The Politics of NGOs in South-East Asia

Participation and protest in the Philippines

Gerard Clarke
The Politics of NGOs in South-East Asia

Since the 1980s, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have proliferated throughout the developing world, triggering an ‘associational revolution’ and achieving an important role within the development process. This book analyses the role of NGOs in the Philippines and in South-East Asian politics and argues that NGOs are significant mainly for their political impact.

*The Politics of NGOs in South-East Asia* traces the history of the emergence of NGOs in the Philippines and South-East Asia and the political factors which encouraged this. The main focus is on the period from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s when NGOs first became a notable force in the region. It documents the complex relations between NGOs and other political actors including the state, organised religion, foreign donors, the business sector and underground insurgent groups and their impact on NGO strategy.

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Participation and Protest in the Philippines

Gerard Clarke
For
Amby
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Every effort has been made to contact all copyright holders. However, if anyone has not been contacted they should contact the publisher in the first instance.
A striking feature of the developing world at the end of the twentieth century has been the proliferation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). One interpretation of their multiplicity, especially in Asia, has been the suggestion that they indicate signs of an emerging civil society in a geographic locus reputed by some to be a prime source of a clash of civilisations and cultures and not of universal values. The theme of an emerging civil society is at the centre of Dr Gerard Clarke’s scholarly enquiry into the role of NGOs, in the main in the Philippines but with a significant consideration of other South-East Asian experience. He attempts to put their role into full perspective through an analysis of their political character and activities. Indeed, he maintains that NGOs are best understood as political phenomena and, with that approach in mind, he explores the extent to which they may serve as agents for political empowerment and change.

In the case of the Philippines, which is the primary focus of this study and which contains the third largest NGO community in the world, Dr Clarke examines in close detail the experience of two of the most important of their number; the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement and Task Force Detainees of the Philippines. On the basis of these two major case studies and together with an examination of experience elsewhere in the Philippines and in other parts of South-East Asia, he demonstrates the ways and the extent to which such bodies enter the political arena through engendering issue-based debate, especially in societies distinguished by patrimonial qualities, and how they mobilise their constituencies of support. Indeed, they are said to fill a political vacuum. And it is in that respect, in important part, that NGOs are able to develop and strengthen civil society. The temporal focus of this volume is the period between 1986–1996 which in the Philippines covers a period of
relatively democratic politics by contrast to what obtained before under the rule of the last President Marcos. With that degree of open door in mind for the role of the NGOs, Dr Clarke is careful not to indulge in undue generalisation where a more authoritarian South-East Asia is concerned but he does illuminate the extent to which the NGO phenomenon has had a role in helping to change the political landscape, albeit not out of recognition. Indeed, he also enters a cautionary note about the extent to which NGOs reflect the values of the societies in which they emerge and operate and also how they may be used in a self interested way by the state.

This volume makes a notable contribution to a dimension of political activity which has not been sufficiently well addressed in those terms. Dr Clarke has placed students of NGOs and the politics of South-East Asia in his debt through his attempt to remedy that intellectual shortcoming. He also makes a contribution to the debate about Asian values by demonstrating the extent to which participation and protest channelled by NGOs arise from local circumstances.

Michael Leifer
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCFA</td>
<td>Agricultural Credit and Co-operative Financing Administration</td>
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<td>ACCORD</td>
<td>Associated Council of Organisations for Development</td>
</tr>
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<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADHOC</td>
<td>Association de droits de l’homme et du développement de Cambodge (Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Armed Forces of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKKAKPA</td>
<td>Aksyon sa Kapayapanan at Katarungan (Action for Justice and Peace)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Amnesty International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALRO</td>
<td>Agricultural Land Reform Office (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMMRS</td>
<td>Association of Men Major Religious Superiors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMRSP</td>
<td>Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGOC</td>
<td>Asian NGO Coalition of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOF</td>
<td>Association of Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Agrarian Reform Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARADO</td>
<td>Agrarian Reform Alliance of Democratic Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARBA</td>
<td>Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Agrarian Reform Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWARE</td>
<td>Action for Welfare and Awakening (India)</td>
</tr>
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<td>AWARE</td>
<td>Association of Women for Action and Research (Singapore)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAYAN</td>
<td>Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (New Patriotic Alliance)</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>Bishops’-Businessmen’s Conference</td>
</tr>
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<td>BCC</td>
<td>Basic Christian Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCFC</td>
<td>Barangay Communal Forest Cooperatives Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEC</td>
<td>Basic Ecclesial Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISIG</td>
<td>Bukluran sa Ikauunlad ng Sosyalista Isap at Gawa (Movement for the Advancement of Socialist Ideas and Action)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAFGU</td>
<td>Citizens’ Armed Forces Geographical Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPART</td>
<td>Council for the Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (India)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CART</td>
<td>Council for Rural Technology (India)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBCP</td>
<td>Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCJP</td>
<td>Citizen’s Council for Justice and Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>Countryside Development Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDP</td>
<td>Community Employment and Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>CENDHRRRA</td>
<td>Centre for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFP</td>
<td>Community Forestry Programme (DENR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFPI</td>
<td>Cooperatives Foundation of the Philippines Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHR</td>
<td>Commission on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency (US)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Congressional Initiative Allocation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLOAs</td>
<td>Certification of Land Ownership Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMLC</td>
<td>Church-Military Liaison Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNL</td>
<td>Christians for National Liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPAR</td>
<td>Congress for a Peoples Agrarian Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Campaign for Popular Democracy (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Council for People’s Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPDC</td>
<td>Community Development Planning Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>Communist Party of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td>Contract Reforestation Programme (DENR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT</td>
<td>Communist Party of Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Community Organising</td>
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<tr>
<td>CODE-NGO</td>
<td>Caucus of Development NGO Networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>COG</td>
<td>Cause-Oriented Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONFREL</td>
<td>Committee for Free and Fair Elections (Cambodia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONVERGENCE</td>
<td>Convergence for Community Centred Area Development</td>
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<td>CUCD</td>
<td>Centre for Urban Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAHR</td>
<td>Davao Alliance of Human Rights Advocates</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAR</td>
<td>Department of Agrarian Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENR</td>
<td>Department of Environment and Natural Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>DILG</td>
<td>Department of Interior and Local Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>DJANGO</td>
<td>Development, Justice and Advocacy NGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOH</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOJ</td>
<td>Department of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSK</td>
<td>Demokratikong Sosyalista Koalisyon (Democratic Socialist Coalition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>Ecumenical Center for Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>UN Economic and Social Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDMS</td>
<td>Economic District Management System</td>
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<td>ELF</td>
<td>Education for Life Foundation</td>
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<td>EMJP</td>
<td>Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENQAP</td>
<td>Emergency Quick Action Programme</td>
</tr>
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<td>EPSM</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Society Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td>FACOMA</td>
<td>Farmers Cooperative Marketing Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organisation</td>
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<td>FAP</td>
<td>Food Aid Program (TFDP)</td>
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<td>FDC</td>
<td>Freedom from Debt Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>Fourth Generation Strategy</td>
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<td>FIND</td>
<td>Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearances</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLAG</td>
<td>Free Legal Assistance Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPE</td>
<td>Foundation for the Philippine Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPO</td>
<td>Family Planning Organisation of the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRC</td>
<td>Forum for Rural Concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSRP</td>
<td>Family Self Reliance Programs (TFDP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FUNCINPEC</td>
<td>Front Uni National Pour La Cambodge Indépendante, Pacifique et Coopérative (United National Front for an Independent, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFP</td>
<td>Green Forum Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>GABRIELA</td>
<td>General Assembly Binding Women for Reform, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLKAR</td>
<td>Golongan Karya (‘Functional Groups’) (ruling</td>
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</table>
Abbreviations and acronyms

HBL  Hukbong Bayan Laban Sa Hapon (Anti-Japanese People’s Army)
HMB  Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (The People’s Liberation Army)
HRAN  Human Rights Alliance of Negros
ICNPO  International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations
ICRC  International Committee of the Red Cross
IIRR  International Institute for Rural Reconstruction
ILO  International Labour Organisation
IMEM  International Mass Education Movement
INDAP  Institute of Agrarian Development (Chile)
INGO  International Non-Governmental Organisation
IO  Intermediate Organisation
IPAS  Integrated Protected Area Systems programme (DENR)
IPD  Institute for Popular Democracy
ISP  Indirect Service Programme (TFDP)
JAJA  Justice for Aquino, Justice for All
JICA  Japanese International Co-operation Agency
JCRR  Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (Taiwan)
JCRD  Joint Commission on Rural Development
JRC  Judicial Reorganisation Committee
KABUCO  Kabankalan Sugar Company
KAHRA  Kotabato Alliance of Human Rights Advocates
KAPATID  Kapisanan para sa Pagpapalaya at Amnestiya ng mga Detenidoong Pulitikal (Association for the Release and Amnesty of Political Detainees)
KBL  Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement)
KILOS  Kilusang Laban Sa Kudeta (Coalition Against Coups d’état)
KIPP  Komite Independen Pemantau Pemilu (Independent Election Monitoring Committee) (Indonesia)
KKK  Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran (Movement or Livelihood and Progress)
KKK  Koalisyon Kuryente ng Kotabato (Cotabato Electricity Coalition)
KMP  Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Philippine Peasants Movement)
Abbreviations and acronyms

KMU Kilusang May Uno (May First Movement)
KSS Kilusang Sariling Sikap (Self-Help Movement)
LACC Labour Advisory and Consultative Council
Lakas-NUCD Lakas ng EDSA-National Union of Christian Democrats
LBH Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (Legal Aid Institute) (Indonesia)
LDP Laban Demokratikong ng Pilipinas (Fight for Philippine Democracy)
LGC Local Government Code
LGU Local Government Unit
LICADHO Ligue Cambodgienne pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l’homme (Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights)
LPHAM Institute for the Defense of Human Rights (Indonesia)
LP-PDP-Laban Liberal Party – Partido Demokratikong Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan
LPSM Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masayarakat (Self-Help Promotion Organisation) (Indonesia)
LSM Lembaga Swadaya Masayarakat (Self-Help Organisation) (Indonesia)
LUSSA Luzan Secretariat for Social Action
MABINI Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity and Nationalism Inc.
MAPCO Movement to Abolish the PCO
MARI Majelis Rakyat Indonesia (Indonesia Peoples’ Council)
MARTYR Mothers and Relatives against Tyranny and Repression
MCA Malay Chinese Association (Malaysia)
MCC Myanmar Council of Churches
MDC Municipal Development Council
MEM Mass Education Movement (Pre-revolutionary China)
MHRO Malaysian Human Rights Organisation
MHS Ministry of Human Settlements
MIN Movement for an Independent Negros
MINCODE Mindanao Coalition of Development NGOs
MISSA Mindanao-Sulu Secretariat for Social Action
MLMTT Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought
<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>MPD</td>
<td>Movement for Popular Democracy</td>
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<td>MSPC</td>
<td>Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference</td>
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<td>MTPDP</td>
<td>Medium Term Philippine Development Plan</td>
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<td>MUAD</td>
<td>Multi-Sectoral Alliance for Development</td>
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<td>MUNGO</td>
<td>Mutant NGO</td>
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<td>NACC</td>
<td>Negros Anti-Communist Crusade</td>
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<td>NACFAR</td>
<td>National Council for Aquatic Resources</td>
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<td>NAJFD</td>
<td>Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy</td>
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<td>NAMFREL</td>
<td>National Movement for Freedom of Elections</td>
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<td>NASSA</td>
<td>National Secretariat for Social Action</td>
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<td>NBI</td>
<td>National Bureau of Investigation</td>
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<td>NCC-LG</td>
<td>National Coordinating Council on Local Governance</td>
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<td>NCCP</td>
<td>National Council of Churches in the Philippines</td>
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<td>NCFO</td>
<td>National Congress of Farmers Organisations</td>
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<td>NDF</td>
<td>National Democratic Front</td>
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<td>NDF-CPP-NPA</td>
<td>National Democratic Front-Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army</td>
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<td>NECC</td>
<td>National Economic Consultative Commission</td>
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<td>(Malaysia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEDA</td>
<td>National Economic and Development Authority</td>
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<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Economic Protectionism Association</td>
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<td>NESDB</td>
<td>National Economic and Social Development Board (Thailand)</td>
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<td>NFSW-FGT</td>
<td>National Federation of Sugar Workers-Food and General Trades</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NGO-COD</td>
<td>NGO Coalition on Development (Thailand)</td>
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<td>NIA</td>
<td>National Irrigation Authority</td>
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<td>NIC</td>
<td>Newly Industrialising Country</td>
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<td>NIPA</td>
<td>NGOs for Integrated Protected Areas</td>
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<td>NLD</td>
<td>National League for Democracy (Myanmar/Burma)</td>
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<td>NLPLP</td>
<td>Negros Land for a Productive Life Programme (PBSP)</td>
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<td>NOVIB</td>
<td>Nederlandse Organisatie Voor Internationale Ontwikkelingsorganisaties (Netherlands Organisation for International Development)</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
<td>New People’s Army</td>
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<td>NPC</td>
<td>Nationalist People’s Coalition</td>
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<td>NPKC</td>
<td>National Peace-Keeping Council (Thailand)</td>
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<td>NPO</td>
<td>Non-Profit Organisation</td>
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<td>NRDP</td>
<td>National Reconciliation and Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRDP</td>
<td>Negros Relief Development Programme (PRRM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSEs</td>
<td>Non-Stock Entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSS</td>
<td>Nature Society of Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC</td>
<td>National Unification Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUCD</td>
<td>National Union of Christian Democrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORMAS</td>
<td>Organisasi Masa (mass organisations) (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACD</td>
<td>Presidential Arm on Community Development (previously named the Presidential Assistant on Community Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PADI</td>
<td>People’s Action for Development India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAHRA</td>
<td>Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>People’s Action Party (Singapore)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARCODE</td>
<td>People’s Agrarian Reform Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBSP</td>
<td>Philippine Business for Social Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCAC</td>
<td>Presidential Complaints and Action Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCCD</td>
<td>Presidential Council for Countryside Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCHR</td>
<td>Presidential Committee on Human Rights (1986–1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCHR</td>
<td>Philippine–Canada Human Resources Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCO</td>
<td>Presidential Commitment Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCPM</td>
<td>Philippine Council for Print Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCPD</td>
<td>Presidential Committee for Political Detainees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCSD</td>
<td>Presidential Council for Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>Partido Demokratikong ng Pilipinas (Philippine Democratic Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEAN</td>
<td>Philippine Environmental Action Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PECCO</td>
<td>Philippine Ecumenical Committee for Community Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>Philippine Ecological Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEO</td>
<td>Popular Economic Organisation (Latin America)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEPE</td>
<td>Popular Education for People’s Enlightenment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERADIN</td>
<td>Persatuan Advokat Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Lawyers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhCHR</td>
<td>Philippine Coalition for Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHILCAG</td>
<td>Philippine Civil Action Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhilDHRRA</td>
<td>Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHINMA</td>
<td>Philippine Investments Management Consultants</td>
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<td>PFPP</td>
<td>Philippine Family Planning Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHRC</td>
<td>Presidential Human Rights Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>PINOI</td>
<td>Philippine Institution of NGOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>PKI</td>
<td>Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKRI</td>
<td>Perkumpulan Keluarga Berenca Indonesia (Planned Parenthood Association of Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLLLP</td>
<td>Protestant Lawyers League of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMP</td>
<td>Partido Masamong Pilipino (Party of the Philippine Masses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMS</td>
<td>Presidential Management Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PnB</td>
<td>Partido ng Bayan (Peoples Party)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNGOC</td>
<td>Philippine NGO Council on Population, Health and Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>People’s Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>POC</td>
<td>Peace and Order Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>PORP</td>
<td>Programme on Organisations of the Rural Poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPI</td>
<td>Philippine Priests Incorporated</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPI</td>
<td>Philippine Peasant Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party) (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD</td>
<td>Partai Rakyat Demokraisi (People’s Democratic Party) (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCESS</td>
<td>Participatory Research Organisation of Communities and Education in the Struggle for Self Reliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRRM</td>
<td>Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRUCIS</td>
<td>Philippine Rural Community Improvement Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSF</td>
<td>Presidential Social Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>PVO</td>
<td>Private Voluntary Organisation</td>
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<td>QIP</td>
<td>Quick Impact Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAFI</td>
<td>Ramon Aboitz Foundation Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAM</td>
<td>Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abbreviations and acronyms

(Révolutionary Nationalist Alliance formerly, the
Reform the Armed Forces Movement)

RDC Regional Development Council
RDDP Rural Democratization and Development
Programme (PRRM)
RRMA Rural Reconstruction Men’s Association (PRRM
pre-1986)
RRW Rural Reconstruction Worker (PRRM pre-1986)
RRWA Rural Reconstruction Women’s Association
(PRPM pre-1986)
RRYA Rural Reconstruction Youth Association
(PRPM pre-1986)
SAC Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
SAO Subdistrict Administrative Organisation (Thailand)
SARILAKAS Sariling Lakas (‘own strength’)
SCAAs Special CAFGU Active Auxiliaries
SEC Securities and Exchange Commission
SELDA Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa
Detensiyon at para sa Amnestiya (Association of
Ex-Detainees against Detention and for Amnesty)
SFAN Small Farmers’ Association of Negros
SHO Self-Help Organisation
SLORC State Law and Order Restoration Council
(Myanmar/Burma)
SMC San Miguel Corporation
SN Samahang Nayon (Barrio or Pre-Cooperative
Associations)
SRA Social Reform Agenda
SRC Social Reform Council
SRD Sustainable Rural District (PRRM)
SRDDP Sustainable Rural District Development
Programme (PRRM)
SRP Self-Reliant Projects (TFDP)
SSCD Social Services and Community Development
SSRD State Secretariat for Rural Development
(Cambodia)
SUARAM Suara Rakyat Malaysia (The Voice of the
Malaysian People)
SWA Social Welfare Administration
TFAS Task Force Apo Sandawa
TFD Task Force Devolution (DOH)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TFDG</td>
<td>Task Force Data Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFDP</td>
<td>Task Force Detainees of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOYM</td>
<td>Ten Outstanding Young Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRRM</td>
<td>Thailand Rural Reconstruction Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUCP</td>
<td>Trade Union Congress of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCCP</td>
<td>United Church of Christ in the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL</td>
<td>Union of Civil Liberties (Thailand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMNO Baru</td>
<td>New United Malay Nationalist Organisation (Malaysia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCED</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Environment and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nationalist Democratic Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNTAC</td>
<td>United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSEC</td>
<td>United Rural Sectors Electoral Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VANI</td>
<td>Voluntary Action Network India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISSA</td>
<td>Visayas Secretariat for Social Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VO</td>
<td>Voluntary Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volags</td>
<td>Voluntary Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPD</td>
<td>Volunteers for Popular Democracy (1986–1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWF</td>
<td>World Wide Fund for Nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>YLBHI</td>
<td>Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMBA</td>
<td>Young Men’s Buddhist Association (Myanmar/Burma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Young Men’s Christian Association</td>
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</table>
Since the late 1980s, a number of studies of the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the developing world have been published, giving rise to a distinctive literature within the social sciences. This literature, however, focuses on the socio-economic aspects of NGO action and is of limited use to political scientists in interpreting the ‘associational revolution’ triggered by the proliferation of NGOs in Asia, Africa and Latin America in recent decades. Since the early 1990s, however, a number of studies have acknowledged the political significance of NGO proliferation and the political roles of both national and international NGOs in the developing world, including Indonesia (Eldridge 1995), East Africa (Ndegwa 1996) and Central America (MacDonald 1997).

Michael Bratton was the first to argue, in 1989, that it is in the political sphere rather than the economic that the contributions of NGOs to development should mainly be seen. The new literature on NGOs and politics which has emerged in the mid-1990s however, and political science literature generally, still fail to contribute proportionately to the evolving NGO literature. Following Bratton, this book therefore presents a study of non-governmental organisations and politics in the Philippines, the country with the third largest NGO community in the developing world and with one of its best organised and most politically active. Philippine NGOs and the People’s Organisations (POs) with which they work closely, this book argues, are significant mainly for their broad organisational reach and their ability to represent ideologically-coherent interests, making them a significant actor in Philippine politics. In addition, this book argues, the proliferation, growth, regional distribution and organisational character of NGOs, as well as the tasks they carry out, have all been determined by essentially political factors.
In the Philippines, NGO representatives helped to draft the 1987 constitution and today they participate in election campaigns, in local government structures and in contemporary issue-based social movements. Such political participation has been achieved at great expense and during the 1980s and early 1990s, NGO workers were killed by government and opposition forces alike. Since 1986, however, NGOs have worked closely with the government in the implementation of development projects and in policy-making concerned with issues such as human rights, the environment and macro-economic policy. At the same time, they have advocated further change and reform and protested against measures which undermine the interests of constituencies they seek to represent. While engaging the state through participation and protest, NGOs also engage with other institutions including the Christian churches, overseas donors, the business community and the underground left, revealing a rich mosaic of political relationships.

Between 1986 and 1996, the number of registered NGOs in the Philippines grew by 160 per cent. This growth raises important questions about the nature of NGO action and its impact on Philippine politics, the state, and civil society. Does the NGO community strengthen civil society? Can it transform relations between the state and civil society? Can it help to empower the millions traditionally marginalised from political participation in the Philippines? On the first question, this book argues that NGOs simultaneously weaken and strengthen civil society and that the NGO community is best seen as a new arena, within which battles from society at large are internalised. On the second, it argues that collaboration between NGOs and the state has strengthened the state in small yet significant ways, helping it to attack entrenched socio-economic elite interests and helping the state to attract broad-based popular support for political and economic reforms. On the third question, the book argues that expanding political participation has been one of the main achievements of the Philippine NGO community and that NGOs, by linking with grassroots people’s organisations, have filled an important institutional vacuum resulting from the inability of political parties, trade unions and peasant associations to promote sustained popular political participation.

The origins of this book date to 1986 when, as an undergraduate student, I spent a number of months working with the human rights organisation, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP). The experience convinced me that TFDP and other NGOs played a significant role in Philippine politics, a role that was not acknowledged in political science or development studies literature. Thus, in 1992, I began to study for the PhD degree on which this
book is based. I sought to research and document what I felt was the rich political history of TFDP and other prominent NGOs, as well as their contemporary roles and to relate them to the changing character of the Philippine state and of Philippine civil society. The research I felt would not be without its problems. Prominent Philippine NGOs worked in a complex political environment, criticised by the media, by government spokespersons, by politicians, by other NGO representatives and by underground activists and cadre. In this environment, the leaders of any prominent NGO faced dilemmas in allowing a foreign research student to delve into its archives and to examine its activities in depth. I was therefore fortunate that representatives of TFDP and later the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) gave me permission to undertake research on each organisation. I was very lucky that both organisations showed such trust at a time of political flux that affected both in significant ways.

TFDP and PRRM represented ideal choices in many respects. Both were long established with political histories that helped to put their activities in the post-1986 period in a broader context. As the third and second largest NGOs in the Philippines respectively, both were also sufficiently large and prominent to be well enmeshed in political debates of the day. Finally, the choice of a human rights NGO and one concerned primarily with rural development provided a valuable contrast that enabled me to document the intrinsically political nature of all NGO activity, whether outwardly connected with socio-economic development or not.

