

Fragmentations in the Urban Movement: Shift from Resistance to Policy Advocacy

Anna Marie A. Karaos

From the time urban scholars first took notice of urban poor movements in developing societies, they have had to assume the burden of explaining why despite the vitality of these movements they have had little impact on larger urban society. Typical characterizations of urban poor struggles have pictured them as reactive and unable to orient their collective actions beyond parochial concerns (Castells 1983, Mainwaring 1987). This limited vision, it is argued, makes them prone to factionalism, which in turn diminishes their political power and ability to transform urban structures. Such thinking has engendered a kind of skepticism towards urban poor movements that has long persisted in the academic literature on the subject as well as in the consciousness of social activists.

Observers of the Manila urban scene of the 1970s up to the early 1990s have generally shared this view of the circumscribed impact of the urban poor movement on Philippine urban society (Berner 1997, Karaos 1993, Van Naerssen 1987). Notwithstanding its relatively long history of struggle with state authorities from the well-

known Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO) of the '90s up to the highly-successful advocacy coalition of the Urban Land Reform Task Force (ULRTF) of the '90s—the urban poor movement has consistently failed to create and sustain a united constituency capable of bringing its proposed reforms onto the political agenda of policy-makers and politicians. The fragmentation of the movement has persisted, leaving its ranks as divided, and sometimes hostile to one another, as ever. This fractiousness has generally been regarded as a problem and an obstacle to the sector's developing a capacity to exercise real political power.

Taking this prevalent perspective as a background, this essay proposes to take another hard look at the urban poor movement in Metro Manila from a different paradigm. This paradigm does not treat the fragmentation of the urban poor as necessarily a problem or liability but as part of the interplay of social and organizational dynamics resulting from the attempt to increase the urban poor's access to state decision-making processes. Following Erhard Berner's lead, we propose to

look at these mobilizations as actions of strategic groups striving to respond to concrete conditions of disempowerment and indirectly challenging the prevailing system dominated by established elites.¹ My own contention is that the fragmentation is itself a consequence of urban poor strategies to gain and increase access to state resources and opportunities to influence state policies. An implicit hypothesis being put forward here is that a united urban poor movement with a pre-defined policy agenda could be less effective in winning concessions from a state that, through successive administrations, has been more comfortable with handling urban poor demands through negotiation and accommodation, rather than through honest-to-goodness policy reform.

To develop this perspective, I take my cue from three experiences of social mobilization by urban poor actors and their allies directed at influencing state urban policies. The choice of these examples of urban poor mobilization is crucial because they exemplify collective actions built around supra-local concerns. In these cases, we find evidence of intense social activity oriented towards issues that are not local-specific, contrary to the experiences of urban poor mobilization found by earlier urban scholars. The question of whether these mobilizations can be sustained long enough to build a stable people's movement around them remains an open question. But for now we find that these

types of mobilization are occurring with greater frequency and regularity to warrant a consideration of a possible shift in the mode of collective action from one dominated by local-specific actions to supra-local ones.

History of coalition-building

The dominant form of strategic grouping in the 1990s therefore seems to be no longer the community-based organization but the supra-local advocacy coalition.

This is not to say that local or community-based organizations have become irrelevant for they continue to be the foundation of successful coalitions, nor are we saying that coalitions are a new thing. Obviously, coalitions have existed since the time of President Marcos up to the time of President Aquino. The 1980s saw the emergence of a genre of coalitions of the "united-front type" represented by such organizations as the National Congress of Urban Poor Organizations (NACUPO), the Urban Poor Forum (UPF) and the Urban Poor Coordinating Network (UPCN). These past coalitions, however, basically operated from a paradigm informed by the vision of the united front (i.e. the banding together of groups of different ideological persuasions) as the most effective vehicle for urban poor political empowerment.

History has shown that the strategy has failed.² The ideological backgrounds of the groups proved to be an insur-

mountable barrier to building trust and transparency, and also limited the coalition's capacity for negotiation with external entities like the government. The successive failures in sustaining coalitions in the '80s have rendered the united front model of coalition-building open to challenge in terms of practicability and efficacy.

