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Philippine housing takeover:
How the urban poor claimed their right to shelter

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Abstract

On 8 March 2017, representatives of the Philippine urban poor marched to Pandi, Bulacan calling for their right to housing. Dubbed 'Occupy Bulacan' and led by KADAMAY, the takeover succeeded in occupying 5,300 socialized housing units in the area. Prior to the takeover, 15,000 public housing units in Bulacan were deteriorating from disuse while thousands of families were living as homeless or relegated to informal settlements. Citing difficulties in acquiring decent housing, together with the availability of idle houses, KADAMAY members were compelled to take matters into their own hands and staged a takeover. Despite disapproval from various entities, KADAMAY remained steadfast in its stance. One year later, the Philippine Congress signed a resolution prompting the state housing agency to award the housing units to qualified 'occupiers.' This level of victory had never been reached since the 'golden years' of the Philippine urban poor movement in the 1970s. Here I describe what is possibly the largest organized takeover of government-built housing in the global South, with an emphasis on the ensemble of tactics and strategies that KADAMAY employed. This consists of the 'arouse, organize, mobilize' (AOM) strategy, a 'repertoire of contention', and a 'repertoire of strategies'. I also contextualize the takeover within local and international economic and political conditions, situate KADAMAY's place in the urban poor movement, and identify other factors that led to the takeover's success.

Keywords

housing takeover, strategies of resistance, social movements, Occupy Bulacan, Philippines

Introduction

On 8 March 2017, representatives of the urban poor marched to Pandi, Bulacan, a suburban area immediate north of Manila, Philippines, calling for their right to housing. Dubbed '#OccupyBulacan' (Occupy Bulacan, henceforth) and led by the urban poor group KADAMAY (*Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap* or National Alliance of Filipino Urban Poor),[1] the takeover succeeded in occupying 5,300 idle socialized housing units. While urban poor families claimed victory, not everyone welcomed the occupation. Government officials called the takeover 'illegal' and online commentators tagged the 'occupiers' as 'thieves', 'anarchists', 'lazy', 'professional squatters'. KADAMAY justified the action as valid, citing 15,000 housing units in Bulacan in various states of deterioration, while thousands of families were homeless or living in slums.

The Philippines has a population of 103 million in 2016, with 46.5% living in urban areas (United Nations Population Division, 2018). At least 7.53% or 3.6 million of this urban population were living in informal settlements or in varied stages of housing inadequacies (Philippine Statistical Authority [PSA], 2018a)[2]. In 2015, 8.30% of the country's urban population was living below the international poverty line, which was set at USD1.90/day using 2011 prices (PSA, 2018b). Such economic condition prevents the poorest of the poor to own a house making housing occupation an attractive alternative.

The paper describes the events surrounding what could possibly be the largest organized takeover of public housing in the global South.[3] The houses in Bulacan were government-built houses allocated for uniformed personnel and relocated informal settlers (relocatees, henceforth). However, the housing units had been idle for five years, while members of KADAMAY, who applied as beneficiaries to the responsible government-housing agency, remained housing-insecure. This predicament pushed the urban poor to organize themselves and occupy the houses.

Social movements are sustained campaigns of claim-making rooted in organizations and networks with the use of reliable and repeated performances (Tilly and Tarrow, 2015). Taking over socialized housing, however, is not a usual part of KADAMAY's repertoire of claim-

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[1] 'KADAMAY' can also be translated as 'ally'.

[2] This is a far small estimate when compared to the United Nations Statistics Division's figure of 38.3% or 18.4 million urban informal settlers living in the Philippines (2019).

[3] Housing occupations are seldom in the global South as compared to the global North, less so of public housing takeovers. Land occupation and building a makeshift home on it is more prevalent in the former (Basu, 1988). Brazil and Venezuela had building takeovers but neither were of public properties. After the 1979 Revolution, Iran witnessed its largest housing takeover of 4,500 villas in three Tehran villages alone (Bayat, 1997). Other villages also had their share of occupations, not only of villas but also of empty apartment blocks, luxury homes, and deserted hotels. There was no mention, though, of public housing or if the apartments were government-built. Elsewhere, particularly in North America and Europe, housing takeovers often involved foreclosed, abandoned, or soon-to-be-demolished properties (as detailed in the succeeding section of this paper). Italy was the exception as its largest squatting campaign reached up to 20,000 units of both private and public housing (Lagaña, Pianta, & Segre, 1982; Cherki & Wieviorka, 2007). However, there is no disaggregation of data in terms of housing type. The data I gathered here are limited to available English language literature and the possibility of public housing occupations not documented in English or not documented at all cannot be disregarded.

making. KADAMAY, which aims to achieve decent housing, a living wage, and democratic rights (KADAMAY Constitution, 2012), relies on a stock of classic social movement political actions. Rallies, pamphleteering, public meetings, statements to the media, and barricades (in the case of contesting demolitions) are KADAMAY's staple performances of resistance. The group was established 20 years ago, but it is only now that it has been brought into prominence, thanks to the much-publicized housing takeover. Its repertoire of resistance needs scrutiny to be able to grasp what made Occupy Bulacan effective.

Multiple concepts of social movement tactics and strategies are invoked in this paper to examine KADAMAY's set of political actions related to its housing justice campaign. KADAMAY has its own organizing strategy, 'AOM' or 'arouse, organize, mobilize'. 'Arouse' entails consciousness stirring and raising, 'organize' involves unifying people towards a goal, and 'mobilize' involves taking concrete action to achieve that goal. This paper will classify the different mobilizations of KADAMAY into two: 'repertoire of contention,' and 'repertoire of strategy'. Sociologist Charles Tilly defines 'repertoire of contentions' as a set of 'open, collective, discontinuous contention' accomplished in the public arena (Tilly, 1995; Tilly and Tarrow, 2015). This describes KADAMAY's staple set of actions. Federico Rossi (2017) supplemented this repertoire of contention with 'repertoire of strategies,' which are non-teleological strategic actions and may neither always be contentious nor done in public. Examples include public meetings with politicians and audiences with the president. KADAMAY identifies consciousness raising and organizing as prerequisites in order to perform both repertoires.

In this paper, I attempt to show that collective action of the urban poor, nurtured by the organization's AOM strategy, and intensified by heeding the voice and desires of the masses (and seizing the moment), led to tangible victories. I also delve deeper into the identity of KADAMAY as an organization, looking at its ensemble of tactics and strategies performed for the occupation. First, the various building takeovers around the globe are briefly explored and situated in terms of their economic and political contexts. Second, the genesis of the urban poor movement in postcolonial Philippines is traced, including KADAMAY's formation within the movement. Third, the events that led to Occupy Bulacan are recounted while identifying the ensemble of tactics and strategies that KADAMAY utilized. Fourth and last, the factors that led to the success of the takeover are identified.