I was fortunate that by 1993, when I undertook my PhD fieldwork, many Philippine NGO activists had themselves begun to openly talk about the dilemmas and constraints that governed their relationships with other political forces and that shaped their political strategies. Many activists in the NGO community and in the underground movement with which it intersected at points were thus willing to talk to me and to share documents and unpublished manuscripts about the changing political environment in which they laboured. This book is therefore based on interviews with NGO and other activists, supplemented by NGO archive material and by additional research drawing on media, government and academic sources.

In 1995 and 1996, I returned to the Philippines on a number of occasions and, in a rapidly changing environment, updated my 1993 fieldwork. I also turned my attention to other countries in South-East Asia where, like the Philippines, there was evidence of a correlation between NGO proliferation and democratization. In 1995 and 1996, I visited Thailand, after the Philippines,
the country in South-East Asia where the correlation seemed closest, and in 1996, I visited Cambodia. In both countries I interviewed the representatives of prominent NGOs and NGO coalitions about issues that I had examined with respect to the Philippines. The effect was to place the Philippines in a broader, South-East Asian, context and to develop, I hope, a comparative perspective on the political significance of NGO proliferation and the political roles and character of leading South-East Asian NGOs.

As such, this book contributes to a debate within the academic and NGO communities about the relevance of development studies and of the study of NGOs in the developing world. Hulme (1994: 252) argues that

There is a distinct likelihood that much of the efforts of the [NGO] sector, especially in Asia and Africa, will be of decreasing relevance to development . . . unless the sector is subjected to intensified research that relates micro-level activities to macro-level processes. In particular, intermediary ‘southern’ NGOs (SNGOs) require study to determine ways in which their relationships with the institutions of the state, political parties, external financiers and civil society constrain or expand their ‘room for manoeuvre’.

In stark contrast however, Edwards (1994: 291) warns of the danger that NGOs will be increasingly treated as the objects of academic study ‘in much the same way as poor people themselves were treated as objects in the conventional approach to development’. “Southern NGOs”, Edwards argues, ‘do not “require study”’:

they require encouragement and support to understand their environment, clarify their roles, and carry them out effectively. [N]either poor people nor the organizations established to work with them, nor the situations in which they struggle to survive and prosper should be treated as objects for examination by outsiders.

(Ibid.: 296)

There is a strong argument however that NGOs, as increasingly prominent political actors, should be subjected to the same independent and critical scrutiny to which they subject the state, political parties and other political actors. If NGOs seek to participate in politics, especially in a democratic environment in which values of openness, transparency and accountability are to be encouraged, then such participation, and the claimed mandate from
which it derives, should be subjected to independent scrutiny. NGOs do not exist in an independent realm from civil and political society, but work and develop values in the same political culture as other political institutions, in the same juncture between civil and political society where most political struggles are located. As such they are subject to the same ebbs and flows that weaken or empower other institutions, forces that must be documented if, as Hulme suggests above, the development interventions of NGOs are to remain relevant. Similarly, if there is a danger that academics will instrumentalise NGOs in the developing world, then there is a parallel danger that NGOs will instrumentalise the constituencies which they seek to represent, and will themselves be instrumentalised by a range of institutional forces with which they relate.

To illustrate this point, and to amplify upon it, this book examines a number of aspects of Philippine and South-East Asian politics and the role of NGOs. It examines the history of Philippine NGO participation in politics, relations between NGOs and the Philippine state since 1986, the institutional forces promoting the proliferation of NGOs, and the main mechanisms through which NGOs engage in politics. Chapter 1 examines the concept of an NGO, provides a potted history of NGOs and offers some theoretical and comparative perspectives on their role in politics, especially the putative relationship between NGO proliferation and democratization. Chapter 2 presents a brief study of NGOs and politics in South-East Asia excluding the Philippines and examines the political roles that NGOs play under a variety of regime conditions. The chapter argues that NGOs play important roles in South-East Asian politics, especially in promoting political liberalization and democratization. Later chapters focusing on the Philippines examine key themes from chapter 2 in more detail. One significant theme is the long political history of South-East Asian NGOs and chapter 3 examines the history of non-governmental organisations in the Philippines and their growing involvement in politics from the late nineteenth century to the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986. In chapter 4, the book examines relationships between NGOs and the Philippines state in more detail, focusing on the 1986–1996 period and the governments of Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos. Much of the political significance of NGO proliferation however does not lie in the way NGOs relate to the state but in the way that NGO communities are structured, in the institutional forces that support them, and in the particular means by which they engage in politics. Chapter 5 therefore looks at the organisation of the Philippine NGO community and the role of business and philanthropic interests,
the Christian Churches, overseas donors, and the underground left in establishing or supporting NGOs and using NGOs as institutional vehicles to advance their own causes and interests. Chapter 6 looks at the specific means by which NGOs participate in Philippine politics, and focuses on their participation in NGO coalitions, in contemporary issue-based social movements, in local government structures and in election campaigns. Much of the political significance of NGOs in South-East Asia or the Philippines however can only be appreciated with reference to specific NGOs and chapters 7 and 8 present case studies of two of the largest and most politically prominent NGOs in the Philippines. Chapter 7 documents the history of the PRRM, the largest rural development NGO in the Philippines, the oldest (founded in 1952) and one of the most politically controversial and experimental. This chapter is significant in part because it is the first independent study of PRRM available in the public domain since 1961 and contrasts sharply with studies by its own management which, for understandable reasons perhaps, ignore or underplay significant aspects of its political history and current strategy. Chapter 8 provides a contrast in documenting the political history of TFDP, the largest human rights NGO in the Philippines and, until recently, in the developing world as a whole. In conclusion, chapter 9 locates the Philippines in a South-East Asian context in an attempt to explain the increasing political significance of NGOs and their roles as political actors. NGOs, it argues, have played an important role in the emergence, consolidation and development of civil society in South-East Asia. Yet, the type of civil society to which NGOs contribute is multi-faceted. It differs across the region according to regime type. It also differs substantially from the concept of civil society envisaged by leading Western political theorists including G.W.F. Hegel, Alexis de Tocqueville and Antonio Gramsci and, finally, and perhaps most surprisingly, it differs from the type of civil society which many NGOs seek. NGOs, the book argues, have a significant capacity to engage in politics, influence the path of political change and to contribute to the emergence of a strong civil society that undermines the political disempowerment of large sections of the population in South-East Asia. Equally, however, NGOs are by no means a unified political actor promoting a unified vision of civil and political society. As such the book helps to define the political ‘room for manoeuvre’ which NGOs enjoy and the factors, including regime type, political culture and the history of NGO action, that serve to influence it.

Over the five and a half years (1992–1997) that it has taken to complete this book, and the PhD thesis on which it is based, many people and institutions
have provided valuable support, advice and practical assistance. For their help during my time as a PhD student at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and in many cases, beyond, I am grateful to Anne Booth, Ian Browne, Helen Cordell, Steve Heder, Michael Heller, John Sidel, David Taylor and Robert H. Taylor. Outside of SOAS, I am very grateful to Duncan McCargo, David Potter and, especially, to James Putzel. For the financial support that enabled me to complete the research, I am grateful to the Economic and Social Research Council, the British Academy Committee for South-East Asian Studies and the Centre for Development Studies, University of Wales Swansea. For their help and support during my time at the Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines, Diliman, I am also grateful to William Chang, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, Jaime Faustino, Edmund Fronda, Temario Rivera, Jorge Tigno and Reynaldo Ty.

For other support I received in the Philippines between 1993 and 1996, I am grateful to interviewees listed in the bibliography, many of whom provided documents or introduced me to other contacts, especially Lorenda Jagurin for her help in Bacolod; the small number of people who spoke to me anonymously; those in the Philippines who provided advice, support, insights and friendship including Vinia Abesamis, Richard Bennett, Fr. Frank Connon, Jose Custodio, Miyuki Komori, Fr. John Leyden, Joseph Lim, Sayuri Nishimura, Kathy Nadeau, Daryl Orchard, Maureen Pagaduan, Steven Rood, Ronet Santos and Richard Vokes; Sr. Mary Radcliffe, for all her help; Sr. Cres Lucero and Anelyn de Luna for their support of my research on TFDP; Jun Sales of PRRM for help in the Philippines and Britain and Lisa Dacanay for her support of my work on PRRM; Linda Yuson and Arnaldo Estareja, PRRM and TFDP librarians respectively, for their help; and Maris Diokno for allowing me access to selected files and papers of the late Jose W. Diokno.

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Over the years many people have provided important material, information and unpublished documents which helped me to complete this book. In this respect, I am grateful to Catherine Blishen, William Callahan, Carole Garrison,
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Gerard Clarke
Swansea, July 1997
1 Non-governmental organisations and politics in the developing world

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s, a significant number of studies of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the developing world have been published, giving rise to a distinctive literature within the social sciences. In 1987, *World Development* brought out a special issue on NGOs and development,\(^1\) based on the proceedings of a major conference. Then followed a series of books\(^2\) including the Overseas Development Institute’s four-volume series on NGOs, the state and agricultural development.\(^3\) These works are now complemented by studies of individual NGOs,\(^4\) as well as an expanding journal-based literature.

The new literature is testament to the emergence of NGOs as important actors in the development process in Asia, Africa and Latin America. According to figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), NGOs transferred US$5.3 billion from industrial to developing countries in 1986,\(^5\) nearly US$1 billion more than assistance provided by the International Development Association (OECD 1988: 81; World Bank 1991: 136). By 1990, the amount had reached $7.2 billion, equivalent to 13 per cent of net disbursements of official aid or 2.5 per cent of total resource flows to developing countries (UNDP 1993a: 93).

NGOs acquired this financial role in a relatively short period of time; from low levels in absolute terms, official development assistance (ODA) disbursed through NGOs grew by 1400 per cent in the ten years to 1985 (Van Der Heidjen 1987: 104). This relatively new financial role provides NGOs with significant organisational reach: according to one official estimate, the programmes of NGOs benefitted 250 million people in 1992 (UNDP 1993a: 93). The implications of this growth and expansion are profound. According to Salamon, ‘we are in the midst of a global “associational revolution” that may prove to be as significant to the latter twentieth century as the rise of the nation-state was to the latter nineteenth’ (Salamon 1994: 109). In the mid-1990s, new works have
documented the role of NGOs in politics in many parts of the developing world and their contribution to this ‘associational revolution’, including Eldridge (1995) (Indonesia), Ndegwa (1996) (East Africa), and MacDonald (1997) (Central America). This book examines non-governmental organisations and their role in national politics in the Philippines, a country with one of the largest and most politically active NGO communities in the developing world, and this chapter introduces theoretical and comparative aspects of NGO political activity in the developing world.

WHAT IS A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION?

The term ‘non-governmental organisation’ or NGO refers to a wide range of organisations in the more developed and the developing worlds alike and the term is subject to considerable conceptual ambiguity. Adding to the confusion, a variety of alternative labels are often used to describe similar organisations: Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs), Private Voluntary Organisations (PVOs) or Intermediate Organisations (IOs) in the United States; Voluntary Organisations (VOs) or charities in the United Kingdom; or Voluntary Agencies (Volags) in India. In one of the first rigorous studies of the NGO sector, Salamon and Anheier use a seven-fold test to distinguish NGOs from a variety of other organisational forms. NGOs, they argue, are:

1. formal (i.e. they have an institutional character);
2. private (i.e. institutionally separate from government);
3. non-profit-distributing (i.e. institutionally distinct from the private sector);
4. self-governing;
5. voluntary (i.e. dependent on a certain amount of voluntary effort, even if only at board level);
6. non-religious (i.e. non-proselytising);
7. non-political (i.e. not primarily engaged in promoting candidates for electoral office) (Salamon and Anheier 1995: 14–15).

Even this seven-fold test, however, captures a vast array of organisations and the authors set out a comprehensive International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (ICNPOs), based on 10 broad categories (*Ibid.*: Appendix B). In more simple terms, and for the purposes of this book, NGOs can be defined as *private, non-profit, professional organisations with a distinctive legal character, concerned with public welfare goals*. Within this definition,
NGOs include philanthropic foundations, church development agencies, academic think-tanks, human rights organisations and other organisations focusing on issues such as gender, health, agricultural development, social welfare, the environment and indigenous people. Other non-profit organisations such as private hospitals and schools, religious groups, sports clubs, and QUANGOs (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations) are excluded.

In the contemporary NGO literature, NGOs are distinguished from Peoples Organisations (POs), local, non-profit membership-based associations that organise and mobilise their constituents in support of collective welfare goals (cf. Carroll 1992: 9–11; Korten 1990: 2). POs include local community associations and cooperatives as well as peasant associations and trade unions but exclude other professional or business associations. Base Christian communities (informal, priestless, prayer groups that flourish in Latin America and parts of Asia) are also excluded, although NGOs and POs play vital roles in sustaining them. POs are usually regarded as a sub-category of NGO (Carroll 1992: 9; Korten 1990: 2). Although the NGO/PO distinction is now accepted in much of the NGO literature, a number of alternative labels are often applied. Carroll, for instance, distinguishes between Grassroots Support Organisations (GSOs) and Membership Support Organisations (MSOs) while Fisher distinguishes between Grass-roots Support Organisations (GRSOs) and Grass-roots Organisations (GROs) (Carroll 1992: 9–15; Fisher 1993: 5–18).

Despite their rapid proliferation since the mid-1980s, NGOs have a long history, stretching back in many parts of the world to civic organisations, charities and foundations of the late nineteenth century. In one early study, Lador-Lederer notes that NGOs date to the middle of the nineteenth century and to a Europe strained by the industrial revolution and its by-products: nationalism, middle-class ascendency and the emergence of a stratified ‘civil society’. Conservative forces and great power rivalry, Lador-Lederer argues, defeated the bourgeois rebellions of 1848, but by then the European state had developed ‘from absolutism to a system of countervailing powers’, and the ‘frustrated revolutions . . . resulted in an effervescence of contacts between the peoples which had taken part in them’ (Lador-Lederer 1963:17 and 61).

Alexis de Tocqueville’s Democracy in America, Volume 1 of which was published in French in 1835, notes that Americans developed the right of association first imported from England and that a vast array of political associations developed as a result of individual initiative unfettered by the state (de Tocqueville 1947: 109–15). The oldest ‘modern’ NGO, the world
alliance of Young Mens Christian Associations (YMCA) was established in 1855 while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was established in 1863. Japan’s first ‘modern’ foundation or NGO, the Society of Gratitude, was established in 1829, well before the first European or North American philanthropic organisations (Salamon 1994: 121). With the successive international crises of 1870, 1916–18 and 1939–45, the proliferation of such organisations quickened (Lador-Lederer 1963: 61). One study, for instance, of 546 international NGOs formed between 1846 and 1931 found that 9 were established between 1846 and 1865; 29 from 1866 to 1885; 96 from 1886 to 1905; 289 from 1906 to 1925 and 123 in the six years to 1931 (White 1951: 279 n5).

Organisations associated with the international labour movement helped to establish the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1928, but were known as ‘Private International Organisations’ rather than NGOs (cf. White 1933). Officially, the term ‘NGO’ first appeared in the United Nations Charter of 1945. Organisations established independently of government were involved unofficially as consultants to some of the country delegations (especially the United States) at the San Francisco drafting convention, and the role of NGOs in the emerging United Nations system was explicitly recognised in Article 71 of the Charter (Goodrich and Hambro 1946: 224). By 1951, 87 international NGOs had secured consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (White 1951: vii). As humanitarian relief poured into Europe after World War II, and gradually to the countries of the developing world from the early 1950s, and as national NGOs proliferated in the developing world, the term ‘NGO’ achieved wide currency within the United Nations. By the 1960s, it was firmly established. Studies from the 1950s and 1960s were produced mainly by specialists in international law and as such concentrated on international NGOs (cf. White 1951; Lador-Lederer 1963). Challenging the traditional view that international society was solely a society of states, and concerned with the role of NGOs as a countervailing force, they defined NGOs largely by distinguishing them from states. Lador-Lederer, for instance, describes them as non-governmental, non-profit-making, non-sovereign and non-ecclesiastical (Lador-Lederer 1963: 60), a broad definition which embraced trade unions, professional associations and youth groups etc. He cites a study of 1,937 NGOs published in 1954 which found NGOs mainly involved in: welfare (relief, education, youth and gender) (10.9 per cent), medicine and health (9.7 per cent), economics and finance (8.8 per cent), commerce and industry (8 percent), pure sciences (6.8 per cent), agriculture (5.52 per cent), and labour (5.5 per cent) (Ibid.: 62).
In the 1980s, as development assistance flows to NGOs in the developing world began to expand exponentially, the term ‘NGO’ acquired a new meaning. As Landim notes, NGOs began consciously to think of their role in promoting development, and in society at large during the 1980s (Landim 1987: 30), in contrast to earlier decades when an insufficient appreciation of the role of NGO action was largely due to NGOs themselves. Drawing on the work of Padron, Landim defined NGOs as ‘in general, private, non-profit organisations that are publicly registered (ie. have a legal status) whose principal function is to implement development projects favouring the popular sectors and which receive financial support’ (Ibid.; Padron 1986). As this definition implies, the new meaning referred to development NGOs, and specifically, to those working to address the structural causes of poverty. Today, however, many organisations in the developing world that describe themselves as NGOs are not engaged in socio-economic development, although they do describe their activities in terms of a development discourse, for example human rights organisations. Equally, many NGOs fail to address the structural causes of poverty, preferring to concentrate on more narrowly-defined objectives such as relief and rehabilitation.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

The post-1980s NGO literature focuses on the socio-economic roles of NGOs in the developing world in providing relief and rehabilitation to the victims of natural catastrophes or civil wars; in reducing poverty, especially in rural areas; and in helping governments and donors to target social service provision to those in greatest need. Yet, increasingly, attention is being paid to the more ‘political’ aspects of NGO action in organising and mobilising traditionally marginalised groups; in enabling local communities to participate in decision-making processes; and especially in strengthening civil society, amid the withering of the authoritarian state. Bratton, for example, has suggested that it is in the political sphere rather than the economic, that the contribution of NGOs to development should mainly be seen (Bratton 1989: 569). Supporting him, a 1993 UNDP study argues that NGOs complement state attempts to eradicate poverty and provide social services, but that advocacy is, and will continue to be, their greatest strength (UNDP 1993a: 98). The World Bank also points to the political potential of NGOs. The Bank notes that ‘non-
governmental organisations have become an important force in the development process, [mitigating] the costs of developing countries’ institutional weaknesses which often include administrative shortcomings, and an inability to carry out essential development tasks’ (World Bank 1991: 135–6). Other authors similarly describe NGOs playing a wide range of political roles. Clark (1991) notes that in India and Bangladesh, NGOs are forcing through reform-oriented legislation in areas such as minimum wages, feudalism and bonded labour; Viswanath (1991) suggests that NGOs have become an effective institutional vehicle for undermining the economic impoverishment of women, especially in rural areas, and are potentially a significant means of undermining their political disempowerment; Bebbington and Thiele (1993) note that in Chile during the 1970s, NGOs filled an institutional vacuum when political parties were banned and university funding was cut back. For many professionals, NGOs offered the only viable hope of pursuing political goals and securing employment.

Beyond these general assertions however, what is ‘politics’ and what do we mean when we assert that NGOs are, or are not, ‘political’? Politics has two distinct functions. At one level, it is the process by which decisions are made about the allocation of resources, a process characterised by the constant struggle of antagonistic groups to appropriate and reappropriate resources. At the second level, politics is the process by which social meaning and identity is defined through ideology, cultural relations, and symbolic rituals. It is at this second level that groups cohere sufficiently, as classes, genders, races, ethnic groups or other social constructs, to participate in struggles for resources. Thus, to be ‘political’, NGOs must first participate in processes designed to create social meaning and attempt to cohere as a group or groups around that social meaning, and second, on the basis of that shared social meaning, participate in the distribution of resources and in the struggle to influence that distribution. We can therefore distinguish between two levels of political engagement in which we might find NGOs. First, active attempts to influence the distribution of resources within the context of a given social meaning (ideology), and second, active attempts to influence social meaning and to help social groups to cohere. NGOs involved in relief and rehabilitation serve as an example of the first level of political engagement, while NGOs that attempt to influence Landim’s ‘development discourse’, or other discourses centred, for example, on gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation, serve as examples of the second. Thus, even the distribution of resources on ostensibly neutral or apolitical grounds (for instance by national affiliates of the Red
Cross/Red Crescent movement) is inherently political since it cannot be divorced from particular social meanings. Equally, however, the focus of a study of NGOs and politics should be on those NGOs which operate at both levels.

Overall, despite the increasing emphasis on the political aspects of NGO action in the NGO literature, many questions remain substantially unanswered. Why is the political prominence of NGOs increasing? Are NGOs significant or merely marginal political actors in developing countries? How and why do NGOs engage in politics? Is there a correlation between NGO proliferation and political change? In particular, two interesting and important questions, given contemporary concerns both in the NGO literature and in mainstream political science literature, remain largely untested. First, do NGOs contribute to the strengthening of civil society? Second, do NGOs contribute to democratization? This book attempts to answer these questions with respect to South-East Asia in general and the Philippines in particular.

In general terms, five key factors have fuelled the proliferation of NGOs throughout the developing world. First, non-governmental development agencies in the industrialised world channel significant volumes of aid through non-governmental partners in the developing world, providing an important financial stimulus. In 1990, Northern NGOs provided US$7.2 billion, equivalent to 13 per cent of net disbursements of official aid, or 2.5 per cent of total resource flows, to Southern NGOs and POs (UNDP 1993a: 3). Second, multilateral and bilateral development agencies have followed suit. In a neoliberal climate of disenchantment with the state and under pressure from member states, multilateral donors and their bilateral partners channelled increasing amounts of funding from the early 1980s through Southern NGOs. Since 1981, for instance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been required by Congress to channel a minimum of 12 per cent of expenditure, raised to 13.5 per cent from 1986, through NGOs (OECD 1988: 84). Third, governments in many developing countries that were previously antipathetic to NGOs were forced by economic recession in the 1980s to cede greater recognition and involve them in socio-economic programmes. In Chile, for instance, growth in poverty, from 15 per cent of families in 1970 to 30 per cent in 1982, promoted the proliferation of NGOs concerned with health and social welfare (Vergara 1989: 3–5). In Kenya, up to 35 per cent of health services were provided by NGOs in the late 1980s (Bratton 1989: 571). Fourth, in many developing countries, large-scale social movements that once were ideologically and organisationally cohesive, fragmented amid
Politics of NGOs in South-East Asia

a shift in the ‘themes’ of social mobilization (cf. Lehmann 1990: 148–160). The systematic repression of class-based left-wing social movements in Asia, Latin America and parts of Africa in the 1970s and 1980s and the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, compounded by the social differentiation triggered by economic growth, restructured the basis of the organisation and mobilisation of disenfranchised sections of the population. Since the late 1980s, Lehmann argues, ‘In the place of large formal organisations, we find a myriad of small-scale dispersed movements engaged in an enormous variety of conflicts’ (Ibid.: 157). In turn, NGOs acquired important roles in initiating and sustaining these myriad protest movements. Fifth, economic growth throughout the developing world has promoted a complex process of social differentiation. Institutions that traditionally facilitated participation such as political parties and trade unions have failed to respond by effectively articulating the new concerns of disparate constituencies. As a result a variety of social forces have contributed to the establishment or expansion of NGOs (lawyers, doctors, business executives, teachers, religious leaders, students, left-wing political activists, ex-civil servants etc.). In turn these NGOs address a far wider variety of issues than can be accommodated by class-based institutions.