The emergence of the Urban Land Reform Task Force (ULRTF) in 1991 was, in a sense, an evolution to a new coalition concept that is not premised on the united-front paradigm. Unlike the previous coalitions, which explicitly sought to build some degree of unity among the urban poor organizations identified with different ideological tendencies, the ULRTF was constituted from the very beginning primarily as an issue advocacy group. Its formation was a reversal of the previous pattern wherein the issues, positions and strategies were painstakingly arrived at from a consensus among the different blocs. In the case of the ULRTF, a core group that was singularly focused on pushing for an urban land reform law would first define the issue to be advocated and the strategy for advocating it. The groups that agreed with the issue and strategy became part of the group while those who disagreed either did not join or eventually left.

Thus, in choosing to start from a non-ideological frame as a basis for unity, the group spared itself of undue pre-occupation with consensus-building

across the ideological blocs. It also did not limit its membership to identified progressive forces, and enlisted the support of groups and individuals from the "middle social forces," such as the Bishops Businessmen's Conference, women and professional groups. Collective action was focused on the single issue of having urban land reform legislation enacted by Congress, which eventually became the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992. United front-building was relegated to the background and issue advocacy assumed primacy.

The increasing primacy of the advocacy coalition

In the 1970s and early 1980s, issue advocacy was not seen as an important vehicle for the empowerment of the urban poor. Under an authoritarian government, building strong community organizations and a consolidated people's movement capable of resisting state aggression (that came in the form of raids, demolitions and arrest) was the main strategy for empowering the urban poor. There was little room for issue advocacy because policy-making was confined to government agencies and there was little transparency to allow for information to be accessed by civil society and for allies to be cultivated within government. Building strong community organizations and urban poor alliances was more important than changing policies, the likelihood of which was considered practically nil. This explains the primacy of political

organizing and mass mobilization in that period.

In the early part of the Aquino administration, the urban poor movement became quick to exploit opportunities for gaining concessions from the state using the united-front mode of action. The urban poor succeeded in having the president create the Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP) whose principal mandate in the beginning was to coordinate the different government agencies to ensure a more humane conduct of squatter demolitions. While consolidation of an urban poor movement and a strong united front remained as the strategic paradigm, the repeated dissolution of united front alliances called for a reexamination of the old strategy.

Not only were the urban poor growing weary of the ideological dynamics, they were also starting to take notice of the more open political environment that appeared to offer more diverse opportunities for gaining concessions from the government. There was the PCUP which made resources available to the urban poor for the organization of a national network, and the conduct of meetings and consultations which made it possible to bring together various urban poor groups across the country. The appointment of urban poor sectoral representatives in Congress created a new appreciation for the role of the legislature and

urban poor representation in it as vehicles for influencing state policies. The establishment of new housing programs by the Aquino government, such as the Community Mortgage Program (CMP), in which NGOs played a crucial role in the conceptualization and eventual implementation, likewise expanded the range of issues towards which collective action could be directed.

From a certain vantage point, these initiatives could be seen as strategies employed by the state to minimize urban poor resistance to its policies. These can be viewed as strategies for state cooptation or controlled mobilization of the urban poor. I submit, however, that these concessions did not constitute a conscious strategy by the state as much as these were responses to pressures exerted by the urban poor for the state to recognize them as stakeholders in the formulation of urban policies. The creation of the PCUP, the appointment of urban poor representatives to Congress, and the establishment of the CMP were all initiatives that originated from the urban poor and their allied NGOs. The experience of the last 10 years has shown that while the urban poor took advantage of these initiatives, fortunately it did not lead to their demobilization but rather to an intensified collective action in these hitherto unexplored arenas of demand-making.

The new coalition paradigm: Three cases

The emergence of the advocacy-oriented coalition, as opposed to the united-front coalition of the earlier period, has therefore been the strategic response of the urban poor to the diversifying opportunities for engaging with the state within a more open political environment. The shift in the orientation of collective action from resistance to policy advocacy was an offshoot of changes in the political opportunity structure following the demise of authoritarian rule.³ There was growing awareness that resources could be obtained from the state in the form of access to housing assistance.