The narratives in this paper are derived from the occupiers themselves. Data is sourced from 15 semi-structured interviews and online media articles from 2017 to 2018. KADAMAY leaders, organizers, and chapter leaders (collectively KADAMAY, henceforth) contributed to narrating the events that led to the occupation. Their perceptions of its success were also solicited. Related literature and secondary data from media resources were also gathered to trace the history of the Philippine urban poor movement and determine events related to the occupation. As a geographer and scholar of Philippine culture and society, I have closely followed KADAMAY's role in the transformation of the urban. Documenting their account contributes to the literature on social movements' occupation of buildings from the global South (Bayat, 1997; Lima and Pallamin, 2009). Until now, most

of the accounts have come from the global North experience (Manilov, 2013; Mudu, 2013; Piazza, 2018; Vasudevan, 2017).

1. Occupations and takeovers in context

What started as a crisis involving subprime mortgage in the United States (US) developed into a full-blown global financial crisis in 2008, dragging down national economies left and right and causing instabilities in housing systems. As properties were foreclosed, people lost their homes. And more people became homeless when governments embarked on austerity measures, such as cuts in public spending on housing, in hopes of turning their economies around.

This kind of crisis can wreak havoc in people's lives, but it can also present an opportunity for people to coalesce, to be creative, and to think about alternatives for survival. In the middle of the US housing crisis in 2007, members of Take Back the Land (TBTL) took the initiative to break into foreclosed houses and repair them so that homeless people may have a place to settle in (Hull, 2018). As the Occupy Movement in the US gained strength in 2011, activists occupied foreclosed properties and helped move-in homeless people or prevented their eviction. This subset of the Occupy Movement became Occupy Our Homes and expanded into local counterparts such as Occupy Our Homes Minnesota and Occupy Our Homes Atlanta (Manilov, 2013). Houses were reclaimed in New York, Chicago, California, Minnesota, Atlanta, etc (Martin, 2011; Occupy Our Homes, 2012).

Occupying vacant and abandoned buildings for housing or community use is not new. Since the 1960s, North America and Europe had their share of empty building occupations. Between the 60s and the early 80s, hundreds to thousands of squats emerged in the United States, Great Britain, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, and Italy (Piazza and Faulkner, 2016; Vasudevan, 2017). Largest among these was Italy, where 20,000 apartments had been squatted by 1975 (Cherki & Wieviorka, 2007). The occupations were not limited to housing only. Due to post-Fordism's flexible accumulation, there was a decrease in political spaces where organized groups could congregate. Thus, Italian grassroots organizations and collectives also transformed unused buildings, industrial structures, schools, movie theatres, and deconsecrated churches to self-managed social centers. Similar movements also developed in other parts of Europe such as Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands (Mudu, 2013; Piazza, 2018). This kind of occupation was revived during the anti-austerity protests known as the 15-M Movement, which flooded the streets of Spain in May 2011, even before the start of the Occupy Movement on Wall Street. Squatting occurred not only in public squares but in deserted buildings as well. In Madrid alone, 17 identified buildings were converted mostly into social centers, while some were used for housing (Martinez and Garcia, 2015).

Outside of global North, there were few documented housing occupations. In 1979, during the first months after the Iranian Revolution, 4,500 villas were reported to have been occupied in three communities of Tehran alone (Bayat, 1997). Housing takeovers in South America emerged during the first decade of the 21st Century (Lima and Pallamin, 2009). In

the first few years of 2000, 17 buildings in Brazil were taken over by 1,300 families. In 2007, 850 families gradually filled-out Torre David, an unfinished skyscraper in Venezuela (Caldieron, 2013).

Fast-forwarding to 2017, and moving towards Southeast Asia, a housing takeover occurred in the Philippines. It did not happen immediately after 2008. Though the Philippine economy was slightly affected by the global financial crisis, it easily bounced back due to overseas Filipino workers' (OFW) remittances and business process outsourcing (BPO) revenues. These were also reasons behind the upswing of real estate in the country, involving the construction of condominiums and houses for OFWs, and office spaces for BPOs (Ortega, 2016). Ironically, this boom in real estate was also the force behind the demolition of informal settlers, as urban lands became gentrified. The housing crisis worsened as market speculation drove housing prices higher. Socialized housing was developed through public-private partnerships, as promoted by the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), thereby making them unaffordable for lower-income brackets. In 2012, 4.5 million Filipinos were homeless or living in informal settlements (National Anti-Poverty Commission, 2017b). The urban poor's struggle for land and housing tenure pushed them to perform direct action and occupy thousands of vacant houses. Similar conditions led to the formation of the Philippine urban poor movement 50 years ago. These are the same motivations that led to the establishment of KADAMAY.

2. The beginnings of the Philippine urban poor movement and KADAMAY

The formation of the urban poor sector in the Philippines can be traced back to the early decades of the 1900s when landless peasants began to migrate to urban areas during the American colonization of the country (Arellano, 2014). Said peasants lost their land when the American Government initiated cadastral surveys in 1913 and required properties to be legally titled under the Torrens system. Lawmakers, national leaders, and rural elites took advantage of this new system to further consolidate their land holdings (McLellan, 1969; Shatkin, 2016). Titles were 'fixed' in the assessor's office and court cases were won against peasant landowners who were unaware of the law and who lacked political connections (Kerkvliet, 1977).

Squatting became an evident phenomenon in Manila after the Second World War. A large number of war victims built their houses around the public lands of Intramuros and Tondo Foreshore (see Figure 1 for location map). This phenomenon intensified as migrants continued to arrive in pursuit of rising post-war opportunities in the national capital. Factories opened and commerce and services picked-up. A recruitment program for the offices of the neocolonial government was implemented. Official population estimates of informal settlers in Manila and its suburbs put the number at 46,000 in 1946, 98,000 in 1956, and 283,000 in 1963 (Philrights, 2014).

The assertion for decent housing was initiated not by the urban poor but by workers as part of their call for better working conditions and effort to end exploitation during the 1930s to 1950s (Arellano, 2014). As a response, the government began constructing the tenement

housing in Tondo and the *'Barrio Obrero'* (Workers' Village) in Quezon City (Alcazaren, 2002; Simbulan, 1998). However, these housing projects were not enough to accommodate all informal settlers and their growing clamor for proper shelter, resulting in the formation of the Federation of Tondo Foreshoreland Tenants Association. The federation successfully lobbied for Republic Act (RA) 1597, which instructs the selling of the Tondo Foreshore Land to informal settlers. Sadly, the group broke up in 1959, without ever seeing the implementation of the Act.

The country saw its first massive demolition of slum dwellers around Intramuros and Tondo in 1963 (see Figure 1 for location map). The following year, another demolition hit North Harbor and slum dwellers were sent to distant relocation sites in Bulacan, Cavite, and Laguna. No organized group from the squatters opposed the demolitions until 1969 when the Council of Tondo Foreshore Community Organization (CTFTO) was formed. The CTFTO resisted demolition attempts and pressed for the implementation of RA 1597, but its leaders were allegedly bought off and so the group disbanded (Karaos, 1993).