The result of these factors has been a dramatic increase in the number of NGOs throughout the developing world, in many cases exceeding rates of economic growth and a concomitant increase in their prominence in national politics. In Brazil, the number of registered non-profit entities rose by 150 per cent between 1978 and 1991, from 76,000 to 190,000 (Salamon and Anheier 1995: 105). In Kenya, the number grew by 184 per cent between 1978 and 1987 (Fowler 1991: 54). In Ethiopia, the number of registered NGOs increased by 12.5 per cent in one year alone, from 240 in late 1994 to 270 in late 1995 (Clarke and Campbell 1996). As a result of this associational revolution, NGOs have become significant economic and political actors. In Bangladesh, NGOs constitute a virtual parallel state, their programmes reaching 10 per cent to 20 per cent of the population (roughly 13 million to 26 million people) in the early 1990s (UNDP 1993: 92). In India, NGO revenue from abroad at Rs9 billion (US$520 million), was equivalent to approximately 25 per cent of official development assistance flows in the early 1990s. When contributions from government to NGOs were taken into account, the annual income of Indian NGOs, Rs10 billion, was equivalent to 10 per cent of the government’s anti-poverty expenditure (Farrington and Lewis 1993: 93). In Brazil, NGOs and POs played an important role in the 1990 presidential elections, supporting the
Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, Workers’ Party) beyond its base in Brazil’s industrial heartland and helping its candidate Luis Inacio Lula da Silva win 31 million votes (Sader and Silverstein 1991).10

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

A central premise of the NGO literature is that NGO proliferation strengthens civil society by advocating and supporting the reform of the state, by organising and mobilising disempowered social strata, and by supplementing the traditional institutions of democracy such as political parties, trade unions and the media (e.g. Clark 1991; Farrington and Bebbington 1993; Serrano 1994; Smillie 1995; Clayton 1996). A minority view, however, based on African examples, suggests that NGOs can weaken civil society by pressing fundamentalist, ethnic, ideological or parochial claims or by enforcing personality-based politics (cf. Chazan 1994; Ndegwa 1996). Among those who suggest that NGOs strengthen civil society, a number of ideological positions are evident. Liberals see NGOs as a ‘third sector’, remedying the institutional weaknesses of both the state and private sector in promoting socio-economic development (cf. Korten 1990; Hulme 1994).11 Neo-liberals, meanwhile, see NGOs as part of the private sector, of socio-economic significance mainly, delivering services to the poor cheaply, equitably and efficiently (cf. Uphoff 1993, 1995). To intellectuals and activists on the left, however, NGOs carry hopes of a ‘new politics’ that eschews the capture of state power and the centralising tendencies of the Marxist-Leninist movements of which many NGOs were born, but which retains the commitment to a structural transformation of society (cf. Sethi 1993a, 1993b).

The almost uniform conception of ‘civil society’ that emerges from these arguments is one that exists separately from and independently of the state. Within political and sociological theory, the state is normally defined in terms of two key characteristics. First, it is an institution that regulates society, primarily through its control of a coercive apparatus. Thus, as defined by Weber (1984: 33), ‘the state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory’. Second, however, the state has a class character that derives from the predominant mode of production and the need to redistribute appropriated surpluses. In capitalist societies, the state is ‘an ensemble of social relations that establishes the bourgeoisie as the dominant class’ (O’Donnell 1988: 2) while in socialist societies the dominant class is largely political in character.
Critically, however, the state is not an independent realm but is closely related to the society from which it emerges. Karl Marx wrote that:

The first act in which the [capitalist] state comes forward as the representative of society as a whole – the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society – is at the same time its last independent act as a state.\(^{12}\)

Thus, the state and society are mutually interconnected, with society constraining the capacity of the state.

In contrast to the state, ‘civil society’ is usually viewed as an intermediary sphere, the sum of all institutions that exist between the family, the most basic unit of social organisation, and the state, the most advanced. Normatively, therefore, civil society influences, controls and monitors political society, the realm of the state, on behalf of uninstitutionalised society, the class expression of that society and the voting (or unvoting) public. Within this view, NGOs are critical institutions, vital civil society actors that defend or expand the democratic character of the state in terms of its accountability to society. This conception of civil society however is in many respects significantly different from that of major political and social theorists.

The modern concept of civil society is largely attributable to the work of G.W.F. Hegel and his *Philosophy of Right* published in 1821. To Hegel, civil society embodied the intermediate sphere between family and state. Significantly, however, the state contained civil society, transcended it and was morally superior to it. Equating the state with *de facto* power, Hegel argued that political parties and associations were inextricably bound to the state. To Hegel, therefore, civil society is the sphere of economic relations embodied in bourgeois society and the bourgeois state.

To Karl Marx, civil society was the ‘form of relations determined by the existing productive forces at all previous historical stages’ (Quoted in Bobbio 1988: 82). Within this schema, ‘Civil society embraces all the material relations of individuals within a definite stage of the development of productive forces. It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage’ (*Ibid.*). Crystallised in feudalism and the transition to capitalism, civil society is therefore the product of economic relations, and as such, transcends the state; ‘The anatomy of civil society’, Marx famously wrote, ‘is to be sought in political economy’ (*Ibid.*: 78).

In the work of Antonio Gramsci, civil society exists in a super-structural rather than a structural sphere. In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci wrote:
What we can do for the moment is fix two major superstructural ‘levels’: the one that can be called ‘civil society’, that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called ‘private’ and that of ‘political society’ or ‘the State’. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of ‘hegemony’ which the dominant group exercises throughout society, and on the other hand to that of ‘direct domination’ or rule exercised through the State and the juridical government.

(\textit{ibid.}: 83)

Civil society to Gramsci, as to Marx, is the ‘hegemonic apparatus of the ruling group’ but unlike the Marxian concept it embraces not only economic relations, but the whole of intellectual and spiritual life embodied in ideological and cultural relations (\textit{Ibid.}). Civil society is thus ‘the political and cultural hegemony which a social group exercises over the whole of society’ (\textit{ibid}: 83–4). As hegemonic power increased and civil society expanded, Gramsci predicted, political society (the state) would be ‘reabsorbed’ into civil society and wither away.

Beyond the generalised propositions from the NGO literature that NGOs strengthen or potentially weaken civil society, therefore, political science theory suggests a number of more specific possible impacts.\textsuperscript{13} First, using the work of Alexis de Tocqueville, it can be argued that NGOs strengthen civil society by improving interest articulation and representation. In 1835, de Tocqueville pointed to the relationship between political associations organised independently of the state and democratic governance as a key characteristic of American democracy. ‘There are no countries in which associations are more needed to prevent the despotism of a faction or the arbitrary power of a prince’, he wrote, ‘than those which are democratically constituted’ (de Tocqueville 1947: 111). De Tocqueville was especially impressed by America’s decentralised administration and the active role played by civic organisations at the local level. This suggests that a dense network of autonomous locally-based organisations is a necessary prerequisite for a decentralized and participatory system of government.

Second, drawing on the work of Antonio Gramsci, it can be argued that NGO proliferation simply institutionalises existing patterns of political contestation, between groups in civil society and the state and within civil society itself, adding an additional dimension to struggles which remain fundamentally class-based. Imprisoned between 1929 and 1935, Antonio Gramsci revived Hegel’s view of political parties and associations as ‘the “private” woof of the state’ (Hoare and Nowell-Smith 1971: 259). Civic
organisations, Gramsci wrote, were a central component in civil society, but they also helped to maintain the social hegemony of a dominant class (Ibid.: 264–5). Gramsci was certainly aware of the spread of civic organisations in North America and Europe but had yet to grapple with its implications.14 His critique of pragmatism extended to criticism of voluntary organisations, but overall his argument implied that civic organisations did little to alter class structure. Referring to the Rotary Clubs newly active in Italy, he writes ‘we are not dealing with a new type of civilization [here]. This is shown by the fact that nothing has changed in the character of and the relationships between fundamental groups’ (Ibid.: 318). According to Gramsci:

The massive structures of the modern democracies, both as State organisations and as complexes of associations in civil society, constitute for the art of politics as it were the ‘trenches’ and the permanent fortifications of the front in the war of position: they render merely ‘partial’ the element of movement which before used to be ‘the whole’ of the war, etc.

(Ibid.: 243)

The implication here is that NGOs collectively become an arena within which battles from society at large are internalised and multiplied, Gramscian ‘trenches’ or ‘permanent fortifications’ in a ‘war of position’ waged between dominant and subordinate classes. To the extent that civil society expands as the state makes autonomous social forces increasingly subject to roles that are primarily of its design, NGO proliferation strengthens the state and the social forces that primarily benefit from its power.

Third and finally, drawing on the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, it can be argued that a vibrant community of locally-based and politically activist NGOs fragments interest articulation into a disparate range of issue-based demands that can be easily co-opted by the state on a selective basis. Writing in 1762, Rousseau argued that formal associations subverted the general will through political intrigues and the promotion of personal interest, reducing it to ‘as many modifications of the public will’ (Rousseau 1973: 133). Olson (1971) famously revived this concern, arguing that interest groups drawing members from a particular segment of society often use political influence to extract ‘rents’ from the state in the form of legislative concessions or government programmes directed at that exclusive sectional interest. ‘It is therefore essential’, Rousseau argued, ‘... that there should be no partial society in the state and that each citizen should express only his own opinion’ (Rousseau 1973: 204). But where formal associations had to be permitted, Rousseau
suggested, ‘it is best to have as many as possible and to prevent them from being unequal’ (Ibid.). Rousseau was concerned above all to protect the ‘general will’ expressed through universal suffrage and individual voting. But phenomena such as low voter turn-outs in modern democracies or systematic vote buying in parts of the developing world suggest that the ‘general will’ and general acquiescence to the will of the state are invariably two sides of the same coin. In this sense, the proliferation of NGOs is likely to strengthen the state, rather than civil society, where it coincides with the declining power of mass and counter-hegemonic organisations such as trade unions or peasant associations and the declining appeal of coherent class-based political appeals.

Not all NGOs, however, are like the Rotary Clubs observed in interwar Italy by Antonio Gramsci and the impact of NGOs on civil society depends significantly on their own political character. In this respect, and in one of the more valuable contributions to the existing NGO literature, Korten (1990) distinguishes between four ‘generations’ of NGOs, the first committed to relief and welfare activities, the second to small scale local development projects, the third to community organisation, mobilisation, and coalition-building and the fourth to institutional and structural reform, both nationally and internationally (See figure 1.1). Korten’s typology, echoed in Elliot’s (1987) charity-development-empowerment typology of Northern NGO orientations, captures the main strategic, and in part, ideological, orientations of

(1) First generation strategies: ‘Relief and welfare’. Direct delivery of services to a beneficiary group or population such as food, health care and shelter.
(2) Second generation strategies: ‘Small-scale, Self-Reliant Local Development’. Breaking the dependency resulting from charity or humanitarian assistance. Empowerment of local communities through preventative health care measures, the introduction of improved agricultural practice, the formation of community councils, digging wells, building feeder roads etc’.
(3) Third generation strategies: ‘Sustainable Systems Development’. Concerted efforts to replicate and multiply NGO successes at the micro-level. Creation of new and sizeable institutions, increased collaboration with governmental agencies and a change in NGO role from service provider to catalyst, especially in mobilising local communities through autonomous Peoples Organisations (POs).
(4) Fourth generation strategies: Still evolving and relatively undefined but essentially the promotion of institutional and structural reform
through increasingly complex NGO/PO coalitions, both nationally and internationally.

Figure 1.1 Four ‘generations’ of NGO strategy
(Source: Korten 1990: 115–27)

contemporary NGOs and draws attention specifically to ‘second’ and ‘third generation’ NGOs, the fastest growing categories and the focus of the contemporary NGO literature. Relief and welfare NGOs, the largest group in the developing world, and similar in many respects to service-oriented voluntary organisations in welfare states, engage in charitable activities and are ostensibly non-political (i.e. non-partisan, for example, the international Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and national affiliates). Development NGOs aim to weaken the dependency engendered by ‘first generation’ NGO strategies and use activities such as primary health care programmes and agricultural co-operatives to organise peasants at the local level, helping them to challenge local élites. Such NGOs often become involved in overt political campaigning and in protest actions. ‘Third generation’ NGOs, dating back to the 1970s, and inspired principally by Latin American liberation theology and related currents, focus on ‘conscientisation’ (i.e., raising the critical consciousness of members) and mobilisation, leading to direct intervention in political conflicts. Acting as catalysts, rather than service providers, they work with networks of People’s Organisations to replicate and multiply the local successes of ‘second generation’ strategies, and organise NGO-PO coalitions that underpin issue-based social movements. The three ‘generations’ are by no means exclusive and in practice, prominent NGOs in the developing world pursue a combination of different generational strategies.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND DEMOCRACY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Perhaps the most important question raised by the proliferation of NGOs concerns their contribution to political change, and to democratisation. Writers offer contending positions. Hirschman, for instance, argues that it is impossible to prove a connection between the withering of the authoritarian state in Latin America and the rise of NGOs and grassroots social movements (Hirschman 1987: 98). Similarly, in one of the first detailed studies of NGO politics in a developing country, Fowler (1993) argues that Kenya’s NGO community is unable to hasten fundamental political change because of its fragmentation,
NGOs in the developing world

Fowler is undoubtedly correct in highlighting problems faced by African NGOs, but evidence from other regions suggests that NGOs do make significant contributions to political change. As a general rule, NGOs can potentially contribute to democratisation where the state allows rights of association, where the state itself needs the support of actors in civil society to increase its capacity (in absolute terms or relative to other social forces), and where the weaknesses of other institutions such as political parties or trade unions creates a vacuum that enables NGOs to articulate issues and mobilise around them. Evidence from different parts of the world suggests that NGOs do contribute to democratisation where these conditions are met. In India, for instance, the state has long viewed NGOs as potential partners in developing the country’s economic and political structure, especially in rural areas. India’s struggle for independence resulted in a commitment from 1947 to a welfare and socialist state with a mixed economy. In 1952, the government involved NGOs in health and educational service provision in the first Five-Year Plan (Brosch 1990: 15). The same year, it launched the Community Development Programme to institutionalise village-level political participation, and later launched a three tier system of rural co-operatives (Panchayati Raj). As Migdal notes, ‘[Jawaharlal] Nehru [India’s first post-independence Prime Minister] and his planners hoped co-operative farming along with peasant-dominated panchayat institutions would link peasants directly to the state without the influence of intermediaries on the disposition of goods and services’ (Migdal 1988: 251).

Beyond the state, parallel attempts to encourage participation were also initiated. In 1952, Jawaharal Nehru founded the Bharat Sevak Samaj (Society of the Servants of India) to mobilise communities and promote local development. Established as a non-governmental initiative, the movement became dependent on state funding and evolved into a quasi-governmental structure that eventually floundered in the late 1960s. In another approach, Mahatma Gandhi encouraged supporters to donate land title deeds to the village assembly, the Grama Sabha to encourage local participatory democracy (Fernandez 1987).

Governmental and non-governmental schemes, however, both failed. With the latter, the small relative scale eroded any hope of wide-ranging impact. With the former, the lack of a commitment or capacity to challenge the position of the dominant land-owning castes, a powerful force in the Indian National Congress, as well as the Congress’s sense of its own superiority over other forms of political association, eroded any sense of substance in the

competitiveness, and unrepresentative structure. In general, Fowler argues, NGOs are more likely to maintain the status quo than to change it.
government’s strategy, reducing it to the level of rhetoric. Yet the initiatives did contribute to a climate which enabled later governments to involve NGOs in rural development programmes.

By the late 1980s, one of the most significant examples of co-operation between state and NGOs in the developing world was set out in the Indian government’s seventh Five-Year Plan (1985–1990), in which the government planned to channel Rs2 billion (US$150 million) through NGOs (ADB 1989a: 57; Echeverri-Gent 1993: 187). NGOs were given three main roles in promoting rural development: acting as intermediaries between governmental development programmes and the people; mobilising local resources; and organising the poor to ensure the accountability of village-level officials (Brosch 1990: 16). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) notes that the government had clear strategic objectives in assigning these roles:

The government, recognising on the one hand the positive reputation of NGOs and on the other, the problem of local vested interests and the limitations of its own bureaucracy, has called upon NGOs to help create a ‘countervailing force’ amongst the poor via the organisation of beneficiary groups.

(ADB 1989b: 30)

The strategic nature of the objective is readily apparent in Migdal’s account of the dilemma facing successive post-independence governments:

Even as the Congress party sought to develop as a parallel state in the colonial period, it lacked direct access to the mass of India’s population, the peasants. After independence, the party relied heavily on strongmen of one sort or another to deliver the vote. Of particular importance have been the rich peasants who have not only asserted their social control locally but also as a group have become effective lobbies at the federal level and key players in party politics. The nexus of relationship among the state, party and strongmen, the Triangle of Accommodation, ultimately defined the character of India’s state agencies’ activities at the local and regional level. Even when Indira Gandhi sought in the 1970s to free herself of her dependence on strongmen, particularly the rich peasants, and to appeal directly to the electorate, the accommodation proved impossible to overcome without suffering unacceptable costs in terms of political stability.

(Migdal 1988: 250)

By the early 1990s, NGOs had become significant allies of the government in
eroding ‘Triangles of Accommodation’, with an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 NGOs actively engaged in rural development (Farrington and Lewis 1993: 92). Echeverri-Gent (1993: 186) notes that ‘Without a prior distribution of the bases of political power, the state is unlikely to provide poverty alleviation programs with sufficient resources to improve their plight relative to other groups’, but there is tentative evidence that such a redistribution is being partially facilitated by NGO action. In Andhra Pradesh, Action for Welfare and Awakening (AWARE) has had a profound impact on local politics. With tens of thousands of members, it has influenced state legislation in key areas including land reform (Clark 1991:113). One of India’s largest NGOs, with a staff of approximately 1,500 complemented by a volunteer force of 25,000 including professionals, AWARE had formed almost 2,000 village organisations by the late 1980s, bringing 23,320 acres of land under cultivation (ADB 1989a: 84). By 1986, three quarters of a million people had benefitted from its social action program (Ibid.).

Similarly, in Chile, NGOs played a significant role in the restoration of democracy in 1990 and in the consolidation of the Aylwin regime. First, as Hojman notes, ‘NGOs played a central role in guaranteeing [the] successful transition [to democracy in 1990]… by supporting … the democratic opposition to the military regime and putting forward … policy proposals which would eventually constitute a fundamental component of the incoming democratic government programme’ (Hojman 1993c: 7). Second, many Chilean development NGOs were established in the 1970s by professionals dismissed from the state sector and development NGOs represented a reservoir of skills on which the government could draw (Hojman 1990: 3). As a result, the Aylwin administration brought in leaders and staff from NGOs and associated think tanks to fill ministerial and administrative positions to purge the power of the Pinochet apparatchiks and give momentum to reform in agriculture and other sectors. Third, because of budget constraints, the government subcontracted partial responsibility for agricultural development and support services to NGOs (Hojman 1993b: 7). A redistributive land reform programme was implemented in Chile in the 1960s and beneficiaries to this day rely on support services. In response, the governmental Institute of Agrarian Development (INDAP) planned to use NGOs to quadruple from 25,000 to 100,000 by the end of 1994 the number of peasant farmers receiving technical and other assistance (Kay 1993: 28). Fourth, the government saw NGOs as important allies in its efforts to decentralise and reduce the state apparatus. NGOs absorbed important service delivery functions when the Pinochet regime implemented neo-liberal economic reforms which cut government expenditure on social services. As a result, urban and rural NGOs were well placed to act as sub-
In addition, local elections were held in 1992 and intermediary NGOs supported Popular Economic Organisations (PEOs, Organizaciones Economicas Populares) and Self-help Organisations (SHOs, Organizaciones de Auto-Ayuda) to participate in local government structures.

An explanation for the relatively advanced nature of NGO–state collaboration in Chile is offered by Hojman:

A relatively higher degree of urbanisation, a stronger political culture and a larger and more influential middle-class were all both cause and consequence of the fact that before 1973, democracy survived for longer and civil society was more developed [than any other country in Latin America]. This is a virtuous circle. A stronger civil society and middle sectors before 1973 meant that after the 1973 military coup the development of NGOs was more substantial which itself meant that after the democratic transition in 1990 civil society emerged more vigorously than elsewhere in Latin America.

(Hojman 1993c: 21)

Major obstacles however undermine this strategic alliance. Given the fractious nature of Chilean political culture, the Chilean NGO sector is highly fragmented and politicised; government overtures to one NGO alienates others and ensures a relatively small number to whom the government can turn for support. Chilean NGOs also have a mixed record for effective service delivery. Berdegue, for instance, notes that development NGOs are highly concentrated (especially in regions VIII and IX) and that most peasant families participating in NGO programmes have not achieved production and living standards significantly different from their non-participant neighbours (Berdegue 1993: 165–6). NGOs also have a limited reach, undermining the extent to which the state can view them as strategic partners with the ability to bring large groups within a social coalition. One estimate from the mid-1980s, for instance, suggests that PEOs reach only 120,000 people in the capital Santiago, 2 per cent of the population of 5 million (Downs et al., 1989: 201).18

In India, tensions between NGOs and the state illustrate important constraints faced by NGOs in broadly democratic regimes. In 1986, the Indian government established the Council for Rural Technology (CART) to strengthen the technological capacity of rural development initiatives. In September 1986, as part of the seventh Five-Year Plan’s thrust of involving NGOs more closely in rural development projects, the government merged People’s Action for Development India (PADI), a governmental organisation which funded rural development NGO programmes, and CART to form the
Council for the Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART). In theory CAPART had the twin aims of involving NGOs more closely in rural development and using them to promote technological innovation, but in practice it became a mechanism to coordinate government funding to rural development NGOs (Farrington and Lewis 1993: 95). The bulk of rural development NGOs remained wary of CAPART however. While formally asserting its independence from government, CAPART was administered as a functional wing of the Ministry of Rural Development, provoking distrust (Fernandez 1987: 44). CAPART’s role in channelling funding also provoked concern about its potential to control the rural development NGO sector, while NGOs also resented the government view of NGOs as sub-contractors rather than partners.