Urban poor organizations and NGOs found themselves increasingly drawn into policy discussions with government housing authorities. One aspect of this response has resulted in the continuing fragmentation of the urban poor movement, no longer along ideological lines, but on issues of strategy, tactics and leadership dynamics involving policy issues. What is being argued here is that while fragmentation has remained, its causes have changed. It is important to understand this fragmentation not simply as a disadvantage but as the underside of the strategic goal to maximize opportunities for gaining access to state decision-making processes.

To expound on this thesis, I discuss three examples of advocacy campaigns that have taken place within the last six years and the corresponding coalitions that staged these campaigns. What is striking to note about these coalitions is how different they are in terms of strategic orientation, tactics and discourse compared to the united-front coalitions of the 1970s and 1980s. This is so even though a good number of the main actors and personalities are the same people who made up the earlier coalitions. While it is a fact that new leaders and groups have emerged, the new character of current advocacy coalitions is not so much caused by the infusion of "new blood". Rather, it is the result of the opening of policy space within government, the constant engagement with the state on policy issues, and the nature of opportunities to exercise influence that the urban poor are offered in the course of this engagement.

Time and space constraints do not allow me to discuss these cases in full detail. The history and origins of the coalitions, as well as the issues and positions they advocated will be described only schematically. I am reserving the fuller discussion on the analysis of the significance of their campaigns on the unity of the urban poor movement and the movement's relationship with the state. These cases lend support to the salience of the political opportunity structure in

accounting for intra-movement dynamics.

The campaign for the repeal of PD 772

All the major urban poor coalitions since the early 1980s have called for the repeal of Presidential Decree 772 (PD 772) as their most important political demand. Promulgated in 1977 by then President Marcos as a deterrent to squatting, PD 772 made squatting—or the act of occupying a piece of property without the consent of the legal owner—a criminal offense punishable with imprisonment. After Marcos was deposed, the decree continued to serve as a political symbol for state repression towards the urban poor. Thus, urban poor groups have consistently demanded the abolition of this Marcos decree.

Although the repeal of PD 772 was an old issue, the systematic lobby with the legislature to push for its revocation began only in the 1990s. The Ramos government launched a national program called the Social Reform Agenda that sought to institute reforms for the different marginalized sectors of Philippine society. The reforms were determined through a series of consultations organized by the government and participated in by different grassroots groups across the country. Since the repeal of PD 772 has always been an agenda of the urban poor, it was among the reform proposals that found its way into the

Social Reform Agenda (SRA). In one national consultation held in 1995, urban poor delegates led by the Urban Land Reform Task Force (a coalition of urban poor groups and NGOs) publicly presented to President Ramos its demand for the repeal of PD 772. They sought the president's endorsement of a priority bill for congressional action repealing the law. The repeal of PD 772 was adopted as one of the resolutions of that assembly. The ULRTF then initiated a nationwide signature campaign, kicking off a full-scale lobby with Congress and the Senate for the repeal of the presidential decree.

While all urban poor groups supported in principle the repeal of PD 772, they however employed different strategies. One group, KALAS (Kilusan Laban sa Kahirapan, Demolisyon, atbp), was led by Nic Salameda who represented the urban poor sector in the Social Reform Council of the Ramos government. KALAS was organized by a group of urban poor, among them Salameda, who had previously broken away from the ULRTF. KALAS believed that wider support from government people for the repeal of PD 772 could be obtained by supporting a proposal by Dionisio de la Serna, chair of Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) to amend the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA). De la Serna wanted certain amendments to the UDHA as a complementary measure to the

repeal of PD 772. He anchored this proposal on a SRA resolution to strengthen the UDHA implementation.

Other urban poor groups, and the ULRTF in particular, strongly opposed the move to have UDHA amended. They believed that De la Serna had distorted the SRA resolution calling for strengthening the UDHA since the spirit of the resolution was to speed up the law's implementation and not to amend it. They viewed De la Serna's move as aimed at advancing the interests of landowners and real estate developers who wanted more liberal provisions incorporated in the law. They perceived the danger of Congress watering down the pro-urban poor provisions of UDHA if it was given a chance to do so.

