation. Overlapping functions and conflicting jurisdictions among national and local agencies have resulted in bureaucratic red tape (Porio 1995:12). Where a metropolitan perspective is needed to address spatial problems that affect different administrative units (e.g. garbage disposal), the lack of it even among the higher government units involved in managing the metropolis,[42] has frustrated the initiatives of relevant segments of civil society. Moreover, in some areas, the pressures from civil society have not been strong enough to counter the political and economic elite's control over state structures that enable them to consolidate their hold on resources (Porio 1995:12).

A major issue of metropolitan governance is the balance between the demands of democracy – the development and meaningful participation of civil society and the management, if not the resolution of conflicting interests, on one hand, and technocratic demands, on the other (Porio 1995:37). Some of the major urban problems require technical solutions (e.g., flood control, waste management) cutting across different sections of the metropolis and interests of various localities. The development of such technocratic responses to pressing problems within a participatory framework is the major challenge of metropolitan governance in the 21st century. For after all is said and done, "cities that will be successful are those that will be able to build the social and political institutions for consensus building that can rise above class, ethnicity and other cleavages" (Douglass 1996:13).

Notes

[1]This is a revised version of a paper presented at the *Seminar on Cultures in the ASEAN and the 21st Century,* Sentubung Resort, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, May 13-16, 1997.

[2]The recent privatization of the Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System is hoped to address this problem.

[3]Blunt and Moser point to the danger of exaggerating the policy implications of the high rate of urban growth between 1980 and 1990. Very few cities grew at a rate close to five percent.

[4]For the Philippines, an area is urbanized "when it is a city or municipality with a population density of at least 1000 persons per square kilometer or, regardless of population size, it has achieved certain characteristics - the presence or number of certain types of business establishments." *Barangays* with a population density of at least

1000 persons per square kilometer, which are not predominantly farming or fishing and have the same urban characteristics are also considered urban (Sobrepeña 1994:5).

[5]From the *Philippine Urban Situation Report: A Post-EDSA Analysis* as quoted by the World Bank Report (1996: 30) from the UNICEF Terminal Implementation review – Third Programme of Cooperation Between the Government of the Philippine and UNICEF, December 1993, reported that 591 squatter colonies were identified in Metro Manila. Assuming a total of 661 slum communities in Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao City in 1993 as reported by Cariño, Benjamin (1997:5), about 89 percent of the total slum communities in the three metropolitan areas were in Metro Manila.

[6]The metropolitanization of Manila was formalized by a Presidential Decree in 1975 that created the Metro Manila Commission. The presidential decree restructured four cities and municipalities, integrating them into a supra local administration unit (Berner 1996). None of the other cities have been officially designated as metropolitan although Cebu is referred to as Metro Cebu.

[7]As cited in World Bank (1996:30).

[8]As cited in Gizewski and Homer-Dixon (1995:17).

[9]A squatter interviewed for a research on poverty has expressed this point succinctly: despite the congestion and pollution in the slum community he now calls home, transferring his family to Metro Manila was a desperate shot at some intergenerational mobility. To his mind, the educational institutions in Metro Manila had better quality and could promise a good start for his children.

Without denying the strong pull of market forces and material benefits, the value attached to being in the center of modernity and the status this provides the would-be migrants in their communities of origin is one of the unarticulated reasons for deciding to move (O'Connor 1983:118). Generally, people in urban areas are perceived to be in touch with new developments and technologies and are higher in the implicit prestige hierarchy among peers in rural societies. Exposure to new developments, which is more likely to occur among urban than rural residents, reinforces a generalized notion that the urbanite is superior to rural folk. Take, for instance, exposure to computers, the symbol of the emerging information society; a Social Weather Stations Survey revealed significant gaps between urban and rural respondents in their awareness of computers and the availability of the equipment in their workplace. About 97 percent of Metro Manila respondents were aware of computers as opposed to 72 percent of rural respondents; 43 percent had computers in their workplace in urban places while only 14 percent had them in rural areas (Arroyo 1996).

[10] The document cites the work of Pernia and Israel (1994).

[11] Abstracted from Tables 13a, 14a and 15 of Herrin, Alejandro and Rachel Racelis. *Monitoring the Coverage of Public Programs on Low-Income Families.* National Economic Development Authority 1992.

[12] See Tony Paño's "Squatter Syndicates: A Bane to Social Housing" Series 1-4, *The Philippine Star,* June 28-July 1, 1995 for a feature on organized networks involving "professional" squatters who make money by buying and selling occupancy and access rights to idle land or space in slum areas.

[13] A makeshift dweller is defined by the National Census and Statistics Office as one who lives in housing units made of salvaged or improvised construction materials either for the roof or walls in combination with other construction materials. The urban poor, on the other hand, is defined by their level of income. Their proportion would also vary with the definition of the poverty threshold. Landless urban settlers are those without homes, with incomes below the poverty threshold who reside in areas of priority development, high risk or danger zones, and in smaller, relatively new settlements. Squatters, on the other hand, refer to those living without permission to stay on land they do not own. Lately, the category has been used to refer to one who can afford to purchase a house and lot but continues to live in an illegal settlement to avoid payment of rent or mortgage (Rebullida and Endriga).

[14] The official poverty threshold in 1995 as set by the National Economic Development Authority was P5,200 monthly for Metro Manila including P500 for housing (Berner 1995).