An even greater source of tension between NGOs and the Indian government was the establishment in 1986 of the Council of Voluntary Agencies. Included in the Council’s mandate was the preparation of a ‘Code of Conduct’, which, when drafted, called for NGOs to be made financially accountable, and to be barred from promoting commercial or political interests (precluding NGOs and their representatives from joining political parties or holding elective office at local or national level). By the end of 1986 however, over 50 meetings had been held throughout India and as a result of the opposition, the government was unable to implement the code. Despite the backdown, many Indian NGOs remained worried by what Tandon (1989: 27–8) described as ‘the growing role of the state and state-ism in India’ over the previous 30 to 40 years, and a corresponding ‘shrinking role for voluntarism and voluntary action’. In 1988, NGOs established their own co-ordinating body independently of the government, the Voluntary Action Network India (VANI), which took some sting out of state–NGO conflict. In a country where interest groups have traditionally found it difficult to remain autonomous from political parties as well as the state, VANI proved an important landmark in consolidating the institutional integrity of India’s voluntary sector, yet the highly segmented nature of Indian society and politics will remain a significant obstacle to unity.

The case of India as outlined above illustrates the difficulties in assessing the role of NGOs in strengthening civil society and in democratising the state. Premises drawn from the work of de Tocqueville, Gramsci and Rousseau above are all supported by the Indian experience. So, how can the role of NGOs in broadly democratic regimes throughout the developing world be best conceptualised? Realistically, NGO–state relationships need to be placed in the context of the overall institutional arrangement prevalent in individual countries. Political scientists, for instance, have long used the concepts of
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corporatism and neo-corporatism to analyse institutional arrangements throughout the twentieth century that involved government (often in association with the military), the business sector and trade unions in tri-partite decision making structures. Today, political scientists face a challenge in conceptualising the more diffuse institutional arrangements heralded by the retreat of the state and the concomitant strengthening of civil society. Montgomery (1988) uses the concept of ‘bureaucratic populism’ to describe growing state overtures to NGOs in different parts of the developing world but, historically, populism has acted as the ideological pillar of corporatist or neo-corporatist regimes. As such, it offers an inaccurate picture of regime structure in developing countries today. Is there a more accurate alternative? Salamon (1994) offers a clue, for the ‘associational revolution’ heralded by the proliferation of NGOs, as he points out, is evident in the developed as much as the developing world. In turn, political scientists in Europe and North America have grappled with this proliferation and the reform of the state from which it derives. One product of this analysis has been the reinvigoration of ‘associative democracy’, a concept dating to the nineteenth century and the work of English political theorists. Born of diffuse concerns, associative democracy never cohered as an ideology or programme of government before it was eclipsed by the rise of the welfare state after World War II.

‘ASSOCIATIVE DEMOCRACY’ IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

In its nineteenth century guise, associative democracy had two key features as a social doctrine. ‘The first’, Hirst writes, ‘was the advocacy of a decentralized economy based on the non-capitalistic principles of co-operation and mutuality. The second was criticism of the centralized and sovereign state, with radical federalist and political pluralist ideas advanced as a substitute’ (Hirst 1994: 15). Distinct sources included advocates of industrial and social co-operation such as Robert Owen and George Jacob and political pluralists such as F.W. Maitland and John Neville Figgis (Ibid.). In the early 1990s, however, the concept has been renewed by ‘a changed conjuncture’. Hirst writes that:

Politics is no longer dominated by one great question. It looks less and less like a social war over the forms of property that are to prevail. It is centred less and less on a single structure of authority; supra-national, national, regional and non-state forms of governance are all possible contenders to influence policy. The issues and the forums of political
NGOs in the developing world

competition are changing. This has resulted in the rise of new political forces that cannot be accommodated on the old spectrum of left to right. *(Ibid.: 3)*

The decline (albeit far from terminal) of class-based political contestation and its replacement by more diffuse issue-based debates in multiple arenas, local, national and supra-national, suggests that political affairs are increasingly best managed by voluntary and democratically self-governing associations. ‘The principal aim of an associative supplement to representative democracy’, Hirst argues, ‘is to reduce both the scale and the scope of the affairs of society that are diminished by state agencies overseen by representative institutions’ *(Ibid.: 21).*

In another important contribution to the revitalisation of the concept, Cohen and Rogers suggest four key roles that independent associations such as NGOs play within the associative democracy scheme. First, they provide otherwise inaccessible information to policy makers on member or beneficiary preferences and the impact of proposed or existing laws. Second, they equalise representation by enabling individuals with low per capita resources to pool their efforts through organisations, thus (partially) correcting the imbalance in power that stems from the unequal distribution of wealth. Third, they promote citizen education, undermining civic inertia among those most marginalised from the political system. Fourth, they provide a system of alternative governance, remedying deficiencies in the market and public hierarchies from which large sections of the population are estranged (Cohen and Rogers 1995: 42–4). Secondary associations, Cohen and Rogers argue, have a distinctive capacity to gather local information, monitor behaviour and promote co-operation among private actors *(Ibid.: 45).*

Associative democracy tackles different problems. Hirst is concerned primarily with the role of socialism and large mass organisations such as trade unions in stifling the emergence of local, autonomous and accountable associations; ‘Socialists long ago abandoned the task of building security and welfare through mutual institutions in civil society’ (Hirst 1994: 10). The answer, he suggests, is, first, to ‘rebuild associations from below by political campaigning and voluntary action in civil society’, and second, ‘to work at the regional level and to build on and attempt to generalise the efforts of state and city governments to promote the economic revitalisation and to create agencies to carry out these tasks’ *(Ibid.: 111).* Cohen and Rogers however are concerned principally with the atomisation and fragmentation of society resulting from the increasing social differentiation associated with contemporary neo-liberal orthodoxy, with individuals who increasingly feel
little in common with neighbours and colleagues and who feel more isolated from the formal structures of social engagement and political participation. The answer, they suggest, is to use the traditional levers of public policy (e.g. taxation) to promote encompassing, less factionalizing secondary associations.

Associative democracy, Hirst argues, has always been an explicitly normative political theory (Hirst 1994: 44). In reality, however, non-profit organisations already play a significant economic and political role in the United States and the United Kingdom and many of the ideas advocated are already being implemented. In the UK for instance, where the NPO sector dates to the Charitable Uses Act of 1601, NPOs (including trade unions) account for 4 per cent of total employment and 4.8 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), making it arguably the largest NPO sector in the world in relative terms (Salamon and Anheier 1995: 97). In the US, NPOs account for 6.9 per cent of employment and 6.3 per cent of GDP, but the figures include private non-profit hospitals which account for over half the NPO sector’s contribution to GDP (Ibid.: 100). Cohen and Rogers (1995) advocate state support to NPOs channelled through individual citizens, using tax rebate ‘vouchers’ that tax payers donate to NPOs of their choice. In Britain, a similar system has existed for years, allowing tax payers to supplement their donations to NPOs with a contribution from the state. In political terms, NPOs have been equally important. Since the 1960s, for instance, NPOs in the UK and US have acted as launch pads for important social movements mobilised around disparate concerns and opposed to the state on issues such as nuclear weapons proliferation, racism, homophobia, environmental destruction and foreign aid. Today, NPOs in both countries, promote legislative reform and hold governments accountable by lobbying political parties and by using the media to publicise targeted campaigns. As such, the normative character of associative democracy theory detracts attention from the real power that NPOs have attained in the politics of Western democracies.

The US and the UK however fall short of associative democracy ideals. In the UK, a highly centralised system of government that charges local authorities with implementing government policy, but which provides little opportunity to influence or change it, marginalises local NPOs. Similarly in the US, the vibrant local associationalism and civic engagement admired by de Tocqueville is waning. Membership of trade unions, Parent-Teacher Associations and women’s organisations such as the League of Women Voters has declined considerably over the last two decades. Yet, membership of certain national organisations is expanding, especially environmental groups. According to Puttnam:
The rule seems to be this: organisations in which membership means moving a pen are booming, but groups in which membership means meeting others are withering. The same applies to politics: petitions are common, but collective forms of participation (meeting to discuss community affairs, attending rallies, working for a political party) are down by 40–50 per cent. (Puttnam 1995)

Puttnam’s point here correlates with a central fear of Cohen and Rogers, that increasingly factional secondary associations advance the specific interests of their members, rather than more comprehensive interests (including the maintenance of democracy itself) (Cohen and Rogers 1995: 40).

Another objection to the associative democracy scheme, normative or otherwise is that social movements that challenge, rather than cosy up to, the state often achieve the most spectacular results, and that protest rather than participation, becomes the key to their success. Tracing the history of the US hazardous waste movement, Szasz (1995: 154) notes that the reductions in waste disposals which it achieved ‘would not have happened in a world of normalised co-operation between government and artfully constructed secondary associations’. Equally important, Szasz suggests, the ‘mischief’ of the hazardous waste movement mobilised and radicalised thousands of people ‘in a moment where most “citizens” are profoundly apolitical, inactive and disinterested in the larger world’ (Ibid.: 154–5).

CONCLUSION

This chapter argues that NGOs play a significant role in the politics of many developing countries and that they have become significant political actors in civil society in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The chapter also suggests however that important questions concerning the role of NGOs in politics go substantially unanswered. Why or how, for instance, do NGOs come into existence? How or why do NGOs intervene in politics? How are NGOs affected by prevailing political culture? Why do states forge relationships with NGOs? What obstacles undermine such relationships? How do NGOs relate to other political institutions such as political parties, trade unions, peasant associations or insurgent groups? This book attempts to answer these questions with respect to the Philippines and to South-East Asia.

One of the most important issues raised by the proliferation of NGOs concerns their impact on civil society. As a central tenet, the mainstream NGO literature assumes that NGO proliferation strengthens civil society. Yet this
chapter suggests that the proliferation of NGOs may have a more multi-faceted impact, a point also made in other recent studies (cf. Ndegwa 1996; MacDonald 1997). To the extent that NGO communities have become new arenas within which struggles from society at large have been internalised, NGOs may simultaneously strengthen and weaken civil society. Political scientists thus face significant difficulties in trying to conceptualise the institutional arrangement in countries where NGOs play a prominent role in national politics, especially those that have witnessed democratic and other related political reforms in the last fifteen years.

One of the objectives of this book is to make an initial tentative attempt to characterise this institutional arrangement. In particular, the book explores the relevance of the concept of ‘associative democracy’ in South-East Asian politics in general and in the Philippines in particular. The concept of associative democracy has been used by its proponents and critics alike to date, almost exclusively to analyse institutional arrangements in more developed countries with liberal democratic regimes. The possibility exists, however, that it can be used to study actual institutional arrangements in developing countries and specifically to assess the political roles and impacts of secondary associations such as NGOs. In a similar vein, the phenomenon of ‘globalisation’ has been used by social scientists to chart a process of growing economic interdependence fuelled by growing foreign trade, missing important political dimensions. In reality, however, the proliferation of NPOs around the world, in developed and developing countries alike, suggests one important political feature of ‘globalisation’, the emergence of a common specific institutional arrangement (i.e., an active NPO sector working closely with government agencies) in a variety of regime settings. This book examines this key feature with respect to the Philippines and to South-East Asia.

‘Redemocratisation’ and the politics of democratic consolidation have been among the most significant themes in political science theory since the mid-1980s. An important dimension of this concern involves accounting for new mechanisms created by changing institutional relationships. Competing institutional interests animate any process of democratisation and clues to the character of a ‘redemocratisation’ project can be found in an examination of the nature and degree of competition between and within institutions of state and society. Since it is not certain that NGOs are the most effective means to institutionalise ‘popular empowerment’, this study examines the contradictions as much as the potential of NGO action.
2 Non-governmental organisations and politics in South-East Asia

INTRODUCTION

Until comparatively recently, political scientists have devoted little attention to non-state associational life in South-East Asia, especially the role of the voluntary sector. At one level, the omission is unsurprising. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, political life in the region was dominated by the state as authoritarian patterns of rule prevailed. Yet significant socio-economic change during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, wrought in large part by the region’s authoritarian regimes, dramatically changed the nature of associational life in South-East Asia. In a 1973 article, Carl Landé argued that social organisation in South-East Asia, from the Thai monarchy to the Kalinga of the Philippines, centred on elaborate pyramids of dyadic structures ‘composed variously of ties of kinship, friendship, patronship-clientship and interpersonal political alliances’ (Landé 1973: 119), undermining the key assumptions of group theory with respect to the region. Drawing on the Philippines for modern examples, Landé argued that ‘associational and institutional groups account for only a small part of the totality of interest articulation’, and that voluntary organisations, whilst widespread, were occupationally-specialised, undermining the interest-representation function of the voluntary sector (Ibid.: 115).

Since the late 1980s, however, civil society in South-East Asia has been rejuvenated, transforming the nature of social organisation in the region and with it, the nature of South-East Asian politics. Economic recession in the mid-1980s forced states to reduce their intervention in the economy and to cede significant autonomy to a range of institutions. Since the early 1990s, the restoration of stable economic growth rates and the continuing pace of
economic and political reform has consolidated this rejuvenation. Business associations have been perhaps the most notable beneficiaries of this process, stimulating important new works on South-East Asian politics by MacIntyre (1990) and Anek (1992). Non-governmental organisations however have also emerged as important new institutional actors and their rapid proliferation since the mid-1980s has echoed the ‘associational revolution’ evident in other parts of the developing world, posing a major challenge to traditional conceptions of the voluntary sector in the regional political science literature. This book is largely about the proliferation of NGOs in the Philippines and the emergence of NGOs as an important force in Philippine politics. NGOs however have also become important actors in other South-East Asian countries, and this chapter thus examines the rise to political prominence of NGOs in South-East Asia excluding the Philippines and their role in contemporary national politics, especially their role in the democratisation process.

In South-East Asia as in much of the developing world, NGOs have proliferated rapidly since the early 1980s. In Indonesia, the number of NGOs registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs increased from 130 in 1981 to 4,000 in 1993, while 10,000 NGOs existed in 1994 according to another estimate (Hutabarat and Suharyanto 1994: 4; Cohen 1994). In Thailand, there are now an estimated 10,000 NGOs and POs, (over 2,500 of them registered with the Public Welfare Department), a 250 per cent increase on the number in 1984 (Rueng 1995: 65; Dej 1995: 92; Farrington and Lewis 1993: 277). In Malaysia, 14,000 organisations were registered under the 1966 Societies Act in the early 1990s (Serrano 1994: 8). In Vietnam, over 150 international NGOs work in the country while the legalisation of national NGOs in 1991 has led to the emergence of a small national NGO community (NGORC 1995; Sidel 1995). In Cambodia, a country where no contemporary national or local NGOs were founded before 1991, more than 400 local and over 100 international NGOs existed in 1996.¹ In Singapore, finally, the number of registered charities/societies grew from 656 in 1988 to 4,562 in 1994.²

Non-governmental organisations have become a significant force not just on account of their rapid proliferation or their sheer numbers today, but also for the way in which they have insinuated themselves deep within the economic, social, and political life of South-East Asian nations. In many South-East Asian countries for instance, NGOs have become an important conduit for overseas development assistance and have used, or are using, this role to carve a broader niche. In Cambodia in the late 1980s, donors channelled 25 per cent of development assistance, roughly US$10 million per annum, through
international NGOs working in the country, bypassing the corrupt and debilitated bureaucracy (UNDP 1990: 14). International NGOs effectively functioned as the social service arm of the Heng Samrin and Hun Sen regimes during the 1980s. By 1995, Cambodian-based international NGOs channelled over US$60 million per annum in development aid while Cambodian NGOs received over US$10 million per annum from international donors. Similarly, in Vietnam, international NGOs channelled more than US$70 million of aid in 1994. This was equivalent to 5.6 per cent of the government’s expenditure on social services in the same year, a small amount perhaps in absolute terms, but a significant platform from which local and international NGOs can carve a broader niche. In turn, South-East Asian governments have come under significant economic pressure to tolerate, if not actively support, NGO activities. In Myanmar/Burma, for instance, the combination of desperate economic deprivation and the search for international legitimacy has led the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to tolerate a small number of international and local NGOs (Chandler 1995a).

In other countries, however, economic growth rather than economic stagnation has encouraged NGO proliferation. In Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, for instance, foundations and NGOs sponsored by prominent businessmen or companies have become an important institutional vehicle in legitimating the wealth and consolidating the political influence of successful business interests in the face of pressure for greater government taxation. In Thailand, for instance, companies that traditionally supported philanthropic activities (e.g., sport, music, the arts) are increasingly supporting NGO development activities (e.g., community organising, environmental conservation, democratisation) (cf. Amara and Nitaya 1994: 94–5).

Sociological factors also help explain the proliferation of NGOs in South-East Asia. In Thailand and Indonesia especially, and in Malaysia, Singapore and Burma to a lesser extent, class-based social movements from the 1970s and early 1980s gradually fragmented into a disparate range of issue-based campaigns centred on democracy and human rights, government economic strategy, and agrarian/rural development issues including rice prices and land reform, minority rights and the environment. In Thailand, the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) fragmented after the military coup of 1976 and subsequent counter-insurgency campaign, and NGOs and POs, many of them led by former CPT activists, inherited the mantle of radicalism from the early 1980s. Equally, the cohesive student-led movement prominent in the Wan Maha Wipayok, the ‘Great Tragedy’ of October 1973 that led to the brief
democratic interregnum of 1973–76, was replaced in the late 1980s and early 1990s by a more disparate range of student and other organisations, organised around ideological, economic and personality-based cleavages.

A second, more general, sociological explanation has been the emergence throughout South-East Asia of more organised, institutionalised and differentiated forms of social organisation, in place of social relationships centred on dyadic ties. NGOs and POs have increasingly replaced traditional institutions such as gotong royong, the traditional spirit of mutual help in Indonesia and Malaysia,\(^5\) traditional funeral societies in Thailand, and clan associations in Singapore where charities are now the main non-governmental providers of social services. Organised religions have been instrumental in this process. In Islamic South-East Asia, voluntary organisations, many of them corporate-sponsored, are increasingly responsible for collecting and dispersing sadaqah (voluntary alms). Prominent examples include MENDAKI (Council for the Education of Muslim Children) in Singapore and the Yayasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Islam Malaysia (Islamic Economic Development Foundation, Malaysia) (Ariff 1991: 34–42). In Thailand, NGOs have become important institutional vehicles, especially to prominent intellectuals, in maintaining traditional Buddhist values in the face of rapid economic development and corresponding social change.\(^6\)

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA: A BRIEF HISTORY

The non-governmental organisations that have become such a significant presence in South-East Asian economic, social and political life since the mid-1980s trace their history to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when a myriad of civic, voluntary and charitable organisations first emerged. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, colonial rule in the latter-day states of Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam, provided an encouraging institutional environment. The region’s booming market economies supported a mixed middle-class of indigenous businessmen or civil servants, Chinese immigrants and European or, in the peculiar case of the Philippines, American counterparts.

In the face of colonial states’ antipathy to intervention, especially in social matters, European émigrés and church missionaries established charitable organisations that provided welfare services. Indigenous members of the
middle class meanwhile established political associations that promoted the cause of independence or sustained liberal or intellectual causes in the immediate post-independence period. In Indonesia during the 1920s, for instance, civic associations were established by prominent intellectuals such as the nationalist educator Budi Oetomo and ‘played an important role in developing the intellectual and grassroots movement that fostered the Indonesian independence movement’ (Corrothers and Suryatna 1995: 121). Similarly, in North Vietnam, after the establishment of a communist state in 1954, the Nhan Van Giai Pham movement of liberal intellectuals promoted greater openness in Vietnamese society until it was banned in 1957 (Sidel 1995: 300).

Chinese migrants played an important role in the emergence of a voluntary sector in South-East Asia, establishing mutual help and welfare associations in major urban areas. In Indonesia, for instance, the Chinese Federation (Chung-hua Tsung-hua, CHTH) supported vulnerable sections of the Chinese community and provided a link with the Dutch colonial, and later, Indonesian post-independence, authorities (Amara 1995: 21). Similarly, the Malay Chinese Association (MCA), a political party in the Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition that ruled Malaysia from 1969, emerged in the 1940s as a community organisation that worked with the British authorities to provide housing for homeless plantation or factory workers (Ibid.: 23).

Organised religion also contributed to the emergence of civic organisations in South-East Asia. In Thailand, the Chung-hua, Lung-hua and the Yi-ho were founded as Buddhist mutual aid organisations in 1930, 1932 and 1935 respectively (Amara and Nitaya 1994: 19). Together with Christian organisations such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (1937) and the Church of Christ Foundation (1943) (Maniemai and Tips 1985: 39), these Buddhist organisations are the direct antecedents of the latter-day NGO movement in Thailand. After World War II however, state-directed Buddhism, mobilised to counter the threat of communism, was used to curb the continued proliferation of civic organisations. Non-Buddhist organisations were tightly controlled while the Thera Association monitored Buddhist institutions (Amara and Nitaya 1994: 24–5).

In the 1950s and 1960s, a second generation of non-governmental or voluntary organisations emerged in South-East Asia. After World War II, European and American development organisations, many with a strong religious character, launched programmes in individual South-East Asian countries. In addition, civic and voluntary organisations continued to
proliferate, some of them branching into development, as distinct from welfare, activities. In Indonesia, for instance, the first development NGO emerged during the relatively liberal years of the Sukarno presidency (1949–1965). *Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia* (PKBI, Planned Parenthood Association of Indonesia) was founded in 1957 to promote family planning and gradually expanded into health-based community development activities. In Thailand, few contemporary NGOs date to the pre-1950 period, but during the 1950s and 1960s, NGOs committed to more traditional social welfare activities began to proliferate, gradually expanding into second-generation development activities. Similarly, in South Vietnam, training and other assistance provided by French and American organisations in the 1950s and 1960s led to the establishment of indigenous civic organisations concerned with social welfare, mostly in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) (Sidel 1995).

During the 1960s and early 1970s, the first genuinely indigenous development NGOs began to emerge in South-East Asia. In Indonesia, rural development NGOs first emerged in the early 1960s, when government and civic leaders were both concerned with the plight of the rural poor and the effects of unchecked population growth, especially on the central island of Java. *Yayasan Sosial Tani Membangun* (Social Foundation for Agricultural Development) for instance, precursor of *Yayasan Bina Swadaya*, one of Indonesia’s largest development NGOs, was established in the early 1960s to organise savings and pre-co-operative groups. The military coup of 1965 led by General Suharto and the mass murder of supporters of the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI, Indonesia Communist Party) to which it led, discouraged the further proliferation of rural development NGOs. The New Order regime did however encourage the emergence of urban-based largely middle class organisations that protested against human rights abuses and government controls on the judiciary. In 1969, for instance, the Institute for the Defense of Human Rights (LPHAM) was founded to protest the murders of PKI supporters in the Purwodadi region of Central Java and during the early 1970s a number of organisations including LPHAM and the Association of Indonesian Lawyers PERADIN (Persatuan Advokat Indonesia) protested against the passage of Act No. 14, reducing judicial powers of oversight (Ibrahim 1996: 17–18). By the mid-1970s, however, rural development NGOs began to proliferate again, as foreign aid donors, estranged by the authoritarian character of the Suharto regime, channelled development assistance through them.

