

# Chapter 3. URBAN SOCIETY

1. The objective of this chapter is to describe Philippine “urban society” as we know and see it today, and to examine the ways in which it can support the development of sustainable cities. Simply put, urban society is the social organization resulting from the way people in cities act and interact with one another and with their physical environment. It is concerned with the social interactions themselves as well as with the social organization that results from these interactions.

2. The discussion of urban society in this chapter will cover the following themes:

- social stratification and spatial segregation;
- urban poverty;
- informality;
- gender equality;
- social movements;
- cultural heritage; and,
- consumption habits and lifestyles.

3. Before proceeding to discuss each of the themes and how they impact on the sustainability of cities, we need to be clear on what sustainability consists of as far as urban society is concerned. For purposes of this chapter, sustainability of the city as a system of human interactions is concerned with the question of whether the social and human relationships being built and reproduced in our cities help the people living in them achieve their human development needs and goals.

4. Given this definition, we cannot avoid looking into the issues of poverty, social stratification and gender equality as key themes characterizing urban society. These themes indicate both the quality of the human interactions that take place in urban society and also the character of society itself. From this perspective, the social conditions implicated in these issues can be considered not only as sources of social strain which can disrupt the smooth functioning of society and its institutions but also as themselves obstacles to the development of society as a whole to the extent that certain groups and individuals are deprived of the means to attain their full human development. Thus our framework advocates the vision of an inclusive urban society where all who live in our cities are seen, and behave, as stakeholders who participate both in its responsibilities and benefits. Social structures and human interactions that prevent people from realizing this participation are thus deemed unsustainable.

## I. The Concept of Urban Society

5. When we speak of “urban society” we speak of a group of people characterized by a certain way of life, or an urban culture. As such, the concept would include a certain system of values, norms, social practices and relations that in their totality define a historically specific type of social organization. In the current way we picture urban society, this type of social organization is normally associated with industrial society, even though historically speaking the emergence of cities antedate the industrial age by thousands of years.

6. To complete the concept of urban society, we attach to the concept of urban culture a specific spatial form, which is the city. The city is the physical expression of the urban culture. The culture and the spatial form are so inextricably linked and each exists to shape the other. The cities of antiquity represent an urban culture that is qualitatively distinct from

the urban culture of the industrial, or even the medieval city. Their differences are reflected in their physical forms as well as in the social practices of the people who lived in them.

7. In sociology, urban society as a theoretical construct used to be described in terms of the dichotomy “urban versus rural” society. The object of study being Western societies in the twentieth century, early urban sociology was thus greatly influenced by the theory of social change informed by the folk-urban or traditional-modern continuum perspective which basically differentiated the community way of life of rural society from the associational way of life of urban society. Cultural connotations of urban society or the urban way of life from this perspective included notions of anonymity, the transitory nature of social relations, *anomie*, and superficiality.

8. Later conceptualizations of urban society sought to define a specific content to urban society, which is not reducible to its opposition to the rural way of life. This content was found to be linked to the historical evolution of capitalist society, more specifically capitalist industrialization. Power and social relations were seen to be connected to the way society organized the factors of production under industrial capitalism. Thus, the social conflicts, urban violence and social divisions, for example, that have come to dominate the character of urban societies in the industrial and post-industrial era were seen to be ultimately rooted in the social contradictions of the capitalist mode of production.

9. Thus the concept of urban society cannot be separated from both the historical and physical (or ecological) dimensions of the city. At the same time, when we speak of urban society as a historical reality, we visualize a more dynamic notion of urban society shaping and being shaped by historical forces and social movements.

10. The twentieth century has seen the predominance of the economic role of cities as “engines of growth” of the national economies societies in which they are situated. But we need to remind ourselves that cities have not always been valued primarily for their economic role. Nevertheless, in the present era characterized by the economic integration of economies around the world, or what we call globalization, the economic function of cities has all the more become the dominant force shaping the social structures and human interactions in them.

11. Given the highly unequal social structure of Philippine society, integration into a global economy has defined the contemporary Philippine urban culture not so much along the lines of anomie and the impersonality of human interactions suggested by modern Western literature, but more in terms of the preponderance of exclusionary, status-driven and consumerist values and social behavior. Thus traditional Philippine values that emphasize for instance family, interpersonal ties and reciprocity, superimposed on a very unequal social structure, have bred an urban culture with attributes, such as a lack of consideration for the public good (as manifested in the way city dwellers regard public spaces), and heightened exclusionary tendencies (as manifested in the growing number of gated communities).

12. In the sections that follow, we discuss some of these social realities shaping the social behavior of people living in our cities.

## **II. Social Stratification and Urban Poverty**

13. The vitality and dynamism of cities rest largely on the diversity of the people living in them. Cities are usually melting pots of culturally and economically diverse social groups. Because cities are typically also centers of capital accumulation, they tend to attract not only those with financial and human capital but also those without, yet aspire to acquire them.

14. Sustainable cities are those that not only manage to distribute widely the economic opportunities they generate but also are able to regulate the interactions among the different social strata to ensure that no group is systematically excluded from participating in the benefits of urban living. While differentiation and inequality are inevitable in any human social group, differences need to be managed so that the gaps are not widened and their effects reinforced and the more disadvantaged groups are empowered to improve their situation.