Figure 1

Location map of significant places in Manila and Bulacan during the 2017 Occupy Bulacan and during the urban poor struggle for land and housing tenure in the 1970s.
Source: Author
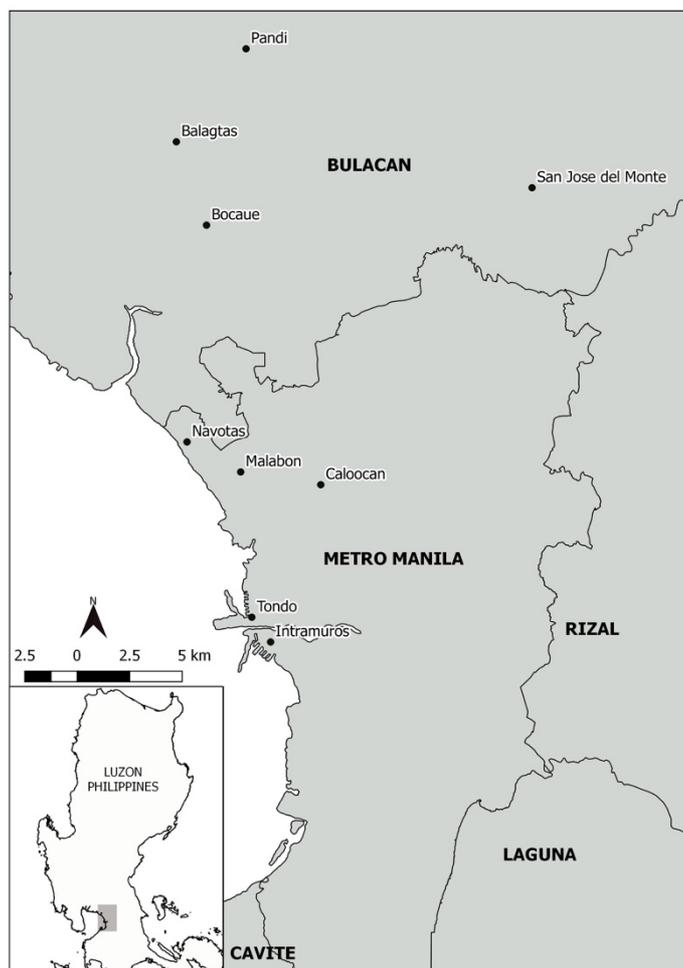
The Marcos Regime (1965-1986) was a time of turmoil in Philippine history—a perfect breeding ground for a more organized and daring social movement. The Regime's anti-national and anti-democratic policies were met with huge protests, which, in turn, were met

with police brutality. The early months of 1970 saw massive and intense protests becoming diurnal events. This tumultuous time became known as the 'First Quarter Storm' (FQS). These demonstrations and the general climate of the time intensified the level of propaganda, agitation, and organizational work by *Kabataang Makabayan* (Patriotic Youth) and other youth organizations. The *Kabataang Makabayan* was considered to be a force behind the national democratic movement, which opposed American imperialism and authoritarianism, and aimed for national liberation and democracy (Shatkin, 2016; Sison 2014). Mobilizations grew from 50,000 to 100,000 and spread outside Metro Manila (Santos, 2014; Sison, 2010).

Youth activists, with their political consciousness stirred, went to communities and organized. Some of them helped in the community organizing of Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO), which was founded by the remaining leaders of CTFTO in October 1970. It was initially formed to confront the threat of eviction of 4,500 residents in Tondo Foreshore due to a modernization plan for an industrial port (Van Naarsen, 2003; World Bank, 1977). ZOTO was the pioneer of true organization of informal settlers and had a membership of 113 organizations at its peak (Karaos, 1993). Its approach was to implement self-help programs for its members while at the same time putting political pressure on government agencies and authorities perform pro-poor policies and actions (Van Naerssen, 2011). It gained broad support from various sectors, including social workers and church groups, and was guided by the philosophies and methodologies of Saul Alinsky and Paolo Freire on community organizing, and of Karl Marx on structural analysis (COM, n.d; Racelis, 2000).

Following the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, communities were raided, urban poor leaders were arrested, and large gatherings were curtailed. But the urban poor movement persisted. The Marcos administration consolidated communities by having control over barangay captains (village heads). As a countermove, ZOTO and other federations in Metro Manila, such the ones from Navotas, Malabon, and Tondo, formed *Ugnayan ng mga Samahan ng Mamamayan ng Buong Tondo Foreshoreland* (Federation of People's Organizations of Tondo Foreshoreland) or *Ugnayan*.[4]

ZOTO/Ugnayan had significant breakthroughs, but the military state's grand design of urban land development prevented them from achieving land and housing tenure. ZOTO/Ugnayan were able to mobilize thousands in demanding for the implementation of RA 1597, negotiate with Pres. Ferdinand Marcos to stop demolitions in Tondo, and reach an agreement with World Bank and Tondo Foreshore Development Authority to focus on slum upgrading or on-site development instead of resorting to relocation to distant areas. Concurrently, the Marcos Regime signed Presidential Decree (PD) 184, which stipulates a 50-year lease on land with an option to purchase at market value – a far different arrangement from RA 1597's fixed price of five pesos per square meter. The Regime also crafted the Urban Land Reform Law, which rationalized existing land use patterns and ownership of urban lands—conditions conducive to the eviction of residents without land titles. The enactment of Presidential Decree 772 criminalized squatting. Around 400,000 informal

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[4] Can also be roughly translated to 'linkages.'

settlers were evicted from 1973 to 1980 (Shatkin, 2016). The creation of the National Housing Authority (NHA), the Ministry of Human Settlement, and other house financing institutions signaled the start of low-cost housing (Karaos, 1993). Ultimately, the state subscribed to a market-based urban and housing development framework, thus diminishing the chance of the urban poor to secure land and housing tenure.

The momentum of the radical urban poor movement, however, started to decline in the late 70s. Though there had been new urban poor formations, the movement had not reached the achievements it had in its early years. Authoritarian rule and the state's strategy of urban development resulted in two contrasting reactions from the movement. On one hand, the movement became more politicized. It expanded, engaging and influencing a wider audience as it linked community-specific issues to broad political issues. On the other hand, disorientation began to infiltrate the movement, creating an ideological split that would influence their claim-making strategies up to the present. Those who upheld the national democratic philosophy continued to oppose the military state's authoritarian rule and urban development framework, while others chose to maintain the squatter's autonomy and their struggle for land and housing tenure (Karaos, 1993).