[15] The 33 percent estimate was obtained from Ramos-Jimenez and Chiong-Javier (*Philippine Urban Situation Report: A Post-EDSA Analysis* as quoted by the World Bank Report (1996:30) from the UNICEF Terminal Implementation Review—Third Programme of Cooperation Between the Government of the Philippines and UNICEF, December 1993). The 50 percent figure came from Dennis Murphy's estimate of 4.5 million urban poor population, as cited in Berner (1995:24) and from the official 1995 census figures for Quezon City alone.

[16] It is interesting to note that 62 percent of makeshift houses were constructed between 1981 and 1990.

[17] Of 11 million makeshift houses in 1990, 48 percent were found in urban areas: 13 percent in Metro Manila and 35 percent in other urban areas (Endriga 1996:20).

[18] As cited in World Bank (1996: 35).

[19] See Rebullida and Endriga for a mapping of government housing programs.

[20]In its assessment of government responses to the housing problem, the World Bank Report notes that three years after UDHA's legislation, none of the 286 cities targetted by the 1992 Act have carried out the requisite full inventory of all vacant lands within the urban and urbanizing areas. Moreover, only 31 of these municipalities had identified land suitable for socialized housing.

[21]This is the conclusion of Rebullida's paper "Issues in Financing the Housing Sector," as cited in Cariño, Benjamin (1997:5-6).

[22]Squatters usually occupied marginal lands including those lying along canals and riverways. In time, these peripheral lands with low economic value were eventually consolidated and absorbed into the areas designated as urban. Squatters shouldered the improvement on the land (World Bank 1996:31).

[23]As cited in Rebullida and Endriga. The 1992 statistics were taken from the Socioeconomic Survey of Special Groups of Families, National Census and Statistics Office and the National Economic and Development Authority Integrated Population. The 1990 data were extracted from Tables 13a, 14a and 15 of Herrin, Alejandro and Rachel Racelis, *Monitoring the Coverage of Public Programs on Low-Income Families.* NEDA 1992.

[24]Classical works include Ferdinand Toennies' *Community and Society* (1963) and Emile Durkheim's *The Division of Labor in Society* (1964).

[25]These are extremely difficult to delineate because their boundaries are symbolic and are arbitrarily drawn by people living in particular settlements.

[26]The regular census has variables that indicate class. However, these are more indicative of social stratificationist rather than a relational concept of class that is defined either by relations of production (Marxist) or market relations (Weberian).

[27]The *barangay* is the most basic local government unit in the Philippines.

[28]Impressions generated from a key informant interview in an exclusive upper-class subdivision in which the author is currently conducting a sample survey that aims to explore the characteristics, lifestyles and political views of upper-middle and upper-class Filipinos.

[29]This is based on findings of the research project on "Urban Poverty and Social Policy in the Context of Adjustment," Final Draft, December 1994. Urban Development Division, Transportation, Water and Urban Development Department, Washington, DC. Endriga's findings that only 42 percent of the makeshift dwellers

were below the poverty line corroborates this observation (Endriga 1996:32). The sites of Berner's study, however, reveal a much higher poverty incidence. Only 28 percent of his respondents were not poor (1995:63).

[30]The organization of life in Berner's research sites follow Jocano's description in 1975. See Berner (1995) and Jocano (1975).

[31]Eight of 10 respondents in Berner's five research sites located in slum communities had relatives within the area (1985:73)

[32]Ten square meters for the entire house of about four to six members is way below the UN standard of six square meters per person (Endriga: 24). Note, however, that Endriga's study focused on makeshift dwellers.

[33]These figures are for *all* makeshift dwellers, including those with incomes above the poverty threshold. The proportions of those who are either sharing a communal faucet or purchasing water from peddlers would be much higher had the computations been made on *poor* makeshift dwellers.

[34]Among makeshift dwellers, the 1990 census figures show that the ratio of persons under 5 years old per thousand was 43 percent as against 28 percent for the general population.

[35]Yasay asserts that by the end of the 1980s, there were approximately 66,000 streetchildren in Metro Manila and 25,000 in other cities plus about 20,000 who were child prostitutes.

[36]In the study conducted in the slums of Commonwealth (cited in Note No. 82), 60 percent of the widows lost their husbands through violent crime.

[37]Ethnicity is important for some social networks in slum areas. However, Berner (1995:60) argues that it is not too relevant. There are no residential areas that are ethnically homogenous; language groups do not form more than a minority and people of different ethnic origins intermarry. This situation may also hold for Metro Manila. Except for the Chinese in Binondo, there are also no ethnically homogenous residential areas. Even if it is an in-migrant metropolis, 77 percent of its urban residents speak Tagalog in their homes, with no other language or dialect spoken by more than five percent of the population. (This is based on a 10 percent sample of the 1990 Census of Population.)

[38]The experience of organizers of the social movement in the 1970s reveals that locality-based associations find it difficult to sustain lateral coalitions with other groups or keep up their links to wider movements for an extended period of time.

[39]For a comprehensive documentation and evaluation of the lobbying effort, see Karaos *et al.* (1995).

[40]As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, governance is defined as the relationship between the state and civil society. Civil society is "the arena of popular organizations, social movements, voluntary organizations and citizens' associations" (Porio 1995:3).

[41]There are many protest organizations and citizens' movements that have recently emerged to address very specific problems. The movement against crime and violence, for instance, consists of motley groups that bonded together to prevent a repetition of the brutal death of relatives and friends. In response to the kidnapping of Chinese businessmen, the Chinese community has organized themselves not only for protection but to assert their rights as Filipino citizens.

[42]See Sivaramakrishnan (1996) for the problems of governance in megacities. See also Cariño, Ledivina (1997) for an assessment of various models of metropolitan government.

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