While ULRTF found amending the UDHA extremely objectionable, KALAS supported the amendment move and thought it would gain some political advantage by supporting the HUDCC chair with his legislative proposal. KALAS was apparently convinced that De la Serna would only give his support to the repeal of PD 772 in exchange for urban poor support to amend the UDHA. Moreover, KALAS members agreed with De la Serna that the UDHA implementation can be facilitated by having certain UDHA provisions amended to make it easier for developers and local governments to comply with the mandates of the law.

KALAS was also deeply involved in negotiations with De la Serna on other issues, in particular the relocation of an urban poor community from a piece of government property in Quezon City. Maintaining good relations with the HUDCC chair, who also chaired the executive committee overseeing the relocation project, became even more desirable in consideration of ongoing negotiations with HUDCC on behalf of its member organizations. On one occasion, KALAS came to the defense of De la Serna at a Housing Conference in which the ULRTF circulated a position paper criticizing HUDCC and the government's housing program. The incident starkly depicted the alignment of KALAS with the HUDCC leadership against the ULRTF, particularly on the issue of the UDHA amendment and the performance of the government's housing program.

By early 1997, the campaign for the amendment of the UDHA had lost steam. On the other hand, the campaign for the repeal of PD 772 gathered momentum. KALAS and ULRTF waged separate campaigns. The ULRTF's campaign began to pick up as the Ramos administration showed more openness to the repeal of PD 772 as a major reform initiative, and legislators in both houses of Congress became more receptive to the proposed bill. Given this promising political climate, KALAS decided to step up its own campaign and staged

its own mobilizations in Congress and in the Senate. Although their campaigns were uncoordinated, KALAS and ULRTF managed to manifest united support for the same legislative initiative. Their campaigns succeeded. The repeal of PD 772 was enacted into law in November 1997.

In the end, the ULRTF was proven right in its decision to push for the unconditional repeal of PD 772 and defend the UDHA against attempts at amendment. It did not bend backwards to accommodate what the HUDCC wanted even when it seemed that HUDCC could block the repeal if the urban poor did not agree to the *quid pro quo* of repealing PD 772 in exchange for amending UDHA.

On the other hand, the strategy of KALAS was also effective in terms of its own objectives. The group was able to maneuver skillfully around the UDHA amendment issue to enhance its ties with the HUDCC. By aligning itself with De la Serna on a crucial policy issue—the amendment of UDHA—it managed to maintain good relations with HUDCC and enhance its bargaining position on the issues being negotiated by its local organizations.

Fortunately, the amendment campaign did not prosper, sparing the urban poor movement of bitter in-fighting over an extremely critical policy question. Had the issue continued, it would have forced ULRTF and KALAS to take diametrically opposing positions, thus

bringing the movement's fragmentation out in the open.

The Congress of CMP Originators

In 1987, the Aquino government created a new home lending program specifically designed to make financing more accessible to low-income and urban poor borrowers. The government crafted the program based on the experience of NGOs that have helped urban poor communities acquire land for housing through community savings and direct negotiations with landlords. The program was called the Community Mortgage Program (CMP).

The CMP gave out group loans to urban poor community associations for land acquisition, site development and house construction. From the very beginning, NGOs played a crucial role in the conceptualization and implementation of the program. They helped organize communities that wanted to purchase land, thereby facilitating the availment of the program. They also helped the community associations with loan documentation and with following up their loan applications. These NGOs formed a loose alliance known as the National Congress of CMP Originators and Social Development Agencies for Low-Income Housing (CMP Congress for short).

In the early years of the program, NGO personnel were recruited to the National Home Mortgage and Finance

Corporation (NHMFC), the government agency administering the CMP. These individuals helped to improve the program by devising ways to facilitate the processing of CMP loans. The program's early period until 1993 saw a relatively good working relationship between the government and the NGOs as far as the CMP was concerned.

The relationship, however, began to deteriorate in mid-1993, following the resignation of two NGO allies from the NHMFC. The NGOs claimed that the new NHMFC president did not support the CMP and that new rules were being introduced which made loan processing more tedious and the program less accessible. Also at around that time, the World Bank, which had until then provided funds for the program, decided to withdraw its support for the CMP because of NHMFC's inability to improve its collection and financial management. The government funding agencies that were asked to provide funds for the CMP after the World Bank cancelled its loan to the program failed to deliver the funds they had committed. Consequently, the CMP started to suffer chronic funding shortfalls.