One dictator and two presidents after, the urban poor were still beset with the same issues. The Ramos Administration (1992-1998) set globalization as its primary development strategy. It liberalized trade, privatized state enterprises, and social services, and deregulated the economy. These were already implemented during the Marcos years as structural adjustment programs, but the Ramos Administration legitimized them by translating them into laws, e.g. Oil Deregulation Law of 1998, Water Crisis Act of 1995, Mining Act of 1992, Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) of 1992, etc. The UDHA signaled the public-private partnership of the housing sector and initiated urban development through gentrification. The urban poor bore the brunt of the difficulties that resulted from the privatization of basic utilities, health care, and education. From 1993 to 1994, under the Ramos administration, there were 80 demolitions that rendered 80,000 people homeless (van Naarsen, 2003).

These were the circumstances that surrounded the formation of KADAMAY in 1998. One of the main gaps in the urban poor movement was that organizations were existent, but they constrained themselves to local issues. And so, a workers' alliance called *Kilusang Mayo Uno* (May First Movement), together with former community organizers and members of different mass organizations, took the initiative to assess the gains and losses from the decades-long struggle of the urban poor sector and recommit to the national democratic framework. Thus, KADAMAY was born (Arellano, 2014). The scope of KADAMAY's membership includes urban community-based organizations from all parts of the country. It has a national office whose main function is to launch campaigns and coordinate all member-organizations and chapters.

KADAMAY recognizes that the urban poor sector is comprised of working-class proletariats and semi-proletariats (those involved in the informal economy), and it has a big role in changing the socio-economic and political structures of society (Arellano, 2014). The number of organized labor groups is substantially small due to economic policies adopted

by the government. Export processing enclaves, transnational labor, globalization, and precarious employment—all of these contribute to dispersing workers. Jobless or in-between jobs, workers can be found in communities as residents and/or as part of the informal economy. It is in these communities that KADAMAY organizes. Its members are informal settlers, relocated victims of demolitions, and those in the informal economy such as drivers and vendors. Starting with a few thousand people, the group's membership has now expanded to 200,000 nationwide.

Since 1998, KADAMAY's campaigns have been focused on resisting demolitions, pushing for decent and affordable housing, and improving basic utilities and services in relocation sites. Their analyses and stance have always been anchored on globalization and neoliberalism, and their entrenchment in inequitable social structures. The group's strategies of resistance range from dialogues, lobbying, demonstrations, barricading areas to be demolished, and recently, the occupation of socialized housing. This move to occupy is far different from the old approaches of resistance of the Philippine urban poor, which were largely triggered by reactions to government policies (Karaos, 1993). As a KADAMAY leader assessed, Occupy Bulacan put the urban poor on the offensive, as opposed to always being on the defensive when resisting demolitions or relocations.

3. The Philippine housing takeover and its ensemble of tactics and strategies

The following section details the events that led toward the occupation, while identifying the tactics and strategies that KADAMAY engaged in. The occupation can be divided into three chronological phases over the period from August 2016 to March 2017. In each phase, the strategy 'arouse, organize, mobilize' (AOM) was utilized. Mobilization types are classified either as part of the repertoire of contention, or as part of the repertoire of strategies.

3.1 Before occupation

The phase before occupation was the longest amongst three, during which components of the AOM strategy were alternately employed. To launch a campaign, KADAMAY roused the interest of its target audience through leafleteering, *Radyo Komunidad* (Community Radio), and *Konsultahang Bayan* (Community Consultations). Once people were interested, the group outreached more through education discussions to talk about their conditions in depth, and to contextualize these within the existing socio-economic and political climate. Organizing started with the recruitment of members, who were then grouped into chapters based on their geographical locations. Mobilizations were carried out in-between the components of arousing and organizing. These included public meetings, dialogues with government officials, and demonstrations. Education, chapter building, and mobilizations all played a big part in consolidating and strengthening the group's membership.

As a province located immediately north of Metro Manila, Bulacan has become a prime spot for resettlement sites (see Figure 2 for a location map of Bulacan and its relocation sites). Thus, KADAMAY's initial campaign in Bulacan was not geared toward occupying

empty houses, but, more pressingly, toward addressing the needs of the relocatees. It was during this time that KADAMAY came up with the plan to draw a 'Relocatees Agenda' that they could forward to the President and to concerned government housing agencies. The group kick-started the campaign with social investigation to identify the needs and capacities of the relocatees, and to pinpoint possible solutions and resources to address these needs. Alongside this, the group ramped up its recruitment efforts to gather the critical mass needed to champion the agenda.

KADAMAY organizers held at least ten Community Consultations from August to October 2016. Invitations for the consultations were sent out through leafleteering and Community Radio. The consultations were held in nine villages in the towns of Balagtas, Bocaue, and Pandi in Bulacan (see Figure 1 for location map). Initial participants were relocatees, but they were later joined by sharers,[5] renters, caretakers, and homeless, or people

Figure 2

Relocation sites in Bulacan, Philippines
Source: Rappler.com (reproduced with permission)
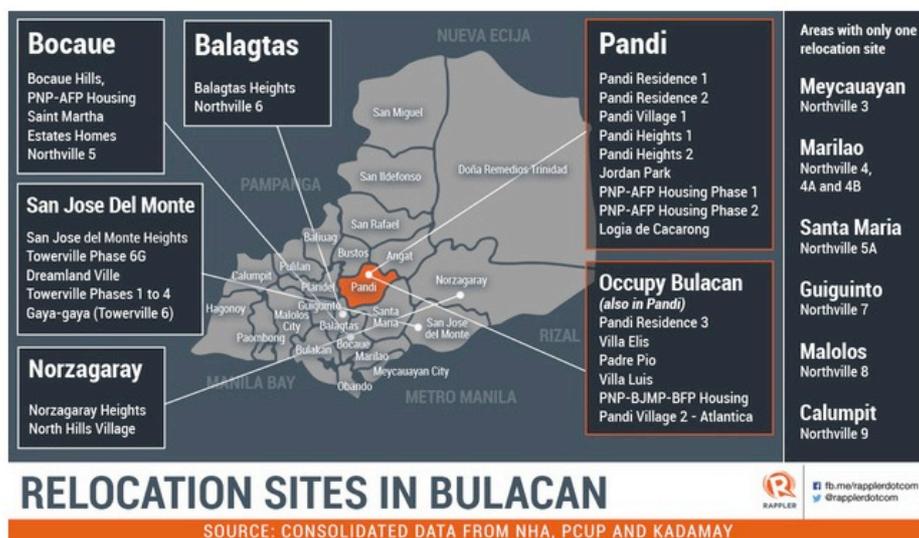
who were housing insecure. Senior citizens and homeowners-association (HOA) officials from seven relocation sites (Villa Elise, Pandi Residence 2, Pandi Residence 3, Pandi Village, Logia de Cacarong, Pandi Heights, and Saint Martha Homes) had separate community consultations to focus on their particular housing concerns.