15. Of the social forces that can weaken social cohesion in urban society, nothing is perhaps more pernicious than poverty. It is widely believed that poverty in the Philippines is predominantly rural because the majority of the country's poor is found in the rural areas. Going by purely income-based measures of poverty, rural poverty incidence is higher than urban poverty incidence. In 2000, it is estimated that 13% of people living in urban areas are poor, while more than three times this figure, or 41.3% of rural people have incomes falling below the poverty threshold.

16. When comparing urban and rural poverty, income-based measures grossly underestimate the extent of deprivation that the urban poor experience. While their incomes may be higher than their rural counterparts, the commodification of practically all the basic requirements of survival in the urban economy puts urban poor households in a more vulnerable situation. Food, shelter, water, health care are highly priced commodities in the urban areas. Moreover, the urban poor face distinct threats that can greatly diminish their income-earning capacity. Their homes can be demolished when infrastructure projects are built or clean-up drives are conducted by public authorities. They lose their jobs or are forced to spend large sums of money on transportation when they are relocated to distant resettlement sites. Their lack of secure tenure in their homes and at work thus constitutes a dimension of poverty which puts the urban poor in a more vulnerable and precarious condition than their rural counterparts.

17. Social and economic inequities in urban areas are also more pronounced than in rural areas. One has only to see the contrast between the living conditions in the crowded slums and in gated villages to see the wide disparities in living standards that exist between the well-to-do and the poor who live in our cities. These physical differences reflect the wide disparity in incomes in urban areas. Table 3.1 below shows that inequality in urban areas is higher than in rural areas, despite the higher incidence of poverty in the latter.

**Table 3.1 Average Welfare, Poverty and Inequality in Urban and Rural Areas, 1985-2000 (%)**

	1985	1988	1991	1994	1997	2000
<b>Urban</b>						
Dimension of Poverty						
Incidence	21.7	16.0	20.1	18.6	11.9	13.2
Depth	5.9	3.8	5.7	4.4	2.6	3.0
Severity	2.3	1.4	2.3	1.5	0.9	1.0
Inequality						
Gini	0.41	0.39	0.42	0.39	0.43	0.41
Share of richest 10%	26.9	24.5	28.0	25.7	31.1	30.7
Share of poorest 20%	7.5	8.0	7.0	8.2	6.7	7.0
<b>Rural</b>						
Dimension of Poverty						
Incidence	53.1	45.7	48.6	45.4	36.9	41.3

Depth	17.8	14.0	15.6	13.0	9.8	11.3
Severity	8.0	5.9	6.8	5.2	3.6	4.3
Inequality						
Gini	0.35	0.35	0.36	0.34	0.35	0.41
Share of richest 10%	23.2	23.1	23.9	23.1	24.3	24.3
Share of poorest 20%	9.6	9.7	9.8	10.7	10.3	10.7

18. These social inequalities, made visible by differences in lifestyle – (cars vs. jeepneys); spending behavior (differences in spending levels and habits); places of residence (slums vs. gated subdivisions); facilities that they go to for services (private versus public hospitals and schools) – can create social alienation and division in urban society. They can breed distrust as interactions across social groups get restricted. It is not uncommon for middle-class residents to dread finding shanties being built by informal settlers outside the perimeter fence of their subdivisions, convinced that it will only be a matter of time before their belongings are stolen by their needy neighbors. Such prejudices encourage the development of urban forms that further reinforce existing divisions and inequalities as manifested in the proliferation of gated communities in many of our cities.

19. Urban poverty is a worsening problem in many Philippine cities. While urban poverty incidence is placed at 13%, as much as half of households living in our biggest and most populous cities resides in shantytowns or slums with no secure tenure, adequate water, sanitation and drainage. This means that the present level of provision of basic services is not adequate for a sizeable proportion of the population of these cities. Such a situation presents a serious challenge to the sustainability of cities as far as meeting basic human development needs and living standards is concerned. It also means that social cohesion is compromised because the gaps in living standards and lifestyles continue to widen.

**Table 3.2. Population & Informal Settlers of Metro Manila Cities and Municipalities (2000)**

Municipality/City	Population (May 2000)	# of Informal settler families	Estimated Popn of Informal Settlers (# families x5)	Percentage of informal settlers to total pop'n
Pasay	354, 908	57, 436	287, 180	80.92
Parañaque	449, 811	29, 790	148, 950	33.11
Muntinlupa	379, 310	40, 457	202, 285	53.33
Las Piñas	472, 780	36, 107	180, 535	38.2
Makati	444, 867	27, 024	135, 120	30.4
Pateros	57, 407	3, 502	17, 510	31
Taguig	467, 375	21, 931	109, 655	24
Caloocan	1, 177, 604	67, 292	336, 460	29
Valenzuela	485, 433	36, 404	182, 020	37.5
Malabon	338, 855	12, 461	62, 305	18.4
Navotas	230, 403	19, 030	95, 150	41.3
Manila	1, 581, 082	99,549	497, 745	32
San Juan	117, 680			
Mandaluyong	278, 474	25, 383	126, 915	46
Quezon City	2, 173, 831	169, 490	847, 450	39
Pasig	505, 058	27, 238	136, 190	27

Marikina	391, 170	28, 580	142, 900	37
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Source: NSO, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC)

### A. The Value of Social Capital

20. Addressing urban poverty is a very complex task. But an indispensable ingredient in most poverty reduction strategies is having good information on who and where the poor are. Secondly, the poor have to be active participants and should in fact be the primary agents of their development. This means that they are not only well informed but are also skilled both in creating new institutions and in engaging with public and private institutions that can promote their interests. Thirdly, while national or macro-level policies can provide useful institutional support to anti-poverty efforts, local action and community-focused interventions by communities and development actors like NGOs, donors and governments, make the biggest difference in reducing poverty incidence and improving the quality of life of the poor.