Given the tight financial situation, the relationship between the government and the NGOs became increasingly antagonistic. The CMP Congress constantly alleged that the government did not give adequate support to the CMP. In late 1993, the NHMFC issued

a controversial circular to which the CMP Congress vehemently objected. The NGOs alleged that NHMFC president Eduardo Lunas was purposely killing the program by establishing new guidelines that would make it difficult for NGOs and communities to participate in the program. On three occasions, Lunas threatened to suspend the program because of disagreements with the NGOs and the failure of funding agencies to provide enough funds to the CMP. The CMP Congress mobilized their partner communities and urban poor organizations in a series of rallies and protest actions denouncing HUDCC Chairman De la Serna and NHMFC President Lunas.

Lunas was forced to revise the controversial circular and agreed to the proposal of the CMP Congress to come out with an integrated set of guidelines for the CMP, removing the objectionable provisions contained in the earlier circular. Furthermore, Lunas agreed to set up an NGO desk in the NHMFC to monitor CMP projects and help facilitate the processing of loan applications.

While these changes brought about some improvement in loan processing, the CMP continued to be burdened by inadequacy of funds. A new law passed in late 1994 provided for P12 billion in budgetary support to the CMP for five years. But when the government consistently failed to release the funds, the CMP Congress

again stepped up its campaign against HUDCC and NHMFC, this time demanding for the ouster of the two top housing officials. The CMP Congress put out paid newspaper ads denouncing Lunas and De la Serna, organized a caravan in different cities nationwide criticizing the government's housing record, and staged pickets at the NHMFC and HUDCC.

At the height of the De la Serna-Lunas ouster campaign in late 1997, the CMP Congress sought the support of their allied urban poor groups and NGO coalitions in their protest actions. Some urban poor groups like KALAS and their allied NGOs obviously could not support such a call. Other groups meanwhile, though friendly to the CMP Congress and unhappy with De la Serna and Lunas, did not agree with its strategy. They were convinced that President Ramos was not likely to fire the two officials, which would then leave the CMP Congress without any credible bargaining position afterwards. These NGOs argued that the CMP Congress was in no position to threaten the government with a boycott of the CMP since the NGOs and their partner communities, rather than the government, would be hurt more by a boycott.

The dissatisfaction of the CMP Congress with Lunas and De la Serna stemmed from the slow release of funds to the CMP, which gave the impression that both officials were not doing enough to fulfill the funding

requirements of the program. In truth, the NHMFC and the government's entire home financing program had a much deeper problem than the CMP, mostly due to poor management and too many non-performing loans. Malacanang, however, was not likely to sanction the two housing officials since the Ramos administration was also partly to blame for not releasing the committed funds to the CMP. The campaign of the CMP Congress for the ouster of Lunas and De la Serna failed to gather a substantial number of supporters who could effectively put pressure on the administration to respond positively. They did not get enough support because of a number of reasons.

Firstly, the issue was not widely understood by a greater majority of urban poor and even by many NGOs. Even though many urban poor communities were affected by it, they were still a minority relative to the total number of urban poor. Furthermore, other urban poor groups at that time were busy with their own advocacies, such as the repeal of PD 772.

Secondly, there existed an alignment of alliances between the two housing officials and urban poor organizations and NGOs that made certain groups reluctant to support the CMP position on the ouster. De la Serna was in alliance with a group of POs while Lunas regularly attended meetings of the Urban Poor Affairs Committee of the Bishops-Businessmen's Confer-

ence, an influential body composed of business, Church, government and NGO personalities.

Finally, even among groups sympathetic to the CMP Congress, there was some disagreement on the strategy taken by the network. Since the autonomy of organizations and networks was respected, there was no mechanism that could force a consensus on the issue. NGOs that felt they needed to protect certain organizational interests, such as maintaining a degree of objectivity because they had dealings with HUDCC and NHMFC, were not prepared to risk these interests by openly supporting the ouster campaign of the CMP Congress.