Relocatees forwarded various concerns during the consultations. Their housing units were substandard and cramped. The average floor area was merely 22 square meters. Wall cracks were evident in some of the units. Relocation sites lack financial opportunities. There were no available jobs near the resettlement sites. Most of them must commute to Manila

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[5] Extended families living with relatives are called 'sharers.' Extended families are common in Filipino culture. When children in the family become adults and have a family of their own, they stay with their parents temporarily to save money for their future homes. However, in recent decades, the younger generation has increasingly found it difficult to build their own homes. The temporary arrangement most times turn into a permanent one. The extended family setup also occurs when people from the rural areas migrate to the urban areas to find jobs and temporarily live with their relatives there. In most cases, those who migrate are single. But in instances where they get married later on, they tend to overextend their stay at the relative's place. Sometimes, they even build a room extension for their own families. Informal settlements expand this way.

for work, thus spending a huge chunk of their wages on transportation fares alone. Those who found employment in Bulacan received low compensation. The legislated minimum wage was PHP 318-346 (USD6.36 -6.92) per day, for both the agriculture and non-agriculture sectors. The relocatees did not receive the promised transition allowance of P18,000 (USD 360). As part of the resettlement program, informal settler families (ISFs) are entitled compensation when displaced due to government infrastructure projects.

On 30 August 2016, while community consultations were ongoing, Vice President Leni Robredo paid a visit to Saint Martha Homes, a relocation site in Batia, Bocaue, Bulacan. During that time, Robredo was also the chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), which coordinates the relocations sites, initiates, and facilitates government policies, plans and programs for the housing sector. Unbeknownst then to KADAMAY, its members, and the community, this visit would change the direction of the campaign.

Hundreds of relocatees, including members of KADAMAY, greeted Robredo with banners bearing their concerns. Owing to their large number, Robredo was forced to acknowledge their presence. She invited the leaders of KADAMAY and HOA officials for dialogue before her scheduled speech. During that short meeting, the leaders relayed the conditions in the community and presented the following demands, which were the basis of the 8-Point Relocatees Agenda that would later be submitted to different concerned government agencies and to the President:

- Removal of the minimum fee for water supply and the reconnection fee for discontinued water service due to non-payment
- Provision of direct connection and continuous (24/7) supply of water and electricity;
- Availability of safe drinking water
- Creation of factories and jobs
- Setting the daily minimum wage at P750 (USD15)
- Regularization of contractual employees
- Access to social services for senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and solo parents
- Distribution of idle socialized houses to renters, sharers, and caretakers

'Susubukan natin ang ating magagawa' ('we will try our best'). This was the response of Robredo during the short dialogue (KADAMAY, 2016). Afterwards, in her public speech, she recognized the abject conditions of the relocatees, but failed to mention possible solutions—such as the construction of factories for employment, and the further distribution of housing units to the homeless. However, a part of her speech captured the audience's attention. She acknowledged that only 800 units were occupied among the 4,000 units in Bocaue Hills, one of the housing projects for the military and police that she recently inspected (Pasion, 2016). This was the information that KADAMAY members would hold on to in the coming months.

Following the Vice President's exposé, KADAMAY started to feel a shift in its campaign. Though unexpected, KADAMAY had to recognize the unfolding conditions and be flexible. The group and its members began to realize that there's an urgent need to address the plight not just of the relocatees but of the homeless as well. At that time, there was a significant number of renters, sharers, and caretakers—collectively known as 'homeless' due to their unsecured housing tenure—living in and around the relocation sites. Moreover, during the September 2016 consultation, one participant suggested occupying the unutilized houses. The proposal was not formally agreed upon, but it was not dismissed either.

For KADAMAY organizers, this was a crucial point in the ongoing campaign. Taking over houses would not be an easy undertaking. However, they could not disregard a proposal that came from the people themselves. As one KADAMAY organizer expressed, the idea to occupy was, in the truest sense, borne out of a mass movement. The leaders and organizers also knew the following facts: one, there were people who were needing houses but did not have the means; two, there were empty government-built houses that have been unutilized for years; three, the government subscribes to market-based housing; and four, the state has historically used force in dispersing the urban poor during mass actions. In my interview with KADAMAY organizers and leaders, they were one in thought that the possibility of an occupation would depend on the determination of the members: If they really want a takeover, they must fully understand why they deserve those houses and be ready to make a claim.

For KADAMAY organizers, this was a crucial point in the ongoing campaign. Taking over houses would not be an easy undertaking. Thus, realities and possible repercussions need to be weighed in. The leaders and organizers knew the following facts: one, there were people who were needing houses but did not have the means; two, there were empty government-built houses that have been unutilized for years; three, the government subscribes to market-based housing; and four, the state has historically used force in dispersing the urban poor during mass actions. The latter was a serious consequence that could not be overlooked. However, they could not disregard a proposal that came from the people themselves. As one KADAMAY organizer expressed, the idea to occupy was, in the truest sense, borne out of a mass movement. It was the readiness of the urban poor that would determine the possibility and outcome of an occupation. As stated by a KADAMAY organizer, 'the readiness of the people (depends on) their knowledge of their right to housing. If they do not have a clear grasp of this right, they would think twice (on carrying out the occupation).'

The community consultations culminated on 6 November 2016 through an Urban Poor Summit attended by 6,400 participants. The summit created the 'Bulacan Urban Poor Agenda', which strengthened KADAMAY's 8-Point Relocatees Agenda. While the 8-Point Agenda identified housing concerns, it also included the demand for genuine land reform, national industrialization, peace talks to end the five-decade civil conflict between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), and the signing and implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social Economic Reforms (CASER). KADAMAY considered the first two as the panaceas to the

root causes of homelessness, while the latter two were strategic reforms that could lead to housing the urban poor. The CASER is one of the agendas being tabled by the NDFP during peace talks and wherein specific clauses on adequate and affordable housing are incorporated.

In terms of recruitment, KADAMAY's membership in Bulacan ballooned to 10,000 in a span of five months. From August to mid-September 2016, over 2,000 residents attended the community consultations. These resulted in mass recruitment and membership, and led to more consultations in other villages. The homeless were especially proactive in recruiting members. News of KADAMAY helping people apply for housing reached various cities in Metro Manila, including Caloocan and Navotas. Hopefuls went to Bulacan to attend the consultations. Organizations were also formed, such as Task Force Relocatees (TFR), which was composed of HOA officials, and the Saint Martha Relocatees Alliance (SMRA). Both became venues for voicing out relocation concerns in their localities.

With its 10,000-strong membership, KADAMAY needed to establish an organizational structure that would facilitate the efficient coordination of activities and boost members' participation. Chapters were formed by clustering members based on their proximity with other members. For easier coordination, those who lived near each other became part of one chapter. Usually, chapters are composed of 15-50 members, but with thousands of members in Bulacan, each chapter ended up having up to 100 members. KADAMAY-Bulacan was also able to form municipal chapters consisting of several village chapters.