In Thailand, development NGOs date largely to the 1970s and early 1980s,
and emerged primarily in response to the most centralised state in non-communist South-East Asia and the effective bias in Thai government policy against agriculture and the rural poor. Thai development NGOs also originated in the work of Pridi Banomyong, an economic technocrat in the 1930s and his belief in the reforming potential of bureaucracy, and from the work of Buddhist scholar Buddhadasa Bhikku who emphasised the duty of Buddhists to alleviate suffering (Pasuk and Baker 1995: 384). The country’s first development NGO dates to 1969 when the Thailand Rural Reconstruction Movement (TRRM) founded by Central Bank Chairman Dr Puey Ungphakorn began operations. Between 1973 and 1976 when military rule was briefly replaced by parliamentary democracy, development NGOs proliferated rapidly. After the military coup of October 1976, however, NGO activities deemed leftist by the government were suppressed. Many development NGOs, including TRRM, closed or became inactive as their leaders and staff went underground or fled abroad. Such NGOs only reopened or relaunched their activities during the early 1980s as the government of General Prem Tinsulanond (1980–1988) introduced tentative reforms.

In Malaysia, as in Thailand and Indonesia, the expanding role of the state in economic, social and political life hindered the proliferation of development NGOs. In Malaysia however, the state was comparatively more successful in promoting rural development, especially in Peninsular Malaysia, minimising the vacuum in which rural development NGOs developed in Thailand and Indonesia. During the 1970s, however, urban-based middle-class NGOs emerged, largely concerned with consumer rights and environmental protection. During the 1970s, Malaysia’s 1966 Societies Act was applied harshly to prevent the emergence of politically-vocal NGOs. In 1975, for instance, registration of the new Malaysian Human Rights Organisation (MHRO) was denied. In the 1981 Amendments to the Societies Act, further restrictions on the operation of politically-active NGOs were introduced; the Registrar of Societies was empowered to approve all foreign affiliations or connections of Malaysian NGOs, to remove office holders of certain types of NGO and to decide whether an NGO had violated certain clauses of the national constitution. NGOs that wanted to criticise government changes or to campaign for legislative change were obliged to register as ‘political societies’, deterring NGOs that wanted to maintain their separate identity from political parties (Muzaffar 1985: 127–31).

In Cambodia, in contrast to Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, few civic or voluntary organisations emerged in the late nineteenth or early twentieth
centuries and no development NGOs emerged during the 1960s or 1970s. Cambodian history and political culture have been heavily influenced by Hindu-Buddhist notions of hierarchy, status and deference to those in authority (Neher 1994: 220). This long tradition of absolutism and hierarchy hindered the emergence of intermediate institutions between the individual and the state, such as political parties, trade unions or peasant associations in the early half of the twentieth century and it was only during the years of the General Lon Nol regime (1972–1975) that a small number of civic or voluntary organisations were first established. This facet of Cambodian politics enabled the Khmer Rouge to close down all the institutions of civil society between 1975 and 1979 and to return Cambodia (renamed Kampuchea) to the ‘Year Zero’. After the collapse of Khmer Rouge rule in December 1978, the Vietnamese-sponsored regime that governed Cambodia from 1979 to 1991 allowed a partial re-emergence of civil society, especially with respect to organised religion, but it refused to tolerate the establishment of national NGOs.

International NGOs however played a vital role in Kampuchea between 1979 and 1991. The international community condemned the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea in December 1978 and most international donors refused to channel development assistance to the communist regime. Many donors agreed however to channel development assistance through international NGOs. These NGOs worked in the refugee camps on the Thai border through the Khmer Rouge years and following the Vietnamese invasion, established a presence in Kampuchea with government agreement. From the early 1980s, INGOs expanded their role in channelling food aid to promoting agricultural production, rebuilding schools and health clinics and building water supply and irrigation systems. INGOs also played an important political role in the civil war, providing food and other aid to Khmer Rouge camps near the Thai border. By preventing mass starvation in the camps, INGOs helped to contain pressures that might have exacerbated the civil war.

In Singapore, a country that lacked a rural sector and the attendant development dilemmas that promoted the proliferation of NGOs elsewhere in South-East Asia, a different pattern developed. In pre-independence Singapore, a wide range of organisations flourished including mutual self-help groups and clan associations. From independence in 1965 until the early 1980s, however, the range and number of voluntary organisations, trade unions and student associations, declined as the ruling Peoples Action Party (PAP) consolidated its power and as the state strengthened social service provision.
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(Hill and Fee 1995). From 1984 onwards, interest groups and voluntary organisations gradually re-emerged, encouraged in part by the PAP’s poor performance in general elections that year (Ibid.: 229). In the early 1990s, new types of NGOs, explicitly committed to issues of broad political concern, emerged, including the Nature Society of Singapore (NSS), an environmental NGO which challenged the government on the destruction of Singapore’s diminishing green belt, and the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) which campaigned for better conditions for female civil service employees (Ibid.: 232).

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH-EAST ASIA

In the 1980s and 1990s, a third generation of NGOs committed to active political engagement, became a significant force in the economic, social and political life of South-East Asia. In part, this resulted from the evolution of development NGO strategies throughout the developing world (cf. Korten 1990) but it also resulted from, and contributed to, significant changes in South-East Asian politics. NGO proliferation in the 1980s and 1990s has been both cause and effect of broader political change in South-East Asia. In turn, it has both challenged the legitimacy of South-East Asian regimes and provided an institutional partner that has facilitated relations between the state and important constituencies amid significant economic, social and political upheaval.

In Cambodia, indigenous NGOs first emerged in the early 1990s after the Paris Peace Accords of October 1991 brought an end to the civil war between the communist regime of Hun Sen and the internationally recognised Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea that included the Khmer Rouge, the royalist forces of exiled King Norodom Sihanouk and a number of other pro-democracy parties. The Paris Peace Accords provided for a transition period to be supervised by the United Nations with democratic elections to be held in May 1993. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) that resulted, administered the country from March 1992 to May 1993 and played an important role in promoting the emergence of development and other NGOs. In contrast to UNTAC and international donors, national institutions played a relatively smaller role. In comparison to Thailand, Indonesia or Malaysia, the business community played almost no role.
Following fifteen years of communist rule, Cambodia had almost no successful private sector with the capacity to support development NGOs. Equally, the organised opposition played a small role, in contrast to Thailand where the CPT was an important stimulus. Buddhism however did play an important role. Buddhism was the only institution that survived the genocidal regime of Pol Pot relatively intact and Buddhist wat (temples) became an important sanctuary for urban intellectuals and political activists. From 1991, Buddhist wat provided accommodation to new local NGOs while Buddhist monks acted as advisers to, or honourary leaders of, prominent NGOs.

The first Cambodian development NGOs were formed in the Thai border refugee camps in 1989 and 1990 and the first on Cambodian soil were established after the Peace Accords of 1991. The first local NGO was KHEMARA, formed in late 1991 to improve women’s participation in community development. Numbers grew slowly through most of 1992 but grew quickly in late 1992 and in early 1993 in the run up to the May 1993 elections. Throughout the transition period, the Hun Sen regime viewed the new NGOs with profound suspicion and UNTAC played a critical role in averting conflict. Thun Saray, for instance, a prominent political activist, was imprisoned for 18 months in 1989–1991 after he tried to launch an opposition party. Released in early 1991, he founded the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC, Association des droits de l’homme et du développement du Cambodge) later that year. The new NGO however was obstructed and threatened by government forces, fearful that it would support opposition political parties in the May 1993 elections. UNTAC forces guarded ADHOC’s offices from early 1992 while UNTAC bodyguards accompanied Thun Saray until the elections were complete. UNTAC also intervened when government forces raided ADHOC’s Sveng Rieng office in 1993 and provided funding for an education campaign on the May 1993 elections and for human rights training.

International NGOs continued to proliferate and to play an important role in Cambodia after 1991. In collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), INGOs implemented Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) to repair roads and bridges, clear mines, dig wells and ponds, build schools and clinics and improve agricultural productivity. By June 1993, rehabilitation and development projects worth over US$407 million had been approved, and INGOs played a central role in their implementation (Findlay 1995: 70–1; European Commission 1995: 9). Politically, international NGOs felt reticent about lobbying the coalition government established after the May elections.
but in alliance with Cambodian NGOs but in coalitions such as The NGO Forum on Cambodia, they exerted a low key and discrete influence.

In Burma, NGOs face an inhospitable environment because of Tatmadaw (armed forces) dominance of politics and the highly personalised nature of political power. Since 1987, SLORC has promoted economic liberalisation, including the strengthening of the private sector, and inward foreign investment (including development assistance). A brief parallel political reform process, however, came to an abrupt end following the 1990 elections and the subsequent suppression of ethnic minority insurgent groups. International NGOs, fearful of legitimising the SLORC regime, have therefore been reluctant to establish a presence. With official aid cut off since 1990, however, the SLORC has encouraged INGOs to operate in Burma. As a result, Chandler (1995b: 33, 34) argues, ‘international NGOs are well positioned to contribute to the development of [the] nation’, by influencing policy on the supervision and administration of NGOs, and by demonstrating the positive contribution of NGOs, including national NGOs not yet accorded recognition by the government. Within Burma/Myanmar today, a small number of organisations such as Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC), the Young Men’s Buddhist Association (YMBA) and the YMCA are viewed with suspicion and denied official accreditation. Other organisations such as the Myanmar Medical Association, the Myanmar Red Cross Society and the Myanmar Maternal Child Welfare Association which operate development projects are subjected to close government control. Up to fifteen Burmese NGOs, mostly Christian or Muslim organisations, also operate in states with international borders such as Karen, Kachin and Chin where the government is unable to exert full control. As a result, Chandler (1995b: 38) notes, ‘The government is now talking about indigenous NGOs and their potential role. They are encouraging their development. This process is gradual but also forward moving’. SLORC control of the constitutional convention established in January 1993, and the establishment of a new government-controlled mass organisation, the Union Solidarity and Development Association, in September 1993, however, suggest that the Tatmadaw will continue to maintain a tight grip over political mobilisation and activation, denying NGOs the institutional space to develop a political mandate.

In Vietnam, where political reform has kept pace with economic reform to a greater extent than in Burma, NGOs were legalised in 1991, but required to operate under the umbrella of the five principal state-controlled mass organisations. Since 1991, however, NGOs have gradually increased their
autonomy from the mass organisations, emboldened by the state policy of Doi Moi (renovation) (Lanh 1994). Within Vietnam, the concept of an NGO remains alien and is normally associated with the international NGOs that work primarily in the areas of social welfare and agricultural development. Within Vietnamese civil society itself, however, a plethora of institutions, including social service organisations, religious and clan groups, educational institutions, business associations, trade unions and peasant associations and more politically activist groups are expanding their autonomy from the state (Sidel 1995). In 1996, the Vietnamese government consulted international and national NGOs on a draft legal framework governing NGO activities, to be introduced into law in 1997, but its commitment to preserving the power of the five (reformed and restructured) mass organisations constrains the political space available to NGOs. Vietnamese Communist Party Chief Nguyen Van Linh’s 1988 declaration that new organisations, including NGOs, will not be allowed to make demands that conflict with overall national interests sets a general boundary, but Vietnam’s ‘creeping pluralism’, to use Porter’s phrase (1990: 84), gives rise to a political fluidity that NGOs can use to occupy new political spaces, specifically to represent new and competing interests independently of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the state-controlled mass organisations.

Similarly, in Malaysia, NGOs have enjoyed greater freedom and government recognition since the early 1990s but remain constrained from challenging the power base of the ruling Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition, and its main constituent, the New United Malay Nationalist Organisation (UMNO Baru). During the 1980s, the ethnic Malay-dominated government feared the effect of a politically-vocal NGO community on stability, and the country’s delicate ethnic compact. In particular, the government feared that foreign funding would encourage oppositional and politically-assertive NGOs. The Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, criticised foreign manipulators using a worldwide network of NGOs to promote popular causes in third world countries, and described foreign-assisted NGOs such as the Environmental Protection Society Malaysia (EPSM) or Aliran Kesedaran Negara (Aliran, Society for National Consciousness or National Consciousness Movement) as ‘thorns’ in the government’s ‘flesh’, a euphemism subsequently appropriated by Malaysian NGOs themselves (cf. Singh 1990).

Support for UMNO Baru comes mainly from rural Malays and the party maintains a tight grip over local associational life, except in northern Malaysia where Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS, Malaysian Islamic Party) retains
widespread support. In increasing their limited ability to reach the rural poor, rural development or environmental NGOs represented one of the few potential threats to UMNO Baru’s power base. Until the mid- to late 1980s, the government seemed to have successfully controlled this threat. In addition to legislation which inhibits NGOs extending beyond their Kuala Lumpur and middle-class base, the government exploited personality and organisational tensions within the NGO community to undermine its political impact.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, Malaysian NGOs increased in prominence, and won greater political space through militant campaigning and pressure politics. In 1987, a wave of arrests and the political unrest to which it led stimulated the politicisation of the NGO community by bringing NGO activists together in prison. One significant result was the formation of SUARAM (Suara Rakyat Malaysia, The Voice of the Malaysian People), Malaysia’s main human rights NGO. Many opposition activists, prosecuted under Malaysia’s 1960 Internal Security Act and related legislation, especially in the 1987 wave of arrests, came from foreign-assisted NGOs, and faced charges such as attending demonstrations or NGO training courses in the Philippines. In 1988, several NGO representatives were appointed to the National Economic Consultative Commission (NECC) tasked with co-ordinating macro-economic policy (Riker 1995b: 47). The representatives resigned soon after, however, underlining a determination to oppose the state in key areas of public policy. Environmental NGOs have been particularly successful in opposing the government. By linking with foreign counterparts, they provided significant opposition to the construction of hydro-electric dams, embarrassing the government internationally (Vatikiotis 1992). In September 1992, Dr. Mahathir finally sought a truce with environmental NGOs, declaring that they were no longer seen as the enemy, sending a general conciliatory message to Malaysian NGOs (Eccleston and Potter 1994). Politically-vocal NGOs, however, continued to be treated harshly. Many were denied registration by the Registrar of Societies and in frustration registered as companies. In 1996 and 1997, Government-NGO relations deteriorated again. In October 1996, Malaysian human rights NGOs convened the Asia Pacific Conference on East Timor. The conference in Kuala Lumpur was cancelled however after the conference hall was invaded by supporters of UMNO Baru’s youth wing. The Malaysian government was condemned internationally for the cancellation and in January 1997, officials of the Registrar of Companies raided three NGOs, indicating government concern at the proliferation and political mobilisation of activist NGOs (Jayasankaran 1997: 20).
In Singapore, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the Chinese crackdown in Tiananmen Square in 1989, and a wave of emigration in the early 1990s, promoted debate about relations between the state and civil society. Interest groups were just that however, confined to representing sectoral or ethnic interests and restricted from seeking broader political change. In the 1980s and early 1990s, emigration from Singapore became a significant problem. Up to 10,000 people per annum left the city-state, many of them educated middle class professionals desperately needed to sustain economic growth. In turn, emigration forced the government to tolerate the strengthening of civil society, as Singapore evolves, in the words of one government minister, from a ‘hotel’, a comfortable but stifling environment, into a ‘home’, an inclusive society where citizens have a tangible stake (Ibid.: 225). As Rodan (1993: 91) notes, however, the PAP government distinguishes between civil and political society with rigidity, and adversarial or confrontational politics will not displace PAP-enforced consensus (hegemonic) politics in the foreseeable future.

In Indonesia, as in Malaysia, the state exerts significant control over rural organisations that link the poor directly to the state apparatus and has been able to maintain effective social control. By inheriting the badan perjuangan, the local associations that represented the main institutional constituency in the nationalist pre-independence pemuda movement, the Sukarno regime created GOLKAR (from golongan karya, or ‘functional groups’), the ruling party under the Suharto regime with a presence in practically every village. Through its control of government patronage and its administration by officials of the bureaucracy down to the village level, supplemented by legislation banning political parties from organising in rural areas between election campaigns, GOLKAR has won every national election since 1971.

After 1981 however, fluctuating balance of payments difficulties caused by oil revenue shortfalls led to reductions in spending on state development programmes. The government tried to compensate by liberalising the economy and promoting greater community participation in development efforts (Johnson 1990: 77–8). As a result, it acknowledged the role of NGOs in maintaining welfare programmes in rural areas and allowed them greater autonomy to raise funds from abroad and from co-ordinating with government agencies. In 1982, for instance, the government issued an Environmental Law explicitly recognising the contribution of NGOs to environmental policy, while in 1986 the Ministry of the Interior created, with NGO support, the ‘Working Committee on the Development of People’s Participation in Regional Development’ (ADB 1989a: 119, 127).
In Indonesia, however, communism and socialism are regarded by the government as alien ideologies potentially capable of undermining the entire fabric of the Indonesian state, and NGOs are seen as sympathetic to both. In 1983, reflecting NGO sensitivities to this perception, the term ‘NGO’ was largely abandoned because of its anti-government and oppositional connotation, in favour of the generic labels *Lembaga Swadaya Masayarakat* (LSM, Self-Help Organisation) and *Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masayarakat* (LPSM, Self-Help Promotion Organisation) and throughout the 1980s NGOs were largely loyal to the state ideology of *Panca Sila* (Eldridge 1990: 506, 1989: 3–4). However, the influence of the state security apparatus was brought to bear in the passage of the 1985 Laws on Social Organisations (*Undang Undang Organisasi Kemasyakatatan*), which makes a state permit obligatory to establish an NGO and makes it more difficult for NGOs to attract foreign funding. The law came into effect in June 1987 but was not applied systematically, illustrating an ambivalence in Indonesian government NGO policy (MacIntyre 1990: 39).22 Furthering the ambiguity, the 1985 laws were directed primarily at *Organisasi Masa* (ORMAS mass organisations),23 and the extent to which it covers LSMs or LPSMs, remained shrouded in ambiguity, providing discretion and leverage to government authorities in regulating the LSM/LPSM movement.24

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND DEMOCRATISATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA**

In South-East Asia, as the previous section has illustrated, NGOs face a variety of regime conditions. In certain countries, notably Burma, Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore, the state has been able to control the process of political mobilisation and activation through a hegemonic political party (or coalition, in the case of Malaysia), and has controlled local associational life through a network of government-affiliated or -controlled organisations. Little institutional space therefore exists, in which NGOs can organise and mobilise politically. With the exception of Burma and Vietnam, each government has also combined sustained economic growth with declining wealth inequality and effective service delivery to rural and urban communities, minimising the economic vacuum in which NGOs invariably thrive. Each of the states has also resisted the imposition of a Western-style discourse of democratisation and civil society as it has strengthened its economic ties with the main
industrialised economies. In each of these countries, however, NGOs have benefitted from political reforms and have achieved a toe-hold in national economic, social and political life. In other states, notably Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia, NGOs have contributed to the struggle for, the achievement of, or the consolidation of, democracy. These countries provide some of the most tangible evidence available to date of a direct relationship between NGO proliferation and political reform, towards a form of government characterised by a competitive party system, regular competitive elections, a free media and liberal rights of association.

Indonesian politics remains dominated by President Suharto and a regime centred on GOLKAR as the dominant political party and the military’s formal dual role in politics and national security. Three political parties are formally recognised; the ruling GOLKAR, the predominantly-Muslim *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (PPP, United Development Party) and the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (PDI, Indonesian Democratic Party). Restrictions on the PDI and PPP combined with the magnetic appeal of its patronage have enabled GOLKAR to win well over 60 per cent of the popular vote in every election since 1971. Nevertheless, the Suharto government is far from monolithic and economic, social and political change over the last two decades has produced distinct cleavages in Indonesian politics. Uncertainty surrounding the political future of President Suharto, the momentum of opposition political forces and the overall extent of opposition to the government from a disparate range of sources suggests that NGOs may play a central role in promoting political reform in the near future. In Cambodia and Thailand, democratisation, including multi-party elections and freedom of association, has been a significant outcome of political change in the last decade. A distinct feature of the democratisation process in each has been the proliferation of NGOs, and the emergence of new patterns of political accommodation and contestation, as NGOs work with, and oppose the state. In each case, democratisation has been a violent process and NGOs have played a strategic role in engendering stability by institutionalising and therefore moderating political demands, by providing institutional channels through which governments have negotiated with important social forces, and by improving government capacity to deliver socio-economic services, hence shoring up the legitimacy of vulnerable democratic regimes. Equally, however, Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia illustrate some of the obstacles that NGOs face, and the limits to their contribution, in the struggle for democracy in the region.

In Indonesia, GOLKAR’s electoral success has stemmed in significant part
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from its ability to reach into, and control, practically every rural village. In turn this ability stems from restrictions on the PPP and PDI which prevent them from maintaining an organisational presence below the district level. GOLKAR’s organisational stranglehold, and the traditional concepts of musyawarah (discussion) and mufakat (consensus) which underpin ‘Panca Sila Democracy’ have undermined political discourse at the grassroots level, stifling demands for participation and democratisation. Within this context, however, NGOs have helped to build autonomous social movements that can challenge the Indonesian state and have become significant participants in the pro-democracy movement. Given the top-down nature of Indonesian development strategy, and the authoritarian character of the regime, it is difficult for bottom-up initiatives to organise or threaten the government. The organising strategies of large NGOs however, create a potential for autonomous mobilisation. Indonesia’s largest NGO, for instance, Yayasan Bina Swadaya (Community Self-Reliance Development Agency), had by the late 1980s organised 17,000 local groups directly or indirectly (ADB 1989a: 131), and about 15 large NGOs, mainly Jakarta-based, engaged in similar work. With the advent of large-scale multi-lateral funding from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and UN agencies, Indonesian NGOs have found greater scope to engage in independent organising and policy advocacy helping to erode the hegemony of the Indonesian state.

At a national level, human rights NGOs, where they are allowed to function, are invariably the best placed of all NGOs to challenge the authoritarian rule that dominated South-East Asia in the early 1980s and which remains a significant force. In Indonesia, over 80 legal aid organisations existed in 1982, and the largest, the Legal Aid Institute (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum, LBH), clashed openly with the government during the 1980s by representing defendants in politically sensitive trials (Nasution 1985, Lev 1987). Others supported the opposition Petisi Kelompok 50 (Group of 50 Petition). NGOs have also provided an important institutional base to students and intellectuals, traditionally the main opposition to the government. Most NGOs however expand their autonomy by collaborating with government, demonstrating their efficacy as development agencies and attracting foreign funding, enabling them to maintain a professional distance from government through mechanisms such as sub-contracting or tri-partite collaboration (with government and foreign funders).