21. Development agencies such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have come up with numerous anti-poverty programs, some of which specifically target urban poor communities. They mostly aim at providing secure housing tenure, improving environmental and health conditions and increase the access of the poor to basic services. But the social infrastructure needed for making these programs work on the ground relies a great deal on the social capital, networking, organization and mobilization of the communities of the poor. Investment in social capital formation thus constitutes an essential dimension of any anti-poverty strategy.

22. Social capital formation involves the formation of social networks that are capable of producing and mobilizing resources. In the literature, reference is made to “bonding” social capital based on networks among people within the same community or social group and “bridging” social capital linking people across different social groups. Giving support to the formation of community associations, cooperatives, and savings groups are ways of building social capital. So is facilitating the access of these groups to formal public and private institutions so that they will gain experience in working with these institutions, and in the process learn to trust them. When the level of trust within and between social groups increases in society, this social capital is translated into action that generates resources and capacities. These resources and capacities are not useful only for the poor but for society as a whole. Resources that would otherwise go to dole-out programs would be freed up for more productive uses if people in general were better skilled in accessing services from institutions.

#### Box 3.1 Localized Approaches to Reducing Poverty

In a selected number of localities in the Philippines, communities have gained an awareness of their poverty situation and are beginning to understand how to relate their choice of solutions to the nature and their understanding of their development needs. They are now able to visualize where and how poverty is concentrated, and are more confident of engaging higher local governments in advocating for solutions to their development problems. In a number of these areas, there is an increased appreciation of the link between poverty issues and development planning at the barangay level. Some barangays have begun to reform their development plans to reflect more the results of their poverty incidence monitoring surveys. Others have decided to allocate their scarce funds for identified projects or to source support from the municipal government as well as outside. Municipal governments in turn have committed to support the poverty-focused projects and to integrate them in the annual investment plans. Several municipal governments have gone beyond integration of the projects into their development plans. They have set aside money to fund some of the projects identified by the barangays.

What made these gains possible is a project that sought to build the skills and confidence of the community in diagnosing their poverty situation, advocating for change on the basis of what they consider as responsive projects that address their poverty issues, and tracking the way public resources had been used. The focus was increasing participation and accountability in the way public resources are used at the local government level by developing the knowledge and skills of the people on how to influence local government planning and budgetary systems towards poverty reduction.

The Localized Anti-Poverty Project II (LAPP II) introduced to the communities three components: poverty incidence monitoring (PIM), budget advocacy (BA), and public expenditure tracking (PET). In PIM, communities were guided to look at their poverty situations based on the 13 core poverty indicators of family well-being (classified into survival, enabling and security needs) identified by the National Anti-Poverty Commission. In BA, they were assisted in advocating local government to allocate sufficient resources to fund anti-poverty programs identified in PIM. Finally, in PET, communities were trained on how to monitor (planned versus actual) selected government projects at the local level and to track whether budgeted expenditures are actually spent as planned and whether intended poor beneficiaries have actually received the proposed services.

Some initial results of the project include:

- A systematic and simpler diagnostic tool for determining the needs of poor constituents at the barangay level has been introduced.
- Local plans and programs are now based on needs that are factual rather than based on perceptions.
- Participating barangays now have a data base on poverty which can be used for better targeting and more focused action on poverty reduction.
- There is increased knowledge and awareness among barangay officials and community members on local budgeting process, and the actors and stakeholders involved.
- PIM-derived project and programs are considered in the annual investment planning of the local government.
- Communities learned how to look for possible financing beyond the regular and supplemental budgets of local governments.
- Barangays have become more vigilant in getting information about and monitoring the design and program of works of projects being implemented in their localities.

Source: Simeon Agustin Ilago and Bootes Esden-Lopos, *Developing Community Capacities for Pro-Poor Budgeting and Local Government Accountability for Poverty Reduction*, Synthesis Report, 2006, Quezon City: CODE-NGO, pp 1-18.

## **B. Informality as a Way of Life**

23. One way in which the poor try to either resist or cope with the social exclusion they are experiencing in urban society is by engaging in informal practices that replace, circumvent or undermine legally sanctioned procedures. What we call squatting, or the occupation by the urban poor of unused or vacant lands that are privately or publicly owned often against the wishes of the owner, is one such informal practice. This is the reason for use of the term “informal settler” which is now the accepted phrase used to refer to squatters. In addition, many of the poor are engaged in what is termed informal employment which is work that does not have the benefit of registration, permits and licenses, and social security required by law. Finally, in terms of access to basic services, their living arrangements typically make use of illegal taps for electricity and water either because legal connections are unavailable or unaffordable. As a consequence, they are sometimes preyed upon by syndicates which control and operate the power and water distribution systems in the slum communities. In many important aspects of their life in the city, the poor live in the informal economy.

24. At one level, informality as a coping strategy works for the urban poor. It provides them access to needed land, services and employment which are all vital to their survival in the city. On another level, however, informality reinforces their exclusion and thereby contributes to their poverty and increases their vulnerability. The urban poor actually pay more for their water that is provided by water vendors or water syndicates than do city dwellers with legal water connection. Urban poor families occupying danger areas like creeks, riverbanks and railroad easements are vulnerable to floods and accidents as well as to eviction by public authorities.