The party list electoral campaign

In the May 1998 national elections, the first party list election was held. The Philippine Constitution of 1987 established the party list system as an electoral mechanism for broadening representation in the national legislature (specifically the House of Representatives) of sectors in society that have historically been under-represented. The party list law provided that sectoral, regional and political parties outside the dominant political parties, could get a maximum of three seats in Congress if they obtained a specified minimum share of the votes. These sectors, mostly belonging to the poorer segments of society, include farmers, fisherfolk,

laborers, women, persons with disability, senior citizens, informal workers, and the urban poor.

A total of 123 organizations run in the first party list election of 1998. There were eight urban poor parties, and at least one multi-sectoral party with an urban poor nominee.⁵ Two of the eight urban poor parties eventually won the election, getting one seat each in the House of Representatives.⁶ These were AKO (Adhikain at Kilusan ng Ordinaryong Tao, organized by the ULRTF), and the ALAGAD, which had the support of religious sect Iglesia ni Cristo. AASAHAN, one of the parties fielded by KALAS, failed to get the minimum two percent of the votes.

The fact that there were eight sectoral parties claiming to represent an urban poor constituency meant that there is no single urban poor coalition that could command the allegiance of the majority of the organized urban poor. Why was there no attempt to form a united party?

Part of the reason was that some of the groups had a history of conflict and distrust with one another; a united front would have been hard to negotiate within the time frame of the campaign period. But a more important reason was that the existing party list law unwittingly encouraged the splitting up of the sectors into several parties because of the low minimum requirement of two percent and the maximum limit of three seats that each

winning party was allowed to get. The two percent minimum requirement made the goal of obtaining at least one seat seem reasonably achievable to many groups which tended to have an inflated notion of the breadth of their mass support. The maximum limit of three seats made it difficult for the groups to agree on a common list of nominees that must necessarily be equitably distributed among the different groups forming a united party.

Ironically, it was because the various groups wanted to maximize their chances of getting their own people in Congress that the decision to field separate parties appeared to make more sense as a strategy. The groups of course relied on their own estimation of the breadth of their mass base and their members' capacity to mount an electoral campaign within the short campaign period. Mobilizing their members to get the required number of votes seemed easier than negotiating with other groups on a party platform, membership rules and, most importantly, on a common list of nominees.

The tactical nature of the decision-making parameters of the groups that competed in the party list electoral contest was revealed by the experience of AKO with the Alyansa ng Batayang Sektor (ABS), a multi-sectoral party that failed to meet the two percent requirement. One urban poor leader who was offered the number 3 slot by AKO opted to join the ABS, which

agreed to put him on the number 2 slot. It was possible that this leader and his group thought that the ABS, being a multi-sectoral party, had a broader mass base. As such, he stood a better chance of landing a Congress seat as the number 2 nominee of a bigger party than as the third nominee of an exclusively urban poor party.

The tactical decision proved to be a mistake. ABS lost, managing to get only 0.62 percent of the votes and ranking 56th among all the party list parties. ALAGAD ranked third with a 3.4 percent vote; AKO ranked sixth with 2.61 percent and AASAHAN ranked 74th with 0.46 percent.

Adding the percentages of the total votes obtained by all the eight urban poor parties yielded a total of 9.89 percent of the vote. This means that one out of 10 voters in the party list election voted for an urban poor party— certainly a high batting average. If all the eight parties united under one party, the most they could have gotten was three seats under the existing party list law. As separate parties, they stood a chance of getting more seats. A recent COMELEC ruling allowed an additional 38 parties to get one seat each in Congress, bringing the total number of party list representatives to 52. If a pending case with the Supreme Court rules in favor of the COMELEC decision, an additional two urban poor parties would be seated in Congress, bringing the total number of urban poor representatives to four.⁷

I chose the three cases discussed here to argue the point that the persistent fractiousness of the urban poor movement is not just a product of ideological or personality dynamics, as is often supposed, but is also the result of tactical decisions meant to enhance access to state decision-making processes. The cases also show that the urban poor have been increasingly drawn towards mobilizing on supra-local concerns. The shift to issue advocacy has rendered engagement with government more open to multiple strategies.