Each chapter has five committees: education, health, security, youth, and workers. The education committee's primary task is to make sure that members undergo PADEPA (*Pambansa-Demokratikong Paaralan*, National Democratic School) courses. They oversee the learning program of each member. The health committee supervises members' para-medical training. The security committee provides the marshals and traffic enforcers during mass actions, such as rallies and pickets, to ensure members' safety. Prior to the occupation, the security team did the reconnaissance work on the unoccupied houses. The youth and workers committees were formed to address issues specific to their sector.

Most of the members and leaders of KADAMAY were women (Figure 3). This stemmed from the fact that the housing needs KADAMAY identified were most felt by women. They were the ones left at home to suffer through poor accommodation, insufficient utilities, and the difficulty of making ends meet with their husbands' wages.

For KADAMAY, education is necessary not only to awaken the consciousness but also to recognize the context and root cause of homelessness, which could help members in charting their own actions. KADAMAY's prescribed courses under PADEPA include the 8-Point Agenda, the KADAMAY Constitution, *Lagutin ang Tanikala ng Kahirapan* (Break the Chains of Poverty), intensive discussions on Philippine history, situation analyses of the peasant, women, and youth sectors; and courses on activism and neoliberalism. Chapters arranged lectures on these courses from August 2016 to January 2017. Educational discussions are typically carried out in small groups, but due to the massive membership, KADAMAY held Educational Festivals during the month of February 2017 in Bocaue and Pandi, Bulacan. The festivals were one-day events of simultaneous PADEPA lectures.

Dialogues coupled with demonstrations served as the mobilization type for the Relocatees Agenda and Housing Justice Campaign. While KADAMAY leaders would be in dialogue with a housing agency or government official, the members would hold a picket and a program outside the venue. During Robredo's visit at Saint Martha Homes, she held a dialogue with KADAMAY leaders while the rest of 400 members picketed outside. This was also the case with the other dialogues with the National Housing Authority (NHA), HUDCC, and the Office of the President.

KADAMAY was proactive in seeking dialogues with housing agencies and government officials. On 5 September 2016, KADAMAY held a dialogue with the NHA General Manager and was attended by Anakpawis Partylist and the HUDCC Director. This scored a manifesto of unity signed by the aforementioned parties that cited their commitment to end commercialized housing and provide decent housing and relocation for the urban poor. A follow-up dialogue with NHA ensued on 21 October 2016 where the latter agreed to act on the demands of KADAMAY. On 2 December 2016, a dialogue with HUDCC resulted in an agreement to distribute unutilized government housing units. On 5-6 December 2016, KADAMAY carried out a two-day march called *'Lakbayan ng mga Maralita'* (Urban Poor March). KADAMAY requested Malacañang (the Office of the President) beforehand for a

dialogue with President Rodrigo Duterte to discuss the Bulacan Urban Poor Agenda. On the day itself, 2,710 people marched from Bulacan to Malacañang, but were not accommodated. On 20 January 2017, KADAMAY attempted to seek an audience with Malacañang again. A Malacañang representative engaged them, assuring that the demands would be addressed 'as soon as possible'. During every dialogue, KADAMAY submitted letters of request to distribute houses to the homeless and the socio-economic profiles of each of the 10,000 members to prove that they were qualified beneficiaries. These served as their application for socialized housing units. Finally, on 8 February 2017, the NHA initiated a Housing Summit and KADAMAY was invited to participate, along with other groups. The president attended the gathering. However, KADAMAY was disappointed that their demands were not even mentioned during the summit. The president promised to distribute free housing, but only to victims of calamity.

Aside from the dialogues and pickets for their Relocatees and Homeless Campaigns, KADAMAY members also participated in rallies organized by groups in their network prior to the actual housing takeover. Some mass actions were responses to issues that affect them, such as the labor protest on precarious employment. To show their solidarity, KADAMAY joined peasant and indigenous people-led marches. They also showed their strength in numbers when 5,000 of them joined other sectors in commemorating the EDSA People Power Revolution (EDSA). The mass action called on the government to give life to the spirit of EDSA by ending its war on drugs that gave rise to extra-judicial killings; resuming peace talks; and terminating its neoliberal policies.

3.2 *8th March 2017*: #OccupyBulacan

The occupation itself is part of the repertoire of contention. Organizing was in motion during this phase as chapter leaders and members played out their roles during the takeover. KADAMAY sent out media invitations and press releases to make the public aware of the occupation and the reasons behind it.

Members had anticipated the takeover ever since the occupation of idle houses was suggested in one of the community consultations. KADAMAY leaders did their best to remind members that first, they had to undergo dialogues and properly submit applications for housing. These legal processes, however, generated no concrete response or action from the government.

Whenever members would ask their leaders when the occupation would happen, KADAMAY organizers would refuse to establish a date and instead remind them to be prepared. The leaders could not give a definitive answer as they were initially not united in taking over the houses. Some of the leaders thought the members were more than ready, while others were more cautious.

KADAMAY, as an alliance, has an organizational structure that includes member organizations and chapters. A national office, known as KADAMAY-National, coordinates these member organizations and chapters, acts as the spokesperson for the entire alliance, and serves as the media campaign center. Member organizations have their own leadership

and employ their own procedures in organizing and decision-making. New chapters are organized with the help of the national office until they are formed into a municipal chapter. At the municipal level, chapters undertake organizing and decision-making independently, but they still coordinate and consult with the national office as needed. Hence, while KADAMAY is structured, its chapters exercise a certain degree of autonomy.

In the case of the Bulacan occupation, not all leaders – both at the national and local fronts – initially agreed on the move. The membership was so huge and new that it was hard to gauge their readiness in carrying out a radical mass action. Thus, in order to be prepared, KADAMAY rolled out consolidation efforts.

The group increased its efforts to improve the chapters' committees by making them more systemic and ensuring that more members were attending the PADEPA courses, which were supposed to deepen their understanding of their plight. Dialogues were set to exhaust all legal avenues and mass protests were held to inform the public of the homeless' concerns. These activities were also opportunities for the members to process and reflect on their condition and seek out alternative solutions.

Finally, the leadership of KADAMAY set 8 March 2017, in commemoration of International Women's Day, as the day of action. A day that will, once and for all, allow the homeless to register their demands for housing. Assembly points were designated at *Mapulang Lupa* and Villa Elise in Pandi and in San Jose del Monte, where socialized housing projects in Bulacan were located.

There was no direct and clear instruction for occupying the houses. It seemed that the chapter leaders had different instructions for their members. Some were told that they would only march around the houses. Others were briefed to bring wood, nails, hammers, pails, and cleaning materials – for repair and cleaning purposes, and also to barricade surroundings should the need arise.