### Box 3.2 Land Markets Expelling the Poor

Various observers and practitioners point out that the informal land market in the Philippines has its own set of protection mechanisms that is entangled into the legal and institutional systems with its own judges, politicians, its own legalization processes, developers and lawyers, and its own army and protection. This is likely to help explain the rationale of land supply for the poor in the Philippines that persistently leads the poor to either organize, mobilize resources to directly purchase land or be subjected to evictions and/or resettlement to land usually located in peripheral zones and badly serviced. In both options it is the landowners who are capturing the rent. One can understand the unalterable and unchallengeable status that the informal land market and its actors and mechanisms have in the Philippines' major cities. In addition to that, there are practices of informal land lease, fees for protection against eviction and fees for service provision that are often higher than those paid for public provision. Paradoxically it is an important pillar in the resistance against urban land reforms and the badly needed institutional reforms. According to one of the interviewees:

*"... formalization means an attack on the land mafia's business, and, therefore, community leaders are threatened with murder if they persist on promoting and demanding for these reforms."*

It is worth mentioning that the local government does not exert its primary mandate for the public good by lacking land use planning and land management instruments to capture land value and devolve this "*plus valia*" back to the community in the form of infrastructure investment. This would certainly benefit the poor. It seems though that both the formalization and the deployment of fiscal instruments are likely to go against strong vested interests.

Source" Excerpted from Claudio Acioly Jr and Junefe Gilig Payot, "*Davao City, The Philippines: Building Channels of Participation and the Land Question*," in *Knocking at the Mayor's Door*, 2006.

25. Dealing with informality requires a two-pronged approach of economically empowering the poor to enable them to have access to formal land and labor markets and at the same time reforming urban policies that unreasonably discriminate against those resorting to informal survival strategies. Driving away and confiscating the goods of street vendors without offering them alternative locations where they can sell their wares will not be effective in curbing the practice. By regarding street vending primarily as a survival strategy rather than a public order offense, public authorities will be able to focus more on creating employment alternatives for street vendors than on punishing them. The same logic basically applies to squatting. For as long as public authorities continue to be remiss in providing lands devoted to social housing at affordable cost, unused lands will always attract informal settlers. Thus the careful and systematic planning of urban land uses to make room for urban poor housing is a more effective public policy instrument for dealing with squatting than evictions and distant relocation.

26. There are winners and losers in the existing informal systems in the land, housing, services and labor markets. In some respects, the poor are sometimes benefited by remaining informal because they are spared from the high costs (in the short-term) associated with formalization (such as paying connection fees for utilities, income and real property taxes). But informality often also restricts access not only to legal protection, but also to vital services much needed by the poor themselves.

### III. Gender and Sustainable Cities

27. Addressing gender needs and concerns is an integral dimension of the sustainability of cities. Compared to previous decades, gender concerns in urban areas – such as access to basic services, housing, security in the streets and safety from violence against women and children (VAWC) – are better addressed now as illustrated by the initiatives of some local government units (LGUs). But despite these gains, gender challenges continue to persist and need to be integrated more fully into the development plans and to be institutionalized through policies and programs in most Philippine cities.

28. Several forces have threatened the sustainability of Philippine cities during the past few decades. Rapid population growth, shortage of housing, unemployment, poverty and social inequality are some of the forces that continue to erode the social security and livelihood bases of poor men and women. Given these conditions, the struggle for sustainable life among Filipinos, especially urban poor women, becomes increasingly difficult. With increasing poverty and inequality, it is very hard for women to feed their children, send them to school and pay for housing, health and other social services.

#### A. Gender and the Urban Political Economy

29. Women's empowerment and well-being are affected by political-economic changes happening both at local, national and global levels. Economic liberalization in the last few decades, both at the global and national levels, has led to the expansion of light, export-oriented industries and the service sector, which opened up more employment opportunities for women. In like manner, the heavy dependence of cities on the informal economy<sup>1</sup> also creates more income-generating activities for women but not for men. In addition, the increased recruitment of low-skilled women for overseas reproductive labor (e.g., domestics, caregivers, nurses, mail-order brides, trafficked women) has transformed the division of labor and gender relations in many middle and low-income households and families (Pingol 2001; Porio 2006). More and more the productive roles of women have been harnessed by both the urban and household economies.

30. While women have seen their productive roles heightened by the above forces, they have also increasingly taken on community organizing and leadership roles in cities. Many civil society organizations or CSOs (NGOs, POs, and other voluntary service organizations) are quite reliant on the talents and services of women (Porio *et. al.* 2004). Women are also at the forefront in formulating and implementing community-based environmental management initiatives (Douglass et al 1999).

31. Saskia Sassen (2002) argued that survival in cities had become increasingly feminized with the shrinking opportunities for male employment and social participation. Changes in the economy and polity have created a particular trajectory for women's engagements both in the public and private spheres of their lives and are shifting the dynamics of gender relations in cities. Economic restructuring has resulted in higher wage differentials between men and women. Moreover, women's unpaid household work and the low returns of the informal economy intensify the effects of these differentials in terms of quality of life, especially among those from the lower income sectors.