All three cases revolved around highly-politicized policy issues that transcended parochial or territorially-bounded concerns. However, collective action built around these supra-local issues did not necessarily lead to greater unity. As I have argued here, the maneuvering of the urban poor within the spaces provided by the interaction with the state often resulted in greater fragmentation.

One cannot say for sure whether greater unity would necessarily translate to greater political clout. The examples of successful mobilization by the urban poor that we have seen so far have all been waged by frag-

ments of the urban poor movement rather than by the solidarity action of the different groups. Bargaining is often a complex game that punishes parties who are unable to compromise and multiply their options for action. The existence of diverse groups that are acting independently of one another within the movement has somehow afforded the movement the capacity to engage the state on many fronts and to secure concessions here and there.

It is true that the current fragmented state of the urban poor movement has produced some winners and some losers in the bargaining game with the government. But still, one cannot deny the fact that this fragmented movement has succeeded in legislating the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992, the Comprehensive and Integrated Shelter Finance Act of 1994, the repeal of PD 772, the establishment of the Community Mortgage Program, and the election of two (possibly four) urban poor representatives in the legislature. Considering these achievements and working on the premise that a more unified movement can do much more, we cannot wait to see what a united movement could accomplish.

Notes

¹In Erhard Berner's *Defending a Place in the City*, 1997. In this study of urban poor mobilization in Metro Manila, the author proposes the concept of strategic groups as a framework for understanding how localities, and therefore local issues and concerns, can and do form the basis for the emergence of organized groups capable of conflict.

²In A. Karaos, "Manila's Squatter Movement: A Struggle for Place and Identity, *Philippine Sociological Review*, Vol.41, Nos 1-4 (1993), pp.71-92. This essay documents the experiences of these coalitions in terms of the attempt to bring together the different urban poor blocs.

³For a discussion of the concept of political opportunity structure, see Sidney Tarrow, *Power and Movement*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

⁴The NHMFC was managing another homelending program aside from the CMP. This program, known as the Unified Homelending Program, had a very poor repayment rate.

⁵In the party list system, a party registers with the Commission on Elections a list of five party members as its nominees. A party gets one seat in Congress for every two percent of the total number of votes cast for the

party list that is obtained by the party. The first name on the list gets the first seat, the second the second seat and so on, up to a limit of three seats. There are fourth and fifth nominees as replacements in case of a vacancy. The eight registered urban poor parties were ALAGAD, AKO, AASAHAN, NUPA, OK NAPU, PMP, SMA-SANDIGAN, and TAPAT.

⁶As this is being written, a case is pending with the Supreme Court whether an additional 38 parties would be given one congressional seat each even though they failed to get the minimum two percent vote. The Commission on Elections had earlier ruled in favor of the 38 parties on the grounds that this was consonant with the intent of the 1987 Constitution to give representation to all marginalized sectors of society and to fulfill the constitutional provision that the party list representatives should comprise 20 percent of all members of the House of Representatives. If the Supreme Court rules in favor of the 38 parties, two more urban poor parties will get one seat each, bringing to four the total number of urban poor representatives in Congress.

⁷These two parties are NUPA which garnered 1.33 percent of the vote, placing 18th out of the 123 groups, and PMP which got 0.86 percent of the vote, placing 36th.

References

- Berner, Erhard
1997 *Defending a Place in the City*.
Quezon City: Ateneo de
Manila University Press.
- Castells, Manuel
1983 *The City and the Grassroots*.
Berkeley: University of
California Press.
- Karaos, Anna Marie
1993 "Manila's Squatter Move-
ment: A Struggle for Place and
Identity", *Philippine Socio-
logical Review*, Vol.41, Nos.
1-4.
- Mainwaring, Scott
1987 "Urban Popular Movements,
Identity and Democratization
of Brazil," *Comparative Political
Studies*, Vol.20, No.2.
- Mendoza, Roy
1998 Forthcoming ICSI Occasional
Paper on the 1998 Party List
Election.
- Tarrow, Sidney
1994 *Power and Movement*.
Cambridge: Cambridge Uni-
versity Press.
- Van Naerssen, Ton
1989 "Continuity and Change in the
Urban Poor Movement of
Manila". In F. Schuurman and
T. Van Naerssen. *Urban Social
Movements in the Third
World*. London and New
York: Routledge.