More recently, NGOs have played a central role in the events leading up to the May 1997 national assembly elections. LBH has been a prominent
supporter of Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of former President Sukarno and the figurehead of Indonesia’s opposition movement. LBH lawyers, backed by over 70 volunteers, filed over 200 law suits after the government instigated the ousting of Megawati as Chair of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI, \textit{Partai Demokrasi Indonesia}) in July 1996, leading to riots at PDI’s headquarters in which five people were killed and twenty three reported missing. Another prominent human rights organisation, the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute Foundation (YLBHI, \textit{Yayasan Lembaga Hukum Indonesia}), acted as the anchor in a 30-NGO pro-PDI coalition, the \textit{Majelis Rakyat Indonesia} (MARI, Indonesian Peoples’ Council) (Cohen 1996: 19). Activist NGOs formed by student leaders have also become a critical support base for the People’s Democratic Party (\textit{Partai Rakyat Demokrasi}, PRD), a radical party on the fringe of the pro-democracy movement with links to the PDI. Finally, a new NGO, the Independent Election Monitoring Committee (KIPP, \textit{Komite Independen Pemantau Pemilu}), funded by the US National Endowment for Democracy and supported by the PRD and PDI, established chapters in seventeen cities and mobilised hundreds of volunteers in attempts to monitor the May 1997 elections. KIPP’s efforts were largely unsuccessful but the organisation established a precedent and may play a more prominent role in future elections.

Overall, a wide plethora of activist NGOs have now aligned themselves with the opposition. Other prominent NGOs have avoided such an alignment, eschewing membership of coalitions such as MARI. Nevertheless the nexus between Megawati and the activist NGO community has become a powerful one, one with a significant potential to sustain, if not increase, the pace of change in Indonesia. As Eldrige (1995: 227) notes, social, cultural, religious and economic organisational life in Indonesia is relatively plural at the village and sub-regional levels, while nationally, ‘the process of group formation, independent [of] both the state and of political parties is . . . extensive and deep-rooted’. Democratisation in Indonesia, Eldridge argues, is now ‘a genuine prospect’. This genuine prospect has emerged in significant part from the proliferation of NGOs from the early 1980s, from their growing political activation in the late 1980s and early 1990s and through their close alliance today with the pro-democracy opposition to President Suharto. If democracy is to be achieved in Indonesia, then Indonesian NGOs, acting as an important coalition partner in a multi-faceted pro-democracy opposition will play an important role in its achievement and its consolidation.

In Cambodia, the democratisation process has been unstable, problematic
NGOs and political violence in South-East Asia

and violent, and for that reason NGOs have played a particularly strategic role. Over 1 million people died in Cambodia between 1975 and 1978 under the rule of the Khmer Rouge and hundreds of thousands died during the two-year famine that followed the Vietnamese invasion of December 1978 and the installation of the Vietnamese-backed communist regime of Heng Samrin. Thousands more died during the civil war that lasted until 1991, while 350,000 Cambodians languished in refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border.

Within this context, international NGOs played an important political role, supporting the local NGOs that proliferated rapidly from 1991, and helping to build a civil society by indigenising a previously alien institutional entity. In consort with UNTAC and with other foreign donors, INGOs provided funding to local NGOs, brought NGO workers from other South-East Asian countries to train local staff, and funded collaborative workshops to promote coordination and co-operation. INGOs also helped to organise and animate POs or Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in their project areas, linking them to Cambodian NGOs.

In turn, Cambodian NGOs played a central role in the democratisation process. Many promoted popular debate and discussion on the September 1993 constitution. Ponleu Khmer, for instance, a coalition of leading Cambodian NGOs and prominent individuals, ‘succeeded in popularising debate on the constitution in Phnom Penh, and in 11 provinces’ (Findlay 1995: 95). Human rights organisations such as ADHOC and LICADHO (Ligue Cambodgienne pour la Promotion et la Défense des droits de l’homme, Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights) monitored human rights abuses associated with the election campaign, pressured the government to adhere to international human rights standards and co-operated with the National Assembly’s all-party Human Rights Commission to institutionalise a human rights regime. Other NGOs such as the Khmer Institute for Democracy worked with government departments to train government officials in the skills required to maintain a functioning democracy. As their own capacity gradually increased, Cambodian NGOs assumed part of the INGO sector’s responsibility for administering donor-supported rehabilitation and development projects, complementing the bureaucracy during a difficult period of transition and forging a long term niche as the state retrenched and as civil service employment fell.28

Today, Cambodian democracy remains fragile. The May 1993 elections resulted in a coalition government between the Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) led by the out-going Prime Minister Hun Sen and the royalist
FUNCINPEC (Front Uni National Pour La Cambodge Indépendente, Pacifique et Coopérative, United National Front for an Independent, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia) party led by Prince Norodom Ranarridh. Between 1994 and 1997, relations between the coalition partners were tense as each manoeuvred to strengthen their position in the run-up to parliamentary elections scheduled for 1998. Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Ranarridh served as joint co-Prime Ministers with each government ministry headed jointly by a CPP and FUNCINPEC representative. The military, which accounts for almost 50 per cent of Cambodian government expenditure, was also riven by competing loyalties, and fighting periodically broke out between soldiers sympathetic to the CPP or FUNCINPEC sides. In July 1997, the tension spilled over when Hun Sen displaced Ranariddh amid bitter fighting between soldiers loyal to each in which up to thirty people were killed. The move was seen in many circles as a coup d’état that brought to an end a brief period of democracy and led to a partial return to the pre-1991 civil war, raising doubts about the conduct of parliamentary elections scheduled for 1998.

One of the most divisive issues in Cambodian politics is the on-going peace talks between the government and remnants of the Khmer Rouge. FUNCINPEC, a party aligned with the Khmer Rouge during the 1979–1991 civil war, has taken the lead in negotiating the defection of senior Khmer Rouge cadre, seeking to bolster its own ranks in preparation for the 1998 elections. Prince Norodom Ranarridh secured a personal victory in October 1996 when he persuaded Ieng Sary, former Foreign Minster in the 1975–1978 Khmer Rouge government, and an estimated 10,000 Khmer Rouge guerrillas, to defect to the government side. In June and July of 1997, he appeared to secure another victory with the news that Pol Pot had been captured by Khmer Rouge dissidents and would be handed over to government forces for trial. In contrast, Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge cadre whose family suffered significantly at the hands of his former allies, has been wary of negotiations with the Khmer Rouge remnants and has warned of the dangers of integrating Khmer Rouge defectors into Cambodian politics and the army. The apparent capture of Pol Pot and the decision to try him, leaving uncertain the future of other senior Khmer Rouge leaders such as Khieu Samphan was widely regarded as the trigger to the crisis of July 1997 in which Ranariddh, in many ways, a clumsy political operator, was displaced as first co-Prime Minister.

Throughout the 1994–1997 period, tension over the peace talks and the upcoming elections led the CPP, the stronger of the coalition partners, to clamp down on opposition political parties and the media, creating uncertainty
about the conditions under which the 1998 elections will be held, especially
after the events of July 1997. NGOs were in part, victims of this tense climate.
The government, especially the Cambodian People’s Party, resents the millions
of dollars pumped by international donors into the NGO community amid
cutbacks in government spending and civil service employment in 1996/97
and was wary of links between NGOs and opposition political parties. Similarly,
in the provinces, local authorities are often unable to distinguish between
NGOs and political parties and frequently take action against the former.

Yet within this tense climate, the Cambodian NGO community also plays a
strategic political role. The moribund character and desperate plight of the
Cambodian economy and government reliance on international donor
assistance prevents the government from taking action against the NGO
community. In addition, the government has gradually begun to accept the
political neutrality of leading NGOs and the positive role they play in
complementing government services and in building civil society. As a result
the government consulted NGOs on a draft law governing NGO activities in
1995 and 1996, a draft largely regarded by NGOs as positive and supportive.29
In addition, NGOs are assisting government agencies and foreign donors in
developing a system of local government centred on village committees. In a
state where trade unions and middle-class professional associations are largely
government controlled, where grassroots organisations of farmers are almost
non-existent, where the media is under constant threat, and where a private
sector is only gradually emerging, NGOs therefore play a vital role in bolstering
a fragile civil society. Cambodian NGOs, with their international counterparts
continue to bolster the service provision function of the government. They
also continue to train government officials in the skills needed to sustain a
viable democracy, in areas such as human rights and the law, community
organising and popular participation and in legislative reform. NGOs are
promoting debate and discussion around difficult issues which have never
before been the subject of popular debate, including child abuse, domestic
violence, corruption, human rights violations, illegal timber exports and
religious freedom. NGOs also plan to establish an election monitoring
organisation, CONFREL (Committee for Free and Fair Elections) in time for the
1998 elections, modelled on the National Movement for Freedom of Elections
in the Philippines (NAMFREL) and echoing the activities of similar
organisations in Thailand and Indonesia.30 Overall, NGOs play an important
role as intermediate institutions, acting as a channel between government
ministries and particular constituencies and linking a range of organisations
and institutions in issue-based coalitions designed to monitor government performance, influence government legislation and ensure effective co-ordination between NGOs and government agencies. The stability they therefore engender contributes enormously to the still ongoing, and still fraught, task of national reconciliation.

In Thailand, the rapid proliferation of NGOs from the early 1980s has made them an important political force. In comparison to Cambodia, however, the Thai NGO community has developed over a longer period of time, allowing it to insinuate itself more deeply into the fabric of Thai politics. When the military overthrew the civilian regime in October 1976, NGO activists went underground and most development NGO activity ceased. Many NGO activists joined the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) led insurgency, instilling a radical orientation in the NGOs that re-emerged in the mid-1980s. Between 1980 and 1988, the regime of General Prem Tinsulanond oversaw a programme of gradual liberalisation that allowed reform-oriented ministries and agencies to explore tentative relationships with the newly reactivated development NGO community. From the early 1980s, for instance, the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO) established in the early 1970s began to work with NGOs such as the Thai NGO Committee for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development to provide land titles to small-scale farmers and to promote farmer participation in local development efforts. Similarly, in 1984, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) established a Joint Committee with NGOs to co-ordinate rural development efforts, echoing overtures from the Prem government to business groups, and tentative co-ordination continued throughout the late 1980s.

Thus, when the military abolished parliament in February 1991 and established the National Peace-keeping Council (NPKC), they reversed the steadily improving ties between NGOs and the Thai state, and antagonised a significant and newly empowered political force. After February 1991, NGOs and POs, organised in issue-based coalitions, became an important source of opposition to the Suchinda government, but a small minority compared to the political parties and business groups that gave tacit approval to the NPKC regime. NGOs and POs undermined government plans to establish a National Farmers’ Council by launching a rival Small Farmers’ Assembly; they opposed military attempts to introduce a new constitution in late 1991; and they organised frequent and large-scale demonstrations against the NPKC government (Suthy 1995).

Two of the most effective organisations were the Campaign for Popular
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Democracy (CPD), formed in April 1991 by nineteen organisations, and PollWatch, formed by thirty three NGO and PO leaders in January 1992 to monitor elections scheduled for March 1992 (Callahan 1995). PollWatch, organised in large part by CPD with active government support, played a particularly strategic role. According to Callahan (Ibid.: 104), ‘In the three months leading up to the March 1992 elections, PollWatch recruited 20,000 volunteers from all over Thailand. They had two tasks: to curb vote-buying and to encourage democratic consciousness.’

PollWatch was partly successful in curbing voting irregularities,33 in itself a significant achievement, but was less successful in promoting democratic consciousness, inevitably given the long-term nature of such a process.

Political parties aligned to the NPKC emerged victorious from the March 1992 elections, however, and supported the appointment of NPKC stalwart General Suchinda Kraprayoon as Prime Minister. In response, Chamlong Srimuang, Buddhist ascetic and leader of the Palang Dharma (Moral force) party, went on hunger strike on 6 May, galvanising the opposition movement. As daily demonstrations in Bangkok gathered momentum, the military opened fire on protestors on 17 May, killing over 100 in the four day crack-down which followed. On 24 May, following the intervention of King Bhumipol, Suchinda resigned and Anand Panyarachun was later appointed Prime Minister in a caretaker capacity.

In the media analysis that followed, Suchinda’s downfall was widely attributed to a middle-class uprising, evidential by the Mercedes cars and mobile telephones that graced four days of demonstrations between 17 and 20 May. A number of academics however have suggested that the role of NGOs and POs, i.e., the institutional character of the revolt, was more significant than the participation, still the product of much debate, of Bangkok’s burgeoning new middle class. According to Gohlert (1992), the institutional character of the mobilisation was disguised by individuals hiding their organisational affiliations to protect NGOs from an expected military backlash. Equally, according to Callahan (1995: 91), ‘Though it is common to explain [the events of May 1992] as a ‘middle-class democrat[ic] revolution’, a multi-centred approach can make more sense’. Key to the ‘multiple centres’ character of the May 1992 protests was a plethora of coalitions such as the CPD underpinned by NGOs and POs.

In turn, the key role played by NGOs and POs stemmed in large part from features of the party political system, and the institutional vacuum to which it gave rise. Weak ideological cohesion, poor intra-party discipline, frequent
party changing (often fuelled by financial inducements) and low membership undermined the ability of political parties to respond effectively to the changing themes of political discourse, to represent the increasingly disparate interests featured in that discourse or to induct new social groups into the body politic. Small and flexible but well co-ordinated, with a consistent record of opposition to the military and with direct links to a wide range of social groups, NGOs and POs were well-placed to fill this institutional vacuum.

Since the heady days of 1992, as parliamentary democracy in Thailand has slowly gathered momentum, there has been a gradual process of demobilisation, as the emphasis of NGO political activity shifts from ‘high politics’, systematic opposition to authoritarianism centred on broad coalitions and sustained mobilisation, to ‘low politics’, an emphasis on discrete issues by smaller issue-based coalitions. Yet, Thai NGOs continue to fulfil roles which contribute to the consolidation of democracy. NGOs, for instance, continue to set up village-level organisations, organising regional or issue-based protests, representing local demands, especially from the North-East, Thailand’s poorest region. NGOs support mass membership peoples organisations (POs), sustaining political participation. Member organisations of the NGO Coalition on Development (NGO-COD), for instance support the Isan Small Farmer Congress, a militant PO with a membership of 50,000 people. Through issue-based coalitions, NGOs campaign for public policy and legislative reform on issues such as human rights, freedom of information, environmental conservation and land reform, monitoring parliamentary procedures and placing stories with media groups. NGOs have even achieved influence over government macro-economic policy, and were involved in drafting the 8th National Economic Development Plan in 1996 under NESDB auspices. Following the election of Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, an ex-army commander steeped in the patronage-based practices of Thai politics, as Prime Minister in November 1996 parliamentary elections, NGOs will also play an important role in continued efforts to erode the patronage basis of Thai politics.

In a country traditionally characterised by a high degree of political centralisation, NGOs are also working to strengthen local government. NGO and PO activists now sit on provincial and municipal councils, albeit in small numbers, while the Union of Civil Liberties (UCL), Thailand’s most prominent human rights NGO, has been working to strengthen local government, especially at the sub-district level. In 1996, new legislation was introduced to replace all Subdistrict Councils with Subdistrict Administrative Organisations
(SAOs) by 1998. The new SAOs have greater financial autonomy and broader local representation than the former Councils. Early evidence suggests that the new SAOs are ‘often dominated by local economic and political élites who run the organisations in the image of the central bureaucracy’, marginalising NGOs concerned to promote social development rather than infrastructure projects (Arghiros 1997: 6). To NGOs and reform-oriented bureaucrats in government agencies such as the NESDB however they represent a first step to promoting broader participation in decision-making and in restructuring the centralised Thai state.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter addressed two principal themes, first, the changing nature of social organisation in South-East Asia as suggested by the proliferation of NGOs and second, the impact of NGOs on South-East Asia politics, especially their role in the democratisation process. On the first point, this chapter suggests that social relationships in South-East Asia are increasingly mediated by a range of voluntary organisations or NGOs which constitute a distinctive ‘layer’ of civil society. To turn Landé’s argument from 1973, NGOs and other voluntary organisations are now responsible for a significant part of the totality of interest articulation in South-East Asia and are no longer occupationally bounded. In turn, these voluntary organisations are underpinned by rules (both their own and those of the state), by hierarchical structures, by bureaucratic procedures and by a complex range of institutional relationships with other social actors, rather than simple dyadic ties. NGOs directly confront and work to undermine patronage-based political structures and decision-making processes in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Cambodia, and play a small but increasing role in the building of civil society in Vietnam, Burma and Singapore. In turn this chapter also argues that NGOs play an important role in supporting political reform in Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Burma and in promoting or supporting democracy in Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia.

In Cambodia and Thailand, the prevailing institutional arrangement has changed significantly in the last decade. In Cambodia, the 1993 constitution has institutionalised a separation of powers, with a strong role for the legislature, and with liberal rights of association. Similarly, in Thailand, constitutional amendments and continuing debate on constitutional reform,
aided by related legislation, have consolidated a parliamentary system of government and similarly liberal rights of association. In each country, the military has accepted general constitutional limitations on the right to participate in government, even where it continues to defend traditional prerogatives and retains a considerable institutional or organisational capacity to take power or intervene in important political debates. In each case, liberal freedom of association provisions allow NGOs to organise coalitions to consolidate their political power. Significantly, prominent NGO apex bodies exist in Cambodia and Thailand and to a lesser extent in Indonesia, in contrast to Malaysia where political conditions and government legislation militate against effective NGO co-ordination or Burma and Vietnam where the NGO community remains too small to represent a significant political actor.

The proliferation of NGOs in South-East Asia since the early 1980s and their increasing political engagement also points to changes in the nature of political opposition and protest to the region’s strong-arm governments. In the 1960s and 1970s, opposition movements in Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia were largely centralised, class-based and ideologically coherent, centred on underground left-wing movements and student associations. By the 1980s and 1990s, however, opposition movements in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia especially, had become more issue-based, more disparate and more ideologically flexible. As events in Indonesia in 1996 and 1997 indicate, opposition and protest has not necessarily become less militant but it has become more targeted and focused and, in many cases, more effective. In many respects, this stems from the commitment of NGOs to participation, as well as protest, to engaging the state in a plethora of issue-based arenas. In Thailand, and Indonesia, second and third generation NGOs previously eschewed the system and concentrated on grassroots organisation and mobilisation. With their counterparts in Cambodia however, NGO leaders and officials today not only lobby and campaign in a highly focused manner but often enjoy close relationships with particular government ministries, or sit on government bodies.

Fundamentally, the state in Indonesia, Cambodia and Thailand does not attempt to monopolise grassroots or local association life, although it does attempt to maintain certain controls over local political activation and mobilisation. In Cambodia, the State Secretariat for Rural Development (SSRD), established in 1993, seeks to organise and mobilise local associations, though encourages NGOs to work in rural areas (SSRD 1993: 8). In Thailand, since the 1982–1986 Five Year Plan, the state has sought to establish village-
level groups (*klum*), though without displacing NGOs relationships with *klum* (Hirsch 1990: 161–3). Equally, in Indonesia, the government’s repression of the PDI in July 1996 and its victory in the June 1997 assembly elections illustrates that the state is still reluctant to cede GOLKAR’s or the military’s pre-eminent role in national politics. The suppression of the PDI in July 1996 however and its poor performance in the May 1997 national assembly elections after the government installed a new leader in place of Megawati Sukarnoputri, points to a political space, an arena in which NGOs can mobilise and oppose the state. As such, an institutional vacuum exists in Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia, both at local and national level, which allows NGOs to proliferate and engage in political organisation and activation.

As this chapter has argued throughout, NGOs play a variety of political roles in South-East Asia under a variety of regime conditions. In Vietnam, Burma, Malaysia and Singapore NGOs are small in number or overshadowed by a successful and strong state, but still play a role in civil society of some political significance. In countries such as Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia, however, NGOs have become an important political force and a complex pattern of NGO participation and protest has become a significant feature of national politics. As an overview of a complex and diverse region of the developing world, this chapter has dealt with this pattern of NGO participation and protest in brief, sweeping terms. The chapters that follow, however, are devoted to the Philippines, the country in South-East Asia with the largest and most politically significant NGO community where these complexities are explored in far more detail, throwing light not only on Philippine politics, but on changing patterns of politics throughout the region.
3 Non-governmental organisations and politics in the Philippines
From Spanish rule to the fall of Marcos

INTRODUCTION

Non-governmental organisations are largely a phenomenon of the 1980s. Development NGOs, and a discourse surrounding their activities, date largely to the 1970s though it was only in the 1980s that these phenomena acquired real momentum. Yet as chapters 1 and 2 also noted, NGOs have roots stretching back to the late nineteenth century and much of the political significance of the NGO phenomenon only becomes apparent when related to this long history. In this respect, Korten’s typology of three ‘generations’ of NGOs or NGO strategies (1990: 115–27) represents an important contribution to the NGO literature. Despite this strength however, Korten’s typology, especially the first and second ‘generations’, is based on a primarily socio-economic interpretation of NGO activity that reflects the focus of the broader literature. In the Philippines, however, as in South-East Asia as a whole, NGOs and their antecedents, civic and political organisations, have a long record of participation in politics. In turn, the contemporary political roles of NGOs and the political context to those roles becomes more apparent when situated in this historical context.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES FROM THE 1880s TO 1972

‘First generation’ strategies in the Philippines date to the late nineteenth century and to collaboration between élite philanthropists, the Catholic Church and the Spanish colonial administration. One of the first Philippine civic organisations, the Conferencia de San Vicente de Paul, was established in 1886 by Spanish priests, with Margarita Roxas de Ayala, founder of the Casa Ayala and scion of the Zobel de Ayala family, its first President (Bukang
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Liwayway 1967: 26). In the 1880s, the Spanish colonial administration established the General Inspection of Charities and Public Health to involve charities in upgrading medical skills and facilities, and to make up for the shortage of qualified personnel in the bureaucracy (Robles 1969: 230). According to Rizal’s *Noli me Tangere*, the administration gave awards to civic initiatives that promoted agricultural or commercial development, financed by taxes on cock fighting (Rizal 1961: 289). Spanish policy however restricted the right of association and political organisations were treated harshly.

Philanthropy was a prominent force in the establishment of civic organisations throughout the world in the mid- to late nineteenth century. In the Philippines however, where family clans would long remain the primary unit of social organisation and a dominant force in politics, its role was accentuated. Philanthropy enabled prominent families to secure church approval of their wealth and to legitimate their social prestige; to secure and maintain political office and protect their economic interests; and to socially interact with the Spanish, and later, American, rulers. For the Catholic Church, the establishment of charitable organisations brought the support of prominent families in enforcing its own religious hegemony. Equally, the Spanish state relied on the Church and prominent philanthropists to help provide relief and maintain social order during emergencies and natural disasters, including the 1878 famine.

During the Philippine–American War 1898–1901, both sides used civic organisations as adjuncts to their armies. *Ilustrados* (and women in particular) formed philanthropic organisations, such as the Philippine Red Cross, to raise funds for the *Katipunan*, and provide medical care for its wounded soldiers (Kalaw 1969: 152). American civic organisations, including the Salvation Army and the YMCA were mobilised to support the American war effort, especially to treat wounded soldiers.