#### B. Engendering Local Governance

32. The decentralization of local governance and democratization of urban life (Karaos, 1997) together with the increased awareness of gender issues on the part of government

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<sup>1</sup> The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) estimates that in Metro Manila about 60% to 70% of the economic activities is accounted by the underground economy.

and civil society have opened opportunities for women. This is particularly expressed in the dominant discourse highlighting gender issues within the development community, from USAID to World Bank and other development ministries of OECD countries. The incorporation of gender-relevant indicators into the human development index (HDI) and the minimum basic needs (MBN) have strengthened gender-sensitive policies and programs at the local level. These indices incorporate the survival, security and enabling needs of men, women, and children. In particular, the indices for life expectancy, literacy, standard of living, and access to basic services can be used to monitor the well-being of women in cities. These processes can be seen in the inroads made by some LGUs in gender mainstreaming of their local development plans, policies and programs, especially in their poverty reduction programs<sup>2</sup>. Strategic gender planning and development entails the crafting of a policy and program framework for integrating gender concerns into local governance. The following section highlights some of the outstanding initiatives in mainstreaming gender needs and concerns into local governance.

33. The *Philippine Plan for the Development of Women (1990-1995)* and the *30 year Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD), 1995-2025*, serve as templates for urban legislative councils trying to engender local governance. Through enabling local legislations, LGUs translate these policy instruments into gendered development policies and programs. In Davao City, the 11<sup>th</sup> City Council (1997) enacted into law the Women's Development Code with its implementing rules and regulations (IRR) creating the Integrated Gender and Development Division (IGDD) of the city government. Responsible for integrating gender into the bureaucracy, it created the Gender Action Committee that made sure that all programs of the government addressed the concerns of women. In Cebu City, the government decided to address gender needs by creating the "Cebu City Commission for Women and the Family". In implementing gender-responsive policies and programs, the Commission has made sure that every barangay has a gender and development committee and focal point person responsible for safeguarding gender needs in the local legislative and budgeting processes.

34. RA 7192 (Women in Development and Nation-Building Law) and Executive Order 273 direct all government agencies at the national, regional, and local levels to implement the policies, programs and projects outlined in the PPGD. These laws also direct them to incorporate into their annual plans, the gender and development (GAD) plans, and more importantly, to devote 5% of their budget to gender-related programs and activities. As in most cities, all barangays in Cebu City and Davao City have formulated a gender and development plans which serve as blueprints for all GAD committees and focal points in mobilizing gender-related programs and resources. These initiatives have resulted in better quality of life for the women reached by these programs. j

36. With these gender initiatives at the local level, local officials noted that the participation of women in local planning and decision-making has increased. It has also been noted that in these cities, the delivery of social services such as health, education, day-care and other services for women and children have become more efficient and effective. In like manner, investments in infrastructural development like markets, waiting sheds, and water systems have taken into consideration the practical and strategic needs of women. In a parallel manner, the planning and implementation of these programs have been done with the organization of men and women enabling them to participate better in local governance.

### **C. Blurring Public/Private Issues**

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<sup>2</sup> I drew the illustrative cases here from the winners of the Galing Pook, an awards program for innovations in local governance. For information, please click on their website: [www. Galingpook.org](http://www.Galingpook.org)

37. One of the most compelling achievements in gendering urban development is the recognition of violence against women and children (VAWC) as a public issue that should be addressed both by urban governments and civil society organizations. Many LGUs have supported legislations and provided budgetary allocations for women and/or gender centers that provide counseling, health and livelihood services for battered or abused women and children. The *Balay Bukas Palad* in Sorsogon City and the Center for Women in Balayan, Batangas are both supported by their LGUs and operated by their respective GAD Councils. These establishments serve as crisis centers or temporary shelters for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape and other kinds of abuses against women, children and the elderly. In the same manner, the Bantay-Banay (Family/Community Watch) and the Bantay-Familia (Family Watch) Movements mainstreamed in many Philippine cities have responded to the needs of women and children in cases of violence and abuse. While incidents of wife and child battering were viewed as private/domestic matter before, these issues have now become public matter that need to be addressed by local governments and civil society organizations.

#### **D. Prospects and Challenges**

38. The current urban development policy and fiscal direction favor gender needs and concerns. Significant progress has been made in integrating gender in most urban development plans, policies and programs. Thus, the significance of gender relations and their contribution to the urban political economy is quite recognized by most local officials and civil society organizations. Gender mainstreaming is now part of the official framework of imperatives for government agencies, local governments and civil society initiatives for development. But despite these efforts and accomplishments, a long road peppered with biases and prejudices, lies ahead for women, especially those from poorer sectors, who are striving to achieve a sustainable life in the cities.

#### **IV. Social Movements and Urban Change**

39. While the social structures that shape the social interactions in urban society could evolve gradually as social relations spontaneously respond over time to social, economic and political forces, organized collective action often is an important agent of urban social change. In cities, there are more opportunities for organized collective action because of the density of social relations. Collective action is also encouraged and facilitated by the proximity of social actors to economic and political decision-making centers, the ease of communication and mobilization, and the higher concentration of middle class families, professionals, industrial workers and intellectuals in urban centers.

40. When citizens engage in collective action, they affirm and assert their being stakeholders in what becomes of the city. Indeed urban social movements have been important vehicles of social and political change in many urban societies. Such movements have been responsible for the institution of reforms on issues, such as racial segregation, urban violence, public housing and rent control. These reforms, initially expressed in policies or legislative enactments, in time begin to restructure social life to conform to values, such as racial equality, non-violence and social justice. By acting to change the legal norms that govern public life, social movements can be powerful forces for shaping the physical, social and cultural elements of cities towards sustainable development.