By four o'clock in the morning, an estimated 10,000 people had assembled in *Mapulang Lupa*. Some were accompanied by family members. Women had their kids in tow. Some brought wood and cleaning materials, and a few even brought their home appliances— hopeful and desperate to finally secure a house. The contingent from *Mapulang Lupa* marched to the first resettlement site, Atlantica.[6] The police came and harassed the members. And so, they marched on to other sites: Villa Lois, Pandi Heights, and Padre Pio. Members were in disbelief when they saw row upon row of empty houses, covered with vines and tall grasses. They clamored to occupy the houses upon seeing them idle and abandoned. The leaders then met for an impromptu meeting before announcing that members could occupy the units. A raffle system was set up to allocate houses per chapter. The group at Villa Elise was also successful in occupying houses. Around 300 KADAMAY members held off the police from morning until later in the day, when the police eventually left. Unfortunately, the police prevented the San Jose del Monte contingent from occupying houses.

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[6] The site is popularly called 'Atlantica' but its official name is 'Pandi Village 2'.

Members who failed to secure housing on the first attempt were undeterred. They regrouped and staged two more occupations. The following day, KADAMAY chapter leaders contacted more homeless members and asked them to go back if they still wanted to occupy houses. On the night of 9 March 2017, members marched from Padre Pio to Pandi Residence 3 and successfully built barricades around the relocation site. The police came and threw stones and fired shots into the air. They also rammed a backhoe on the occupiers. But the occupiers stood their ground. It was only on the third day, when things calmed down, were they able to settle into the houses. On 11 March 2017, members finally succeeded in occupying Atlantica, the first site they tried to occupy on 8 March. At the end of the takeover, KADAMAY reported the victorious occupation of 5,300 socialized housing units in Pandi, Bulacan.

3.3 Post-occupation

Engagement with social and news media aimed to raise consciousness regarding the occupation. KADAMAY's defense of the legitimacy of the housing takeover is part of the repertoire of contention. The group continued to organize as it solicited support from various entities. Barricading, again a repertoire of contention, was employed to guard the occupied houses from the threat of eviction.

News of the occupation surprised the country. Though it was hard to gauge the general public's stand on the takeover, those who had access to mainstream media mostly expressed disapproval of the action. KADAMAY members were called 'thieves', 'lazy', and 'freeloaders,' by online commentators. Government officials called them 'anarchists.' Online mainstream media reported the occupation as 'breaking news' without providing context (Cuisia, 2018). KADAMAY won the shelters but was losing the media battle.

Nonetheless, KADAMAY persisted in explaining the legitimacy of the takeover. News and social media were engaged. They solicited support from the public and allied networks. *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan* (BAYAN, New Patriotic Alliance), the umbrella group of national democratic organizations, hailed KADAMAY for claiming their housing rights. Progressive partylists from Congress such as the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, *Anakpawis, Bayan Muna,* Gabriela Women's Party, and *Kabataan* called for the distribution of houses to the occupiers. The National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) and Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP) also supported KADAMAY in their bid for public mass housing (Pasion, 2017a). A support caravan from different sectors – women, peasants, workers, youth, and students – visited the occupiers.

KADAMAY also sought food support. Though the members had been successful in occupying the houses, there was still the threat of eviction by the NHA. Police patrolled the area and tension was still high. Thus, the members had to guard and barricade the sites. Most of them were not able to go to work, leading to the loss of daily wages. The church sector organized a Mercy Mission, which brought food supplies to Pandi. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) also sent family food packages as requested by KADAMAY.

The initial outrage simmered down as in-depth reports on the idle socialized housing came out. Media outlets and academic writings exposed the cause of empty houses and the non-action of government housing agencies in their distribution (Arcilla, 2018). Most of the houses had been sitting in deterioration for almost five years while walk-in applications were waiting to be processed. The houses were so small (22 to 30 square meters) that a family of four could hardly fit in. The houses occupied by KADAMAY had no electricity or water supply, and some did not even have doors and windows. Socialized housing for the uniformed officers had an occupancy rate of 13% as they were small and far from their assignments (Pasion, 2017b). Cases in point were the two housing projects KADAMAY occupied: Villa Lois, which was a housing project for the Philippine National Police, and Pandi Heights for the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

President Duterte, who was barely ten months into his presidency then and who won because of his popularity with the masses, called the occupiers 'anarchists'. However, on 4 April 2017, he announced to the police and military housing beneficiaries that he would grant the houses to the occupiers because 'they are poor' and instead would give uniformed officers 'better houses, more expensive, more comfortable and more spacious' (Reyes-Estrope et al, 2017).

Because of the President's announcement and the exposés on unutilized socialized housing, the Senate carried out an inquiry on the alleged negligence of NHA in its housing projects and the use of funds for socialized housing (Dela Cruz, 2017). On 9 May 2018, more than a year after the occupation, the House of Representatives and the Senate signed Joint Resolution No. 2, authorizing the NHA to distribute to qualified beneficiaries the unawarded, surrendered, and canceled housing units apportioned to the military and police. To date, KADAMAY is still waiting for the NHA to finally provide them with entry passes, which would signify legitimate rights to the occupied houses.

Meanwhile, the occupiers have been building lives in their new communities and leading a more collective life. Typically, in a relocation site, a lot of neighborhood scuffles occur since different sets of people from different areas are forced to live in one community and in close proximity to each other. Pandi occupiers were not immune to quarrels, but these were being resolved quickly. Block leaders[7] mediate misunderstandings between neighbors. A store cooperative had been set up and the health committees worked to expand their first aid supplies. A junior football team had also been formed, with the chance to compete outside Bulacan.

As of this writing, criticisms on the occupation still abound, but KADAMAY continues to educate the public. Threats of eviction will always loom over the heads of the occupiers without the provision of entry passes. According to KADAMAY, there have been malicious and underhanded maneuvers to discredit them. Talks had been going around that KADAMAY was selling the housing units. It turned out that some occupiers were selling the units. KADAMAY said that problems such as these are expected to come up in

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[7] After the occupation, organization structure had been modified based on their village layout, transforming chapters into blocks.

relocation sites, particularly when residents are faced with dire needs. KADAMAY appealed to the media to be objective and responsible in their reporting and let them, as an organization, deal with situations such as these accordingly (CNN Philippines, 2018; Interaksyon, 2017).

KADAMAY's struggle for housing does not end in occupying the houses. They acknowledge that a lot still needs to be done on many fronts: legal recognition of the occupation, the occupiers' community life, public education on the takeover and its aftermath, and the continuous and arduous assertion for housing justice.

4. Contributing Factors Leading to Successful Occupation

Several factors contributed to the success of the takeover: the strategy of the organization, the political climate, and the characteristics of the occupiers. KADAMAY identified collective action as the critical factor in the success of the occupation, and I consider collective action as a result of the organization's strategy of AOM. Collective action is displayed through mobilizations. The dialogues, demonstrations, and the occupation itself were all products of collective action. The demonstrations and the occupation were part of the repertoire of contention, while the dialogues were part of the repertoire of strategies. The combined strategies not only strengthened the unity of the members but also allowed them to internalize the legitimacy of their cause. The futility of the dialogues and demonstrations showed that bureaucratic and legal processes were not enough arsenal in their bid to claim their rights. A radical and prefigurative action, such as the occupation, proved to be an effective alternative.