With the imposition of American rule by 1901, charities began to multiply, stimulated by American colonial policy. William Howard Taft, the first American Governor General, and later, US President, believed that American-style de Tocquevillian democracy, centred on local government and vibrant civic organisations, could be transplanted to the Philippines (Karnow 1989: 228).

A legal framework governing the activities of civic organisations was outlined in the Philippine Corporation Law of 1906, and numerous American civic organisations had established branches in Manila by the late 1920s, including the Philippine Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Philippine Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Philippine Islands Anti-
American rule consolidated the role of philanthropy in legitimating the social status of Philippine élites. American philanthropic and missionary organisations established branches in the Philippines and members of the Filipino social élite embraced their activities with enthusiasm. Aluit’s history of the Philippine Red Cross, for instance, notes that membership in the 1910s ‘was a veritable roster of all the great names of the Philippine scene at the time; Juan Sumulong, Jose de Luzurriaga, Cayetano S. Arellano, Jaime de Veyra, Sergio Osmeña, Vicente Singson Encarnacion, Rafael Palma and Manuel L. Quezon all served on the board’ (Aluit 1972: 182–3). However, few philanthropic organisations challenged the administration on the socio-economic consequences of colonial rule.2

The American colonial government had two main means of encouraging the proliferation of civic organisations. First, senior politicians, judges and administrators developed personal relationships with prominent American and Filipino philanthropists to provide élite patronage and leadership. Taft organised the Gota de Leche, a campaign to provide milk for orphan babies, with the civic organisation La Proteccion de la Infancia, headed by prominent Filipino philanthropist, Teodoro Yangco (Gleeck 1976: 85). Returning to the Philippines in 1905 as Secretary of War, Taft presided over the formal organisation of the Philippine Chapter of the American Red Cross (Ibid.: 89). A later Governor General, W. Cameron Forbes, generated financial support for the YMCA (described by Gleeck as ‘The most successful American effort deliberately aimed at modifying Filipino values’) and served as one of the first Presidents of the Philippine Amateur Athletic Association (Ibid.: 71, 74–5). The second method was to provide direct government funding. In 1921, the colonial government allotted $150,000, equivalent to 2.2 per cent of its annual expenditure (Cameron Forbes 1928 Vol. II: 244),3 to civic organisations engaged in health service provision, especially for a campaign against leprosy (Ibid. Vol I: 278). Senior American officials were proud of the contribution civic organisations made to the provision of social services and the institutional innovation which they represented in a country where people traditionally relied on familial relationships to fulfil social needs.4 Yet, the socio-economic impact of civic organisations was palliative to overall colonial strategy of resource extraction.5

Civic organisations played an important political role in American colonial strategy. First, they aided the proliferation of democratic values and support
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for the American strategy of local government. In 1922, for instance, Governor General Leonard Wood reported that:

One of the strongest influences for building up interest in proper municipal government comes from the numerous women's clubs. They have done excellent work, especially on behalf of child welfare, public health, public instruction, private and public morality and the stimulating of interest in local governments – municipal and provincial.6

Second, they helped persuade many Filipinos of the value of limited government and the role of independent and self-reliant initiatives at a time when the colonial administration was committed to resource extraction.7 Third, Protestant civic organisations acted as a beachhead in establishing Protestant denominations in a country that was predominantly Catholic (Gleeck 1976: 60). Officials of the YMCA led the first Protestant services on Philippine soil (Cameron Forbes Vol. II: 65). American pastors, Clymer notes, 'considered the YMCA as an evangelical organisation and maintained close ties with the mission' (Clymer 1986: 5). The YMCA also played an important role in muting conflict with the Catholic Church and among the various Protestant denominations while Protestant civic organisations supported the military pacification campaign and maintained close ties with military personnel (Ibid.: 103, 108). Fourth, civic organisations facilitated the American strategy of maintaining political stability by perpetuating the position of the oligarchy, establishing the position of prominent families who remain prominent in NGO circles to this day, including the Benitezes and the Pardo de Taveras. Fifth, according to Cullather (1994: 15), civic organisations and institutions sponsored by the colonial government helped to keep Manila’s restive Chinese minority ‘compliant and happy’ and promoted their ‘retro-assimilation’ into Filipino culture.

During the 1910s however, political cleavages developed between the colonial administration and civic organisations, compounded by racial tensions between Americans who used them to legitimate their political power and social prestige, and Filipinos who used them to articulate their ambiguous and evolving sense of national identity.8 In 1905, the Philippine Chapter of the American Red Cross accepted that the colonial administration should assume responsibility for disaster relief and subsequently became inactive. But in the 1910s, when Filipinos had become more prominent, Americans and Filipinos differed over the role of the colonial administration in the organisation’s affairs
(Gleeck 1976: 87, 89). In 1916, the Red Cross’s activities and its relations with the colonial administration became a major source of controversy when the Philippine legislature passed an act establishing a Philippine chapter independent of the American Red Cross. Directed against American dominance over most, and the exclusion of Filipinos from many, civic organisations, the act was declared void by the administration’s Attorney General (Ibid.: 88). Tensions continued during the 1930s when the administration, now composed mainly of Filipino officials, and the Red Cross vied to claim credit for disaster relief activities, as President Quezon renewed demands for an independent Philippine Red Cross (Ibid.: 92).

Catholic civic organisations were equally engrossed in politics. During the 1930s, anti-communist and anti-socialist Catholic organisations such as the Catholic Women’s League, the Bellermine Evidence League and the Chesterton Evidence League were established in reaction to the growth of trade unions and peasant associations (Fabros 1988: 18–20). Tracing church involvement in socio-economic transformation to this period, Fabros argues that counter-propaganda was the main objective of the church’s emerging concern with social action. This objective, he argues, was consolidated in the 1940s, as Catholic civic organisations began to organise peasants and workers. Following recognition of NGOs in the 1945 UN Charter, the Institute of Social Order, established in 1947, became one of the first church-inspired NGOs in the Philippines.

By the early 1950s, the work of first generation NGOs had crystallised. In 1949, the Council of Welfare Agencies of the Philippines was established and the Community Chest of Greater Manila channelled financial support to its members (Alegre 1996: 5). Overall, operating in the relatively rarefied atmosphere of élite Manila society, civic organisations were far removed from the mass movements that developed in response to American rule, and the increased political power of agrarian-based élites, and played a relatively minor role in the important political debates of the day. During the 1950s however, civic organisations became enmeshed in rural politics. Following World War II, the returning US military, with the aid of local landlords and the Philippine Constabulary, violently demobilised the peasant-based Hukbong Bayan Laban Sa Hapon (HBL, Anti-Japanese People’s Army) because of its perceived communist orientation (Kerkvliet 1977: Chapter 4). The re-imposition of oligarchic rule, and in particular the prohibition on the peasant-backed Democratic Alliance occupying the six seats it won in the 1946 legislative elections provoked remnants of the HBL, led by the Partido Komunista ng
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The Philippine Communist Party (Pilipinas) to form the Hukbong Mapagpalayang Bayan (HMB, The People’s Liberation Army). Before the Huk Rebellion, Central Luzon had ‘virtually no horizontal political organisation’ (Ibid.: 210, 249). At the height of the rebellion, 1949–1951, however, the HMB had roughly 15,000 armed guerrillas, transforming Central Luzon through insurrection and the creation of large peasant unions (Ibid.: 210–11). At the same time, elite philanthropic organisations became increasingly active in rural areas. As agriculture became increasingly dominated by capitalist-based relations of production, and in the absence of government efforts to provide housing, education or other social services to workers, corporate philanthropy supplemented traditional patronage as companies provided support to their workforces and made donations to civic organisations which catered to their workers.

A counter-insurgency campaign directed by the US quashed the rural revolt by the mid-1950s. In 1952, the Quirino administration overhauled legislation governing non-profit voluntary organisations in the Science Act (Republic Act 2067), stimulating an immediate response through the establishment of new civic organisations committed to rural development and these organisations played an important role in winning the support of the rural population of Central Luzon for the government. One of the most important was the PRRM, established in 1952 in direct imitation of the Taiwanese Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (Putzel 1992: 90; Abueva 1971: 362), with help from the Social Welfare Administration (SWA). The SWA became a major funder of NGO activity during the 1950s. Its public assistance budget, P1.9 million a year on average between 1953 and 1957, was supplemented by relief supplies from Catholic Relief Services of America, worth P4 million in 1957 alone. This support enabled the SWA to approve grants totalling P200,000 in 1957, based on 226 applications from civic and charitable organisations (SWA 1960: 4).

A retrospective account of military tactics used to crush the Huks observes that ‘civic organisations [made] contributions to the counter-guerrilla effort that [were] nothing short of awe-inspiring’ (Valeriano and Bohannan 1962: 83). Confirming that view, a Huk commander’s report explains declining support from peasants:

Many have been influenced by deceitful government propaganda, the establishment of ‘welfare agencies’ (Agricultural Credit and Cooperative Financing Administration, Farmers Cooperative Associations, Philippine
Rural Reconstruction Movement, Rural Improvement Club, Social Welfare Administration) and the promised land for the landless program administered by the Land Tenure Administration.

(Kerkvliet 1977: 240)

Although few substantive concessions were made to the demands which had fuelled it, the Huk Rebellion prompted the government to forge direct institutional ties with the peasantry. In 1953, the Quirino administration, at US behest, established the Agricultural Credit and Co-operative Financing Administration (ACCFA) to organise Farmers Co-operative Marketing Associations (FACOMAs) and by 1959, 502 FACOMAS had been organised with a membership of 289,121 farmers (Golay 1961: 287). This first attempt at state-led popular mobilisation was a failure; by 1969, only 250 remained, and by 1975, less than 30 (UPLB 1986: 570). Exploiting weaknesses in FACOMA strategy, élite agrarian interests dominated the new associations, undermining the intended direct links between state and peasants. As Po and Montiel (1980: 62–3) explain:

the FACOMAs were meant to serve the interests of farmers and agricultural producers [and therefore] excluded . . . rural workers who comprise[d] a substantial portion of the rural populace. Sugar tenants were likewise left out . . . . Furthermore, . . . capital was needed before a FACOMA could be organised . . . [O]nly those farmers with the resources to pay their share in the cooperative qualified for membership. The FACOMA structure replicated the inequality characterizing rural society. While the ACCFA aimed to help the small farmer primarily, any bona fide agricultural producer–landlord or tenant could become a member of the FACOMA . . . . It was inevitable therefore that, more often than not, landed interests had the controlling power [within] the FACOMAS.9

In 1956, President Magsaysay, in an attempt to launch a government institution capable of promoting sustained rural development, and undercut potential support for a Huk resurgence, created the Presidential Arm on Community Development. The PACD was designed to replace the government’s hitherto fragmented approach to community organising.10 Although inspired by the success of PRRM, it effectively excluded civic organisations which Magsaysay viewed as potential rivals in his own plans to build popular rural support.11 Together, PACD and American officials drafted proposals to improve local
government, which resulted in the Barrio Council Law of 1955. At the same time, the Bureau of Agricultural Extension established functional community organisations such as ‘4-H’ clubs, farmers’ associations, cooperatives and women’s rural improvement clubs (Po and Montiel 1980: 31). Some, the 4-H clubs especially, later forged ties with independently organised NGOs. Effective local government depended on the viability of these various institutions which in turn were dependent on funding mainly from the PACD. Most proved of short duration however, since the PACD hoarded funding for distribution at election time to barrios that supported particular provincial or national politicians (World Bank 1976: 119; Po and Montiel 1980: 35). Another factor in the 1960s was that President Macapagal, in contrast to Magsaysay, felt that the PACD played a marginal role in promoting economic growth in rural areas (cf. Macapagal 1968: 284), and as a result it was marginalised from policy-making.

In addition to counter-insurgency, the government promoted civic organisations as an alternative to increased state intervention in the economy. Emmanuel Pelaez, Vice-President during the Macapagal administration, for instance, emphasised the need for self-reliance and civic responsibility, echoing positions adopted by successive post-war governments:

> the sooner we realize that progress lies in our initiating action to help ourselves within the framework of basic laws that protect our substantial rights, the sooner we wake up to the fact that progress lies not in government regulation and regimentation but in the least interference by the government in our lives, consistent with the common good, that much sooner will we achieve the progress and prosperity that we all dream of for our country and people.

(Pelaez: 24)

The government had little cause however to argue that Filipinos had become too dependent on the state. By 1964, a year after Pelaez stepped down from the Vice-Presidency, general government expenditure stood at only 13.4 per cent of GNP, and government revenue was 12.7 per cent of GNP, figures which had declined respectively to 13 per cent and 12.2 per cent by 1972 (Doronila 1992: 143). Rather, government positions reflected agrarian élite antipathy to increased state intervention and attempts at undermining the regressive nature of the tax system.12

In another approach to co-opting NGOs, the Americans, through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) helped to establish NAMFREL in 1951 to create
indirect support for a Presidential bid by the Defence Secretary Ramon Magsaysay and channelled funding through American civic organisations (cf. Bonner 1987: 40; Cullather 1994: 112–13). Ostensibly a non-partisan civic organisation, NAMFREL’s campaign was directed largely at corruption and electoral fraud within the incumbent Liberal Party, and provided important support to Nacionalista candidate Magsaysay in the 1953 Presidential elections (cf. Coquia 1955: 282–92). Doronila argues that by campaigning intensively in rural areas, a break with traditional election campaigns which led to a 30 per cent increase in turnout, ‘Magsaysay . . . [by-passed] the local political middlemen who formed the synapses of the patron-client framework of the two-party system’ (Doronila 1972: 96). Magsaysay won the presidency over traditional élite opposition, but those same élites dominated Congress, providing effective opposition to the new President’s programme. To bypass Congressional opposition, Magsaysay needed to generate institutional and organised, rather than individual and spontaneous, support from the rural peasantry but in this he was largely unsuccessful. Following his election, Magsaysay introduced a redistributive land reform programme but his administration lacked effective autonomy from Congress where his Agricultural Tenancy Act of 1955 was emasculated (cf. Putzel 1992: 83–96). Consolidating a pattern of perpetual tension between the executive and Congress for financial control over government programmes, Congress also refused to fund Magsaysay’s social welfare programmes, and his successor, Carlos Garcia was forced to abandon them entirely (Romulo and Romulo 1988: 112).

President Macapagal (1961–1965) also co-operated closely with American advisers and, like Magsaysay, used civic organisations to fight communism and maintain rural stability. In 1962, the government embarked on an economic and social rehabilitation programme in parts of central Luzon where Huk elements remained active, with support from PRRM and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Macapagal 1968: 165). During the mid-1960s, US governments used the CIA and USAID (which channelled funds through the Ford, Rockefeller and Asia foundations), to promote civic organisations in the Philippines. The main objective was to erode support for mass agrarian movements seen as communist.

Despite attempts by post-war governments to mobilise popular-based and organised support, the prevailing regime was relatively unaffected. Writing in 1968, Gunnar Myrdal argued that policy-making was shaped predominantly by ‘personalities and landlord controlled lobbies’ and ‘producer associations built around commercial agricultural products’. In turn, Myrdal argued, the
scope for government action was determined primarily by shifting coalitions among these interests groups (Myrdal 1968 Vol. 1: 389). Landlords were the main source of funding for both political parties, the Liberals and the Nacionalistas. As a result, there was little ideological competition between the two, minimal intra-party solidarity, endemic inter-party switching and membership was effectively confined to politicians (Landé 1964: 1). Along similar lines to Doronila, Grossholtz argued in 1964 that interest groups with a newly political orientation were articulating increasingly explicit demands, leading to a ‘breakdown of the old hierarchial relationships and gross economic inequality’ (Grossholtz 1964: 235). These included business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Veterans groups, church groups, and labour unions. In reality however, successive governments dissipated non-élite political demands through a combination of repression and co-option.

Thus, when Ferdinand Marcos became President in 1965, civic organisations were a weak, albeit tangible, threat. Marcos responded by co-opting or displacing civic organisations engaged in relief and welfare activity, largely by expanding the socio-economic and community development role of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). In the government’s Four Year Economic Program, 1967–1970, co-ordination with NGOs in promoting community development is only briefly mentioned, while a whole chapter is given over to the Civic Action Program of the AFP. Marcos proved adept at using civic organisations for his own ends. In 1967, for instance, he persuaded PRRM’s President Gregorio Feliciano to become Head of the Social Welfare Administration, a move that led to consternation within PRRM’s board (See chapter 5). To Marcos, as to Magsaysay and Macapagal before him, NGOs were useful vehicles in undermining potential communist threats, and in 1969, he appointed PRRM Chairman Manuel Manahan to chair the Central Luzon Study Commission, a body charged with creating a bipartisan consensus on renewed rural unrest in the region (Lachica 1971: 251).

Overall, despite limited funding, civic organisations proliferated during the late 1960s. From 1967 to 1971 inclusive, 750 non-stock entities (NSEs) on average registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission each year, compared to 3,200 stock entities (SEC 1967–1971). Martial law however led to a dramatic restructuring in relationships between the non-profit and business sectors; registrations of NSEs fell to 559 in 1972 and 607 in 1973 while stock entity registrations rose to 4145 and 6156 respectively. Yet by 1975, NGOs began to proliferate again.
On 21 September 1972, Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law. Congress was closed, key opposition leaders were arrested, existing political parties were banned, newspapers and radio/television stations were closed or nationalised, and a brutal counter-insurgency campaign was unleashed against rural and urban communities alike. All institutions that existed independently of the state and that could potentially mobilise opposition to it, were repressed, driven underground or shut down. The Catholic hierarchy and officials of the main Protestant churches, supported the regime, yet Marcos clamped down on local social action programmes, jailing priests and nuns, raiding church establishments (Youngblood 1990: 172–3), and disrupting the work of church-based development NGOs. When martial law was declared, the Philippine NGO community was relatively small. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Philippines were seen internationally as an oasis of economic well-being and democratic stability, and was not an important recipient of Official Development Assistance (ODA), a major stimulant to NGO proliferation and growth in South Asia at this time. In the absence of major ODA inflows, NGOs possessed little financial capacity to counter the patronage-based appeal of the martial law regime. The small number that existed were primarily involved in relief and welfare rather than political activity and were largely controlled by prominent businessmen and philanthropists who were willing to acquiesce to the dictats of the martial law regime.

Nevertheless, Marcos tried to ensure that élite NGOs would not become a threat by curbing their financial autonomy, though the strategy was only partially successful. First, the government excluded civic organisations from participating in government-initiated socio-economic programmes. The Four Year Development Plan 1974–1977 excluded collaboration with NGOs, and opted instead for a process of state-directed institution building centred on barrio councils, citizens assemblies, barrio associations and co-operatives (GoP 1973: chapter 2). Second, shares of the proceeds of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes allocated to prominent NGOs were cut on the orders of Marcos, as happened to the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement in 1979. Third, in 1976, the government unsuccessfully attempted to impose a 1 per cent tax on business profits to establish a government controlled Community Fund, a move which would have curbed private sector funding of business organised or oriented NGOs (BONGOs) such as Philippine Business for Social Progress (Callanta 1988: 126).
While largely ignoring the limited threat which NGOs posed, especially in the 1970s, Marcos concentrated on deploying state patronage in an attempt to co-opt support from the urban and rural population and neutralise the armed opposition of the New Peoples Army. In 1973, in Presidential Decree (PD) number 27, Marcos, one the country’s largest landowners, launched a limited land reform programme. Confined to rice and cornlands, the programme was limited to 34 per cent of tenant farmers and barely 8 per cent of an estimated 5.28 million landless farmers (Kerkvliet 1979: 129, 131). To become beneficiaries however, farmers had to join Samahang Nayon (SN, Barrio or Pre-cooperative Associations), and the government planned to establish 16,000 SNs with a combined membership of 1 million (UPLB 1986: 570). SNs were supposed to provide revenue to the government, and to undermine the hundreds of independent rural co-operatives excluded from the land reform programme (Kerkvliet 1979: 127). According to government figures, 15,451 SNs were established within a year and a half of the enactment of PD27, with a membership of 663,489 farmers (UPLB 1986: 570), yet Kerkvliet argues that only a fraction of the planned target was reached by 1979 (Kerkvliet 1979: 127). Between 1979 and 1985, 459 independent rural co-operatives registered with the Bureau of Rural Workers (UPLB 1986: 569), suggesting that the Marcos strategy had failed. Yet, in parts of Central Luzon where the land reform programme was successful, SNs, Kilusang Bayan (government-controlled cooperatives) and other government-controlled rural organisations, provided important support to the Marcos regime until its collapse in 1986.

Marcos also tried to create patronage networks that linked local communities directly to the state through a new system of village-based local government. Reviving the pre-colonial barangay (village) structure because of its nationalist overtones, in place of barrios, the government renamed existing structures at the local, municipal, and provincial level and established a host of new structures: the Katipunan ng mga Barangay (League of Barangay Councils), the Kabataang Barangay Pampook (League of Barangay Youth Organisations), the Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian (League of Provincial and City Councils) and the Kabataang Pambarangay (Barangay Youth Organisation). As a result, by the mid-1970s, few other significant social organisations existed apart from those of the church (Wurfel 1988: 119) and, as Hollnsteiner notes, ‘Spontaneous expressions of mass interests [were] either co-opted by élites or suppressed as subversive threats to the state’ (Hollnsteiner 1979: 391).
During the late 1970s however, the number of NGOs grew significantly (see chapter 5) and the government was forced to make overtures to them for two important reasons. First, from the late 1970s onwards, the government attempted to normalise its rule. In 1978, elections were held to a new National Assembly after political parties had been relegalised and in 1981, martial law was lifted. Tentative collaboration between NGOs and state agencies became part of a process of normalisation. Second, as the martial law regime’s industrialisation strategy floundered following global oil price rises in 1979, poverty levels increased, and the country was gripped by economic crisis. As a result, the government became progressively more dependent on ODA (see Table 3.1). As ODA increased however, the bureaucracy, as the difference between commitments and actual flows in Table 3.1 illustrates, had difficulty in absorbing it, and it was forced to involve NGOs in project implementation.

### Table 3.1 ODA flows to the Philippines 1978–1990 (US$m)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ODA commitments from all sources</th>
<th>ODA flows from all sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>514.7</td>
<td>249.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>399.4</td>
<td>267.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>450.2</td>
<td>299.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>475.0</td>
<td>376.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>495.5</td>
<td>333.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>534.9</td>
<td>429.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>458.9</td>
<td>381.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>365.9</td>
<td>460.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1103.1</td>
<td>955.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1074.7</td>
<td>770.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>1870.7</td>
<td>854.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1611.2</td>
<td>844.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2176.2</td>
<td>1276.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The government was also unable to control the disbursement of large amounts of development assistance, and aid from European funding NGOs especially went directly to Philippine counterparts. In addition, the way in which development was conceived by multi-lateral financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, changed. Locally-based popular participation and ‘basic needs’ were increasingly emphasised
The Philippines to the fall of Marcos

An ILO mission to the Philippines in 1974 argued that the country’s growth potential lay largely in the rural sector and that development needed to be based on popular participation, especially at the barrio level (Rainis et al. 1974: 64). As a result, the Marcos government came under pressure to involve NGOs and other forms of community-based organisations in its socio-economic development programmes. Bowing to this pressure, government agencies promoted programmes that fostered local participation and initiative. In 1976, for instance, the National Irrigation Authority (NIA) tried to launch autonomous irrigation associations in Central and Northern Luzon (Boyce 1993: 86). In 1981, an NGO called SARILAKAS (from sariling lakas, or ‘own strength’) was launched by the Bureau of Rural Workers, with funds from the Dutch government and the International Labour Organisation’s Programme on Organisations of the Rural Poor (PORP) (Harland 1991). SARILAKAS was designed to establish autonomous POs and in 1983 the Bureau of Rural Workers established another NGO, PROCESS (Participatory Research Organisation of Communities and Education in the Struggle for Self-Reliance), to replicate SARILAKAS’s success in community organising.