41. In the Philippines, we are beginning to see in some of our cities active social movements that address pressing urban concerns. Urban poor movements have tried to stop discriminatory evictions and influence land uses towards social housing. Anti-crime movements, most active in Metro Manila, have been promoting citizens' vigilance and exerting pressure on authorities to curb corruption in public order institutions. Environmental

movements have sought to influence citizens' behavior as well as public policies for stopping pollution, conserving water, protecting ecologically fragile watersheds and water bodies.

42. Of these movements, the urban poor movement probably has had the most visible impact on Philippine urban society. Not necessarily acting as one cohesive group but more as independent people's organizations pursuing different strategies for land and housing rights, the movement has produced new urban practices in land use, land acquisition, and public housing which have had the effect of creating more space for the poor in our cities. At the same time, they have been instrumental in cultivating new mindsets and practices among the urban poor that support a culture of self-reliance and civic participation as illustrated by the experience of the Homeless People's Federation (see *Box 3.3*).

### Box 3.3 Self-Organization as Response Against the Adverse Impacts from Land Markets

The establishment of federations of the poor that develop and gain strength from gathering community savings groups, often to purchase land, can be regarded as a very interesting and particularly innovative development in social mobilization and community-based organization in the Philippines, though it does not challenge the regime of land ownership and control of the land stock. In fact, the major threat against its members is the eviction and demolition of their houses. Half of its members currently occupy land that does not belong to them.

The Homeless People's Federation of the Philippines (HPFP) Davao Chapter has received significant institutional and technical support from NGOs. It connects more than 70,000 people nationwide and articulates linking and learning with other similar groups in India, South Africa and Namibia. In Davao City, there are 48 community associations and 5,000 individual members associated with the HPFP. The association has a line of communication with the Davao City government, particularly with the Urban Land Reform Programme, where there is a fund, though limited, available for land acquisition.

The approach used by HPFP is to establish savings groups to purchase land. The bottleneck is basic service and infrastructure provision under the responsibility of the local government. Once land is purchased, the federation approaches the government and says: "... Now it is your turn to do your part."

Source: Excerpted from Claudio Acioly Jr and Juneffe Gilig Payot, "Davao City, The Philippines: Building Channels of Participation and the Land Question," in *Knocking at the Mayor's Door*, 2006.

43. On the policy level, important urban reforms have, likewise, been achieved by the Philippine urban poor movement. The community organizations which formed in the Tondo Foreshore area in the early 1970s gave rise to the first large-scale in-city relocation in the Dagat-Dagatan Housing Project at a time when government policy favored distant relocation of urban squatters. In the late seventies and early eighties, urban poor communities in the cities of Metro Manila federated themselves into larger organizations to fight the systematic evictions carried out by then Metro Manila governor Imelda Marcos to rid the city of unsightly slums. These federations survived the change of regime in 1986 and shifted their strategy from one characterized by outright resistance to one of advocacy for reform. They did not simply oppose the anti-poor policies of forced eviction and distant relocation but they also proposed concrete measures and policies to address the problem of homelessness.

44. These efforts resulted in the passage of important laws, such as the Urban Development Act (UDHA) of 1992 and the repeal in 1997 of Presidential Decree 772 – a Marcos decree which made squatting a criminal offense. These laws essentially recognized and gave protection to the housing rights of the urban poor. The UDHA provided clear regulatory guidelines for the conduct of squatter eviction and relocation, which have been the long-time grievance of the urban poor. It also mandated local governments to set aside lands specifically for urban poor housing. These laws were significant steps in making government policy toward the urban poor less exclusionary.

45. Nevertheless, major challenges remain in the actual implementation of and compliance by government agencies and local governments with these laws. But of more significance is the fact that the urban poor in many parts of the country have gained increased strength and unity and are thus better able to participate meaningfully in the governance of cities. As an example, urban poor groups in many cities today are working towards the institutionalization of local housing boards to more vigorously implement the UDHA and other social housing programs catering to the poor. In some cities they sit on the city development councils and are able to influence local budgets and development programs. These are obviously significant steps towards making our cities inclusive and sustainable.

### **Box 3.4 The Squatter Movement and the Limits to Reform**

The liberalization of the political system in the Philippines which began in 1986 opened opportunities for political participation by the popular movement. These same opportunities, however, also limited the influence which grassroots groups exercised on the kind of reforms which could be instituted. The experience of the campaign for the Urban Development and Housing Act illustrates this point.

When the squatter movement decided to lobby for an urban land reform legislation in Congress, it was initiated into a reform process defined by the parliamentary system. By submitting to this process, the movement was inevitably drawn into making necessary compromises with other interest groups like real estate developers and landowners, interests represented in the legislature. Consequently, what the squatters achieved in terms of reforms was limited by the parliamentary system and the system of private property which the legislature was committed to protect.

In other words, the democratic space was itself a limiting condition to the extent that this legitimized the parliamentary process of reform, and, by extension, the prevailing power structure in society. Congress and the Executive Department were still dominated by the propertied classes. This meant that popular mobilizations, in order to achieve some result, had to be exercised within institutionalized channels of political participation which had to accommodate the interests of the dominant classes. Yet these same channels were systematically constrained by the development strategy adopted by the state and the prevailing political economy which operated in favor of commercial and real estate interests.

Another limiting condition is imposed by the revitalization of social forces brought about by the democratization process. The electoral exercises revived the political party system traditionally based on personalities and paternalistic loyalties. The urban poor communities, when they participated in these exercises, proved to be most vulnerable to the factionalism engendered by this type of politics. In some cases, coalitions broke up as a result of partisan tensions generated by election. The heightened competition produced by the growing number of political parties has, likewise, increased the pressure of politicians and government incumbents to find new ways of co-opting poor communities and squatter organizations.