A critical mass was necessary during the occupation and this comprised the 'collective'. The occupiers clearly outnumbered the armed police deployed in the areas of contention and their massive number gave them the courage to act. The formation of this formidable mass stemmed from effective agitation. Those whose consciousness were stirred through leafleteering, Community Radio, and Community Consultations served as the first batch of members who would, later on, recruit succeeding batches. Afterward, the education discussions fostered critical thinking by providing the theoretical framework behind the effectiveness and necessity of collective action in claim-making.

Organizing provided the impetus for members to practice and internalize collective action. Through the community consultations, they learned how to systematically consolidate their common concerns and turn these into demands. Chapter-building and the committee system provided the avenues for learning to move as one under a collective leadership, which was composed of the executive committee and the committees.

The political climate was conducive to the occupation. The Duterte Administration was only in its tenth month when the takeover happened. The President had just started to lay the foundations of his administration, including the socio-economic road map, political appointments, and dealings with internal and external relations. Remarkably, some of his cabinet secretaries and figureheads were known veterans in the Philippine mass movement. The Administration also expressed openness to different kinds of dialogues, including peace

talks between the GPH and NDFP. Speculations on whether his transactions with the progressive bloc were political concessions or maneuverings, or simply part of his platform, are beyond the scope of this paper and deserve a separate analysis. One thing is certain though: the newness of the administration and its openness to the progressive bloc made it favorable to the occupation.

Support from progressive government officials, including NAPC Chairperson Liza Maza and PCUP Commissioner Terry Ridon, attenuated post-occupation repercussions. Their statements of support neutralized criticisms from both government officials and netizens by expounding on the factors that led to the occupation (Andolong, 2017; NAPC, 2017a, 2017b). The DSWD, whose Secretary at that time was veteran activist Judy Taguiwalo, delivered food and water supply as per request of the occupiers. It was summer. Bulacan was located on a plain and the relocation sites were surrounded by concrete. With no water supply, the occupiers faced the risk of heat stroke and dehydration.

Being in the first year of his administration, Duterte had opened its camp to dialogues with various groups, including the progressive bloc. KADAMAY was able to submit to the Office of the President its Bulacan Urban Poor Agenda and their letter requesting for the distribution of housing units to the homeless. The non-eviction of the occupiers could be seen as an act of goodwill from the Duterte Administration. There would had been carnage had the 5,300 families who occupied the housing units been evicted. That would be seen as a violation of human rights and certainly derail the good relations it had with the progressive groups.

The decision to give away the occupied houses was also a strategic move for the President. By granting the houses to KADAMAY members, he was able to reinforce his populist image. At the same time, he positioned himself on the good side of the military and police, who were the original beneficiaries of the occupied houses, by promising them bigger and better replacement units.

While the success of the occupation is attributed to the collective action of the members, it should also be noted that it was an action done by people who belong to a certain class and socio-economic background. Their abject conditions and their desperation for safe and decent housing were compelling enough reasons that pushed them to explore options that may be unimaginable to people coming from the higher class. These are people with essentially nothing to their names other than the willingness to undertake risks to improve their living conditions. As one of the chapter leaders said, forwarding her demand for socialized housing to the government was a gamble with nothing to lose.

In terms of social class, the urban poor belong to a special stratum of the working class, which subsequently result in imbibing particular characteristics and skills. As part of the working class, it was easy for them to grasp the importance of collective action. Without cooperation, there would be no completion of product or task. As part of the urban poor who are in seasonal employment or the informal economy, they have learned to be daring and adapt to various conditions to be able to survive. In the Filipino language, they are '*mapamaraan*' or '*madiskarte',* which roughly translates to 'having the ability to make do and

make ways'. Though financially strapped, they were still able to look for resources during their marches to Manila, survey the ins and outs of the relocation sites, recruit 10,000 members, and occupy 5,300 houses without using violence.

Summary and Conclusion

Occupations of building for housing and social use became prominent in the 1970s and post-2008 in Europe and the United States. These were responses to a property crisis brought about by the market-oriented economy and a shrinking number of community-based political spaces, both of which can ultimately be attributed to an increasingly neoliberal world economy. At the same time, the occupations signify the capacity of the people to bond and take collective action on alternatives that break market and state parameters.

Occupy Bulacan was an overdue response to the housing and land tenure crisis that have spiraled since the exodus of landless peasants to the Philippine urban. While the 2008 global financial crisis was not the trigger for the Philippine housing takeover/Occupy Bulacan, the economic situation behind it can be considered as the force that propelled the occupation. Philippine governments since the early 1900s have embraced this dominant economy of the West/global North. Thus, the takeover is a result of the long history of the Filipino urban poor's struggle for decent housing and land tenure.

Occupy Bulacan and KADAMAY brought the urban poor movement back to the map of Philippine social movements. The organized formation of the urban poor goes way back to the dark days of the Marcos Dictatorship. It had its victories from early to mid-70s, but military state repression divided the urban poor movement, leaving organizational disorders. These so-called 'golden years' (Karaos, 1993) of the urban poor movement had never been replicated until Occupy Bulacan. The takeover is a milestone in the Philippine urban poor movement.

The success of the occupation can be attributed to collective action, conducive political climate, and the sectoral character of the urban poor. Collective action has been learned, internalized, and performed through KADAMAY's strategy of arouse, organize, and mobilize. Its mobilization activities were an ensemble of the repertoire of contention and strategies. Occupation, classified under a repertoire of contention, is a new tactic of claiming rights by taking the offensive, as opposed to the urban poor being always on the defensive when being demolished, relocated, and stigmatized. It must be noted that occupation was not the members' first plan of action. Only when the dialogues and demonstrations failed did they consider the takeover option. The political climate cannot be discounted from the success of the occupation. The newness of the administration and the desire to live up to its populist image gave way to the declaration of housing distribution to the occupiers. Lastly, the class and socio-economic background of the occupiers compelled them to take action as they had nothing else to lose.

The Philippine housing takeover is organized yet spontaneous. KADAMAY grabbed critical moments and turned them to 'revolutionary moments' and through the collective action of ordinary people achieved what Onuch (2014) calls a 'revolutionary outcome'. Seizing the suggestion of its members to occupy the houses and the newness of the current administration were critical moments that also contributed to the revolutionary outcome. The recentness of the Duterte Administration opened political opportunity structures that contributed to the success of the occupation. Due to being new, the Administration was still open to new actors and influential allies and these were favorable to the occupiers.

The Philippine housing takeover/Occupy Bulacan has multiple significances. It provided shelter to homeless Filipinos, while at the same time signaling the resurgence of the urban poor movement. It proved that collective and organized action, an ensemble of strategies of resistance, heeding the voice and desire of the masses, and seizing the moment can lead to palpable victories. Its brand 'Occupy Bulacan' may be different from the more spontaneous 2011 strand of the Occupy Movement, but the spirit and aspirations behind them are one and the same: to take back what the 99% deserves.

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