The increased opportunities for political involvement also encouraged the launching of many popular initiatives which pulled the movement in so many directions. Priority concerns differed across the different groups from livelihood to demolition; from reform advocacy to participation in government programs like the Community Mortgage Program (CMP) and involvement in the affairs of local government. As a result, it became extremely difficult for squatter organizations to act as a united force even in crisis situations.

When various local governments in Metro Manila stepped up their squatter demolition campaigns after the 1992 elections, the movement failed to launch a unified defense despite the momentum generated earlier by the campaign for the UDHA and the legal protection offered by the recently promulgated law. Various coalitions convened their respective groups to map out strategies to monitor and intervene in the demolition but no united effort could be sustained because the groups were caught up in their different concerns. The lack of strategic focus is one of the consequences of the plurality of influences and decision-making centers in the movement.

Despite the lack of unity, however, the independent efforts of the different groups proved effective in deterring some local governments from going ahead with their demolition campaign. In the City of Manila, after the first wave of demolition was ordered by the mayor in apparent ignorance of the UDHA, squatter groups sought an audience with the local executive. In this meeting, they succeeded in obtaining the assurance of the mayor that the provisions of the UDHA pertaining to demolition would subsequently be observed, in particular, the need for relocation.

More recently, squatter groups have turned their attention to their local governments as a result of the devolution of powers provided under the new Local Government Code as well as the UDHA. Some successes have been noted in a few areas but the potential for influencing decision-making on the local level is only beginning to be seen. Local groups in Quezon City were able to press the mayor to designate the urban poor as one of three sectors to be represented in the city council and have

elected representatives to the council. They have also been able to influence the implementation of government infrastructure projects in the city to ensure adequate relocation of affected squatters. With successes like these, squatters are likely to shift their strategies toward local-level demand-making.

Many observers have noted the characteristic inability of squatter movements to reform societal values and structures. They appear to have little in common with the new social movements that have excited Western scholars. Urban poor demands have often centered on survival issues of land, services and housing, which echo more the aspirations of the classical social movements than those of their “new” variants. Concern for identity and meaning, and the defense of civil society, which animate the radicalism of the new social movements (Cohen, 1985) have yet to find a place in the political identity of squatter movements.

This article dealt with the incipient squatter movement in Metro Manila. I emphasize the word *incipient*, for the organization which the squatters have achieved thus far lacks the organizational scope, clarity and unity of purpose, and political influence normally associated with social movements. At the same time, despite the inherent difficulties in galvanizing and sustaining urban poor political action, the increasing mobilization of squatter communities in Metro Manila manifests the potential for influencing state action and producing important social and political effects on the urban form (Castells, 1983). The experience of the squatter groups of Quezon City with their city government after the 1992 elections has demonstrated the movement’s potential to do this. Redefining the political matrix in terms of City Hall instead of national power structures like Congress has infused a new dynamism to the political praxis of the squatter movement.

The struggle for land in urban society will become an even more important source of social tension in the years to come. In pursuing this struggle, the squatter movement, constituted by several independent coalitions, faces the challenge of carving out a political identity which will make it a more significant and effective social force in the democratization of our cities.

Source: Excerpt from Anna Marie A. Karaos, “*Manila’s Squatter Movement: A Struggle for Place and Identity*,” *Philippine Sociological Review*, 1993, pp.71-92.

### **A. Manila and Heritage**

46. Heritage is really about pride of place. It means not only caring for the nation as a whole but also for one’s specific locality. In a world tending toward homogeneity, preserving the unique features of a locality can help both the city as a whole and its component districts in safeguarding its assets.

### Box 3.5 Revitalizing the City Through Heritage

To remain young and alive, a city must reinvent itself. One source of reinvention tapped by dynamic cities is their “heritage.” They assess, for instance, their location – which is a legacy of decisions made by unknown founders centuries ago. For example, over the past two hundred years, Barcelona has been the most forward-looking of Spanish cities in industry and in intellectual life. Within recent decades, however, planners realized that Barcelona was squandering a major advantage by turning its back to the Mediterranean. Broad boulevards and long parks were, therefore, constructed along the sea to cut across decaying industrial quarters and buildings were reoriented to face the water. The result is one of the most exciting cities in the world: a city with vistas that open out into the sea.

An awareness of heritage also recognizes great national or international events and personalities associated with the city. Their legacy creates an aura that hovers over a city and becomes like a brand that invites easy recall. Thus, St. Petersburg is Peter the Great who opened Russia to the modernizing West. It is also modern ballet, Pushkin’s poems, and the music of Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky. After the dismantling of the Communist regime, Russia ceased to be a superpower, many citizens became destitute, and gangsters became powerful. St. Petersburg has, nonetheless, continued to enjoy international respect because it is associated with a refined way of life. Recent ads in American magazines by the Swiss watchmaker Breguet show off the famous watch together with a photo of an imperial plaza in St. Petersburg.

A third dimension of heritage is the transmission of specialized skills in the arts, sports, finance, religion, or the sciences. Paris continues to set the trend in speculative thought, the fine arts, and the arts of living, because its ancient traditions have been transmitted to this day, and reinvented. During the Middle Ages, one of the West’s first universities sprang up in Paris. With it developed an intellectual tradition that continues to excel in clarifying ideas and in critiquing the logical framework of new treatises, whether in philosophy, the humanities, or the sciences. During the Renaissance, another tradition of excellence sprang up in couture, cuisine, furniture-making, and in the other arts of living.

A fourth dimension of heritage is a city’s intangible and tangible products – its music, poetry, cuisine, sculpture, buildings, plazas, streets. The sum of these forms of heritage gives a great city a distinct personality.<sup>1</sup> Barcelona and St. Petersburg may not be the capital cities of their country but their various achievements make them equally memorable.

Manila has a varied heritage of which it can be proud. Unfortunately, few decision-makers seem aware of this heritage and of its contribution toward revitalizing the city. This book documents the varied aspects of one of Manila’s key districts, Quiapo. It discloses the forces that may either endanger or preserve this heritage; and it seeks to show why the cultural heritage of a particular district has a crucial role to play in revitalizing a city.

The preservation of cultural heritage has probably always been a concern of every human group. If by culture we mean interpretations of life and values communicated in and through socially accepted symbols, every human group values its heritage, for heritage ensures cultural continuity. Our own non-Christian, non-Islamic ancestors, for instance, showed such a concern when they safeguarded jars, weapons, and jewelry for their descendants to admire, to display, and to transmit. They dressed themselves and constructed houses according to the traditions of their own particular ethnic group rather than according to those of outside groups. When speaking a language, like Tagalog, they carefully cultivated the intonation and expressions of the local dialectal variant they grew up in. The result is that the Bulakeño, the Batangueño, and the Tayabasin have inherited a local particularism that subtly announces itself when each speaks Tagalog.

Source: Excerpted from *Quiapo Heart of Manila* by Fernando N. Zialcita.

#### B. Local versus Global

47. In interplay with nationalism is the notion of globalism – a late twentieth-century phenomenon. Because of globalism, particular processes and movements, which the clear-cut jurisdictions of nation-states would have constrained in times past, now easily jump these boundaries to link peoples together. Globalism both results from and facilitates this

increasing rationalization of the world and the self (Kearney 1995, Robertson 1990, Appadurai 1990). Despite terrorism, advanced transportation and media continue to foster international travel and tourism as a major global industry of the twenty-first century. Speculative capital crosses boundaries at the push of a button. Thanks to the internet, communities easily form in cyberspace.

48. Globalism, it seems, could wipe out local heritage because capitalist-driven homogenization instills efficiency and lowers costs. Globalism, however, may in fact reaffirm localism. Nation-states, as well as cities, must compete with one another in the international marketplace (Arnason 1990, Smith 1990, Friedman 1990). In this game, promoting local assets is indispensable. While international mass tourism introduces hotels and products that could be “anywhere,” the more educated (and often more affluent) tourists nonetheless seek out places precisely because they have a “thisness” impossible to duplicate elsewhere.

49. Back in the 1960s, when even educated Filipinos rarely traveled within and outside their country, friends thought it strange that anyone should want to go, for instance, to Zamboanga or to Vigan. “Why,” they would query in amazement, “do you have relatives there?” They thought it even stranger that anyone should be interested in buildings older than twenty years. “If it’s that old, tear it down,” they would admonish. Today, however, it is considered chic to visit precisely those places where one has no relatives, and where century-old monuments abound. With the advent of mass air travel in the 1960s, more Filipinos became aware of what other places had to offer and what their own locality should, therefore, offer. Furthermore, they had increasingly to entertain foreign guests coming in either as friends or as delegates to those international conferences that have become commonplace. Thus, has arisen more and more the question, “What can I show of my locality other than beaches or shopping malls?”

50. This interplay between globalism and local pride does not, of course, mean that locals will automatically act to protect their heritage. Other agencies, like the state, should intervene to level the playing field. While more Filipinos today are interested in Filipino music and would like to listen to it, radio stations do not give it enough air time. American and British pop dominate the airwaves. The state should insist that a percentage of air time be given to local music. Global homogenization indeed fosters a counterattitude – the quest for the local and the heterogeneous.

51. Within this context, cultural heritage becomes “symbolic capital,” which is no less important than economic capital. A family’s capital, according to the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, consists not only of its material instruments of production but also of its clientele, its networks, its prestige in the eyes of the local community. All these give it social “credit” that can be transformed into “economic capital.” Bourdieu distinguishes two types of symbolic capital – the cultural and the social. Cultural capital can refer to cultivated skills and attitudes that the individual embodies while growing up in a privileged family (e.g., table manners or exposure to good music). It can also be objectified in material objects and media, such as “writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc.” Finally it can be institutionalized in the form of academic qualifications.

52. Social capital, on the other hand, refers to either actual or potential resources that come from participation in the network of a particular group. Mere membership in a group with a prestigious name, such as a famous family or a school, can become a credential. Students born into a bourgeois family thus enjoy advantages over those from a working-class family. Because of better command of language and home exposure to the arts and sciences, they do better in school and land high-paying jobs.

53. Applying Bourdieu to cities and nation-states, we find that the international economic order is skewed. A powerful few control most of the world’s wealth. Cultural heritage,

however, mobilizes symbolic resources that enable a Third World city to claim parity with its peers from the First World. Hanoi was severely bombed by the Americans in the 1970s. Today, however, its unique confluence of rivers and sacred lakes, its pagodas from the seventh century, its ochre Belle Epoque buildings, its superb cuisine and its many delightful arts, such as water puppetry give it an international prestige that translates into tourism, investments, and purchases of its products and services. One meets Americans today who, despite the bitter war of the 1970s, want to live in Hanoi because of its history.

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