These initiatives were reflected in overall government policy. The government’s Five Year Development Plan 1978–1982 called for closer co-ordination with NGOs in promoting community development and in social service provision. The Updated Philippine Development Plan 1984–1987, went further, encouraging links with NGOs to strengthen the delivery of social services (NEDA 1984: 225). More specifically, the government noted the role of state–NGO links in attempts to curb population growth (Ibid.: 223), echoing developments in Indonesia where, under prodding from USAID, the government worked with NGOs to implement family planning programmes.

Despite these overtures however, the government maintained its leading role in implementing community development projects. This control facilitated the direct flow of state patronage into barrios and barangays, and provided the financial resources to mobilise grassroots support as regime legitimacy came under increased threat. Large scale community development initiatives supported by official development assistance donors also provided substantial opportunities to enrich the first couple. Imelda Marcos enriched herself by plundering ODA grants to community development projects (Aquino 1987: 63–9) through her control of the Ministry of Human Settlements (MHS), a ‘super-ministry’ created in 1981 which displaced the work of many civic organisations. In 1981, the MHS launched Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran (KKK, Movement for Livelihood and Progress), with an initial budget of $1 billion. Ostensibly, KKK aimed to give interest free loans to support livelihood projects, but, under Imelda’s control, was used in practice to buy the support of local officials and to acquire land for herself and her husband (Aquino
The government also established ostensibly independent ARBAs, but the strategy failed since the ARBAs were widely seen as creations of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (UPLB 1986: 570). A host of other community organisations were also established: Kilusang Sariling Sikap (KSS, Self-Help Movement) (which came under the auspices of the KKK); Samabang Kabubayan (Countrymen’s Organisation); Bagong Lipunan Community Associations (linked to Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, [KBL, the New Society Movement], the ruling party established in 1978), and KABISIG (Linking Arms) Service Brigades. The latter initiative illustrated the Marcoses’ desperate and ultimately unsuccessful attempts to stem the erosion of support for their regime, and in December 1985, the idea was expanded when Marcos launched Kabisig sa Diwang Pilipino (Comrades in Filipino Minds), rhetorically aimed at encouraging popular participation in government and propagating a spiritual, humanist, and nationalist ideology. Riven by corruption, dominated by KBL henchmen and blatantly designed to mobilise support for the first couple, these initiatives alienated the more socially committed NGOs that grappled with rising poverty and landlessness, ineffective government service delivery programmes, and the violent control of associational life, and by 1986 relations between the state and NGOs were more polarised than at any time in the post-independence period.

CONCLUSION

The Philippines has a long tradition of voluntary activity, dating back to the 1880s and Spanish colonial rule. Promoted by the Philippine Corporation Law of 1906, civic and political organisations proliferated in Manila during the years of American colonial rule (1898–1946). After World War II, post-independence regimes promoted their continued proliferation, through legislation such as the Science Act of 1952, and through government funding channelled through agencies such as the SWA and the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD).

Philippine NGOs, and their antecedents, civic and political organisations have long been used in the pursuit of political objectives. The proliferation of relief and welfare organisations, Korten’s ‘first generation’ NGOs, in the early twentieth century was inextricably bound up with American colonial policy of transplanting American democracy and its institutions in the Philippines. These organisations also helped American officials and businessmen to maintain their social status in Manila and to enable the Filipino middle class to interact with them.

After World War II, new civic organisations focused on rural development. The state, the Catholic Church and élite philanthropic interests all promoted
civic organisations in an attempt to undermine communist insurgency and to preserve existing democratic, and inherently élite, institutions by maintaining rural stability. Thus, in the Philippines, ‘second generation’ NGOs were established primarily to fight rural insurgency and only secondarily to fight rural poverty or remedy faults in first generation strategies.

The policy of post-independence governments towards NGOs has been complex and multifaceted. Rural development NGOs, for instance, proliferated during the early and mid-1950s, stimulated in large part by government legislation and financial support. The Magsaysay administration (1954–1958) ostensibly supported civic organisations, yet Ramon Magsaysay regarded NGOs as a threat to his own plans to develop direct institutional ties between the government and the rural peasantry, and PACD collaboration with NGOs was undermined by the resultant ambivalence. Similarly, during Ferdinand Marcos’s two elected terms as President (1965–1969 and 1969–1972), NGOs continued to proliferate yet Marcos marginalised them, mainly by expanding the community development functions of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The years of the Marcos dictatorship (1972–1986) redefined the Philippine NGO community in many respects (see chapter 4). NGO proliferation slowed initially as a result of the declaration of martial law, but after 1975 a new generation of NGOs emerged, stimulated by rising rural poverty and political marginalisation. Until 1972, NGOs worked in close collaboration with the Philippine state, and, élitist in nature, had weak ties to their beneficiaries. Under the authoritarian regime however, new NGOs worked closely with grassroots ‘people’s organisations’ and eschewed collaboration with the state to varying degrees. Implementation of development projects in local communities provided the means to mobilise opposition to the state and NGOs developed significant capabilities, both in delivering social services and in organising beneficiaries. After 1979, the government was forced by foreign funders and economic circumstances to involve many NGOs in the implementation of development projects. To secure its own position and to maintain political stability however, the government promoted state institutions that mobilised people at the barrio or barangay level, bringing NGOs and the state into direct competition for the support of specific constituencies.

By 1986, NGO proliferation had made the NGO community an important political actor. Most NGOs, however, were bitterly opposed to the Marcos regime and NGO strategy aimed primarily to build an infrastructure of political power and a socio-economic capacity that was autonomous from the government and had the potential to undermine it. In 1986, therefore, the Philippine state, traditionally undermined by a variegated range of autonomous and often powerful social forces, faced a new political force, complicating the regime consolidation dilemmas of the Aquino government.
4 Non-governmental organisations and the Philippine state, 1986–1996

INTRODUCTION

After the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, Philippine NGOs continued to proliferate and by the early 1990s, the Philippine NGO community had become one of the largest and best organised in the developing world. NGOs were major beneficiaries of the political liberalisation that followed Corazon Aquino’s accession to power and Aquino quickly forged ties with NGOs, a policy continued by her successor in 1992, General Fidel Ramos. In this and the chapters that follow, the political consequences of NGO proliferation and the increasing political prominence of NGOs are examined in detail, but this chapter looks at one significant aspect; the growing ties between NGOs and the Philippines state between 1986 and 1996.

In the immediate wake of the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986, ‘third generation’ NGOs, many of whom were taken aback by the demise of Marcos, began to reassess their stance towards the Philippine state. In a relatively short period of time, NGOs became an important political force and as such, became potential partners in a strategic alliance that could enhance the Philippine state’s autonomy from the economic, predominantly agrarian, elites who had traditionally acted as a restraint on the development of state autonomy and capacity. But what would be the basis of such an alliance and how would it develop between 1986 and 1996?

In one theoretical case for collaboration between states and NGOs, Evans (1992: 164) argues that the ‘developmental states’ of East Asia (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore) are characterised by ‘an autonomy embedded in a concrete set of social ties which bind the state to society and provide institutionalised channels for the continual negotiation and renegotiation of goals and policies’. In certain middle-income countries such as Brazil however, ‘embedded autonomy is a partial rather than a global attribute’, largely because the ‘persistence of clientelistic and patrimonial
characteristics has prevented the construction of Weberian corporate coherence’ within the state apparatus (Ibid.: 172). In India especially, Evans notes, the state ‘lacks the ties that might enable it to mount a shared project with social groups interested in transformation’ (Ibid.: 176).

Evans’ partial embedded autonomy concept is useful in analysing development dilemmas in the Philippines. The Philippine state has been described as ‘soft’, ‘weak’, and ‘captive’ (Wurfel 1988: 327; Haggard 1990b: 216; Putzel 1992: xx), and Rivera (1994: 128) notes that it has failed significantly ‘to construct or oversee a social coalition’ capable of sustaining industrial growth. Rood (1992) argues however that a strong community of NGOs could help provide the Philippine state with some insulation from socio-economic élites. Evidence from other countries in South-East Asia covered in chapter 2 and from other parts of the developing world noted in chapter 1 suggests that a politically-activist NGO community not only strengthens civil society but exerts a positive influence on the state in promoting and supporting public policy reform. This chapter explores this proposition with respect to the Philippines.

THE BACKGROUND TO STATE POLICY

The environment for NGO action in the Philippines is liberal in comparison to other countries in South-East Asia, especially in the period since 1986. State permission is not required to establish an NGO and few controls existed on foreign funding to NGOs. Under the 1980 Corporation Code of the Philippines, NGOs acquire a legal personality by registering with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) (SALAG n.d.: 3). Registration in itself however does not confer NGO status,¹ and the SEC estimates that NGOs account for roughly 75 per cent of registered non-stock entities.² Table 4.1 sets out the total number of non-stock entities registered with the SEC between 1984 and 1995, and the number of NGOs as per the SEC estimate. The figures show an 88 per cent increase in the number of NGOs registered between January 1986 and March 1992, roughly coinciding with the years of the Aquino presidency, and a further 38 per cent increase between March 1992 and December 1995, covering the first three and a half years of the Ramos presidency. This increase is partly explained by anti-Marcos and development NGOs registering in the more liberal atmosphere post-1986 and by the establishment of new development NGOs as donor assistance to the Philippines increased in support of the new Aquino government.
Table 4.1 Non-stock entities (NSEs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs): 1984–1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Non-Stock Entities (NSEs)</th>
<th>Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)</th>
<th>NGOs: Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1995</td>
<td>93,597</td>
<td>70,200</td>
<td>+ 5.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1995</td>
<td>89,619</td>
<td>67,200</td>
<td>+ 6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1994</td>
<td>86,652</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>+ 9.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1994</td>
<td>81,653</td>
<td>61,200</td>
<td>+ 8.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1993</td>
<td>77,697</td>
<td>58,200</td>
<td>+10.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1993</td>
<td>76,369</td>
<td>57,200</td>
<td>+13.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1992</td>
<td>70,673</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>+ 8.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1992</td>
<td>67,748</td>
<td>50,800</td>
<td>+13.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1991</td>
<td>59,199</td>
<td>44,400</td>
<td>+13.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1990</td>
<td>54,925</td>
<td>41,100</td>
<td>+13.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1989</td>
<td>45,444</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>+ 8.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1988</td>
<td>43,528</td>
<td>32,600</td>
<td>+ 7.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1988</td>
<td>41,863</td>
<td>31,300</td>
<td>+ 9.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1987</td>
<td>39,912</td>
<td>29,900</td>
<td>+ 8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1987</td>
<td>38,353</td>
<td>28,700</td>
<td>+ 5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1986</td>
<td>37,191</td>
<td>27,900</td>
<td>+ 5.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1986</td>
<td>36,179</td>
<td>27,100</td>
<td>+ 8.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1985</td>
<td>35,937</td>
<td>26,900</td>
<td>+ 6.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1985</td>
<td>34,877</td>
<td>26,100</td>
<td>+ 6.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1984</td>
<td>33,787</td>
<td>25,300</td>
<td>+ 6.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1984</td>
<td>31,719</td>
<td>23,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes:
1. Under Section 87 of the 1980 Corporation Code, a non-stock entity ‘is one where no part of its income is distributable as dividends to its members, trustees, or officers subject to the provisions of this code . . . [A]ny profit which a non-stock corporation may obtain as an incident to its operations shall . . . be used for the furtherance of the . . . purposes for which the corporation was organised.’
2. Number of NGOs = 75% of the number of NSEs as per SEC estimate (see endnote 2). Rounded off to the nearest one hundred.
3. Change in the number of NGOs from previous figure expressed on a per annum basis.
4. The figures for NGO numbers (including POs) are illustrative at best. They underestimate true numbers since many NGOs and POs, especially in remote rural areas, are not registered, while they overstate the numbers since NGOs and POs that cease to exist are not deregistered.
Table 4.1 also illustrates however that the largest rate of growth in the number of NGOs and POs occurred between 1989 and 1992. This is largely explained by the establishment of NGOs which aimed to channel financial and managerial resources on a profit-making basis to socio-economic development projects, or to obtain access to government funding channelled through new ‘pork barrel’ (patronage-based) programmes. During the years of the Aquino presidency, ODA flows as a percentage of GNP reached record levels; 2.8 per cent in 1986–87, 2.5 per cent in 1987–88, 2.3 per cent in 1988–89, 3.3 per cent in 1989–90 and 3.0 per cent in 1990–91. By 1991–92 however, it had fallen to 1.6 per cent, equivalent to the rate of dependence in the late 1960s (OECD 1988–93). Most ODA donors insisted on NGO involvement as a condition of most programme loans, and as the government sought NGO partners, many were established specifically to the avail of ODA support, often with the connivance of local government officials. A second category was made up of NGOs established by politicians, members of local government units, and the military. The motives were invariably political; first, a new means to the old end of maintaining control over the allocation of resources dispersed to the local or national level by national or international sources; and second, recourse to a traditional élite strategy of co-opting popular institutional initiatives that threaten the status quo. A third category consisted of phantom NGOs set up to the avail of tax shelters.3

After registering with the SEC, stock and non-stock entities are required to submit annual accounts. This is the sole means by which the SEC can monitor the profit/non-profit status of a registered entity.4 The SEC however lacks the resources to follow up corporations that do not file and even reputable development NGOs fail to submit annual returns. Non-stock entity status is therefore widely abused. Many NGOs welcome this loose regulatory environment, equating it with the opportunity to create a rival institutional power-base to a state that could reassume its authoritarian character. One 1992 survey, however, estimated that only 10 per cent of registered NGOs could be considered as ‘genuine development NGOs’.5

The laxity and uncertainty which characterises SEC oversight of the NGO community is mirrored by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). NEDA is responsible for monitoring official and unofficial development assistance from abroad channelled to Philippine NGOs, yet by 1993 had no procedures for monitoring funding that goes directly to NGOs and only limited procedures for monitoring funding coursed through government bodies. By 1993, NEDA’s Social Development Staff (SDS) had still not established adequate mechanisms to monitor the development NGO community or foreign funding channelled
to it, and was instead relying on its regular liaison with the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) for information about ODA inflows and the overall size of the development NGO community.6

These problems were exacerbated by the passage of the 1991 Local Government Code, (Republic Act No. 7160), a radical decentralisation programme under which Local Government Units (LGUs) received 40 per cent of government revenue and 70,000 civil servants were transferred to LGUs (Brillantes 1993b). The bill provided for significant NGO and PO representation in local government (see chapter 6) and by mid-1993, 16,834 NGOs were accredited for participation in local government structures (LGA 1993a: 5, 11). The accreditation process co-ordinated by the DILG, however, went far from smoothly. Different definitions of NGO were applied in different parts of the country, and many development NGOs were denied accreditation by local officials because of their perceived ideological orientation (Bautista and Tigno 1993; Navarro 1993).7 Neither the DILG nor any other national office had the power to legally enforce a standard definition of an NGO, allowing local officials to accredit often dubious organisations and exclude politically-active but well established development NGOs.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND THE EXECUTIVE

Within weeks of assuming the Presidency on 25 February 1986, Corazon Aquino involved NGOs in the process of government to an unprecedented extent. Three human rights lawyers from the Free Legal Assistant Group (FLAG), Joker Arroyo, Augusto Sanchez and Rene Saguisag became Executive Secretary, Labour Minister, and Presidential Spokesperson respectively, while Dr. Mita Pardo de Tavera, of Alay Kapwa Kilusang Pangkalusugan8 became Social Welfare Minister. Other prominent NGO activists joined the government at sub-cabinet level, notably Karina Constantino-David of the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA) who became Deputy Minister for Social Services and Development. In Executive Order No. 8 of 16 March, Aquino established a Presidential Committee on Human Rights (PCHR) in response to pressure from human rights and other NGOs, and appointed Jose Diokno of FLAG as Chairman, and Sr. Mariani Dimaranan, Chairperson of Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), as a member. The government also established a Judicial Reorganisation Committee (JRC) and a Presidential Committee on Political Detainees, both with FLAG and TFDP representation. Then, in Proclamation No. 9 of 21 April, Aquino appointed 48 members to a convention
NGOs and the Philippine state 73

charged with drafting a new constitution, over 20 per cent of whom were popularly associated with the NGO/PO community.9 These appointments suggested a number of ambiguities. Aquino rewarded leading opposition figures for their role in bringing down the Marcos regime, and the appointments in many cases resulted from institutional pressures on the government.10 Yet, in many cases, the appointees were close friends,11 while to others, Aquino, the daughter of a leading hacendado, was acting out the traditional role of patron with which her upbringing had made her well-acquainted.12

Overall, the first twelve months were characterised by active, albeit tentative and suspicious, support for the Aquino government from NGOs of all political persuasions and the broad social movements in which they participated. Symbolising the new entente cordiale, the new constitution provided for NGO participation in national life to an extent that was unique in the developing world. Article XIII Sections 15 and 16 noted that

Sec. 15. The State shall respect the role of independent people’s organisations to enable the people to pursue and protect, within the democratic framework, their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means.

Noledo (1992a)

Sec. 16. The right of the people and their organisations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making shall not be abridged. The state shall by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms.

Ibid.

Recognition was also provided in Article II, Section 23, which sets out general state policies,13 and in Article X Section 14 which provides for NGO participation in local government structures.14

By February 1987 however, significant tensions over the role of NGOs began to emerge, as the interests of the armed forces and of conservative businessmen within the administration came to dominate the government. On 22 January 1987, 15,000 farmers led by Kilusang Magbukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, Philippine Peasant’s Union) leader Jaime Tadeo, marched on the Presidential Palace to protest government backtracking on redistributive agrarian reform. At Mendiola Bridge, police and soldiers opened fire and 18 demonstrators were killed. On 27 January, rebel soldiers launched their third coup attempt against the government, designed to disrupt the referendum on the draft constitution scheduled for 2 February and to end the government’s peace overtures to the National Democratic Front-Communist Party of the
Philippines-New Peoples Army (NDF-CPP-NPA). Although the coup was defeated, and the referendum went ahead as scheduled, the coup attempt achieved its other objective, and in a speech on 18 March 1987, Aquino promised to ‘unleash the sword of war’ against insurgents (Coronel-Ferrer and Raquiza 1993: 11).

The basis for state–NGO collaboration was further eroded when Congressional elections held on 11 May 1987 restored a House of Representatives dominated by ‘caciques’, the country’s traditional agrarian élite. By 1989, agriculture in the Philippines accounted for only 24 per cent of GNP (World Bank 1991: 208). Compared to 26 per cent in 1965 however, the importance of agriculture had barely declined, with the Philippines remaining a predominantly rural and agrarian society with 58 per cent of the population living in rural areas (Ibid.: 208, 264). More importantly, landowning families, by diversifying into manufacturing and tertiary activity, maintained their dominance over the economy. As Rivera (1994: 44) notes

> Among the 87 stockholding families and economic groups that control the top 120 manufacturing firms [in 1986], there are 22 individual families and family groups with substantial land holdings. These landed capitalists families and executives make up close to half (48%) of all indigenous capitalists, excluding Chinese-Filipino families . . . . On the other hand, as a percentage of all the 87 family groups in the study including Chinese-Filipinos, the landed capitalists still constitute 25% of the total . . . . Furthermore, the big landed capitalist families control 40 out of 120 leading manufacturing firms or 33% of the total.

Given the traditional relationship between socio-economic power and election results, centred on election spending, landowning family groups dominated the newly-elected Congress. According to Pangilinan (1992),

> Of the 200 House Representatives, 130 belong to the so-called ‘traditional political families’ while another 39 are relatives of these families. Only 31 Congressmen have no electoral record prior to 1971 and are not related to these old dominant families . . . (O)f the 24 elected Senators, there are a few non-traditional figures, but the cast is largely made up of prominent pre-1972 families.

While scope for state–NGO collaboration was undermined, such collaboration paradoxically became more important for a state strategy of increasing the degree of embedded autonomy it enjoyed vis-à-vis socio-economic élites.
The period from January 1987 to December 1989 represented a trough in relations between the executive and NGOs. With the collapse of peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF), fighting between the armed forces and the New People’s Army (NPA) resumed. As a result, the Aquino government lurched dramatically to the right, partly because it had little direct institutional ties to the NGO community that might have compensated for the increasing power of conservative business groups, the Marcos-era mandarins who remained in the bureaucracy, and the armed forces. Increasingly, the military view of ‘progressive’ NGOs as agents of subversion and unquestioning stooges of the NDF predominated over the view of NEDA and many government ministries of NGOs as important partners.

Military influence continued to increase, peaking in 1989 when fighting between the AFP and the NPA was at its most intense. At cabinet meetings in July and October 1989 at which prospects for government– NGO collaboration were discussed, defense and military intelligence sources argued that foreign financial support to legitimate NGOs was being channelled to the NDF-CPP-NPA. In response, a brief prepared by the Cabinet Secretary for the cabinet meeting of 25 October recommended the creation of a database on NGOs, ‘intensive military surveillance by defense and military intelligence networks of suspected subversive organisations’, and a ‘review of existing legislation to determine which laws can allow for the monitoring of NGO activities and transactions’.16

In December 1989 however, a sixth coup attempt, the most violent and costly to date and defeated only after intense fighting (GoP 1990: 376, 378), dramatically underlined the government’s lack of institutionalised support vis-à-vis the military. Aquino was desperate to revive the flagging spirit of ‘People Power’ and in a Cabinet reshuffle in January 1990, appointed NGO activist Florencio Abad as Secretary for Agrarian Reform.17 Later in the year she grappled with a more strategic problem. Without her own political party in Congress, Aquino faced the traditional plight of Philippine Presidents implementing a reform-oriented legislative programme in the face of implacable opposition from political parties controlled by socio-economic élites. In June 1990, Aquino launched Kabisig (Linking Arms), a non-partisan peoples movement, the government claimed, that was independent of the ruling Lakas ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP, Fight for Philippine Democracy) party, and open to NGOs and POs that supported the government. Kabisig aimed to speed up the implementation of government programmes, especially the proposed Local Government Code, by creating a pro-reform lobby and direct links between policy-makers at the national level and policy-implementors at the local level. More generally, the movement promoted a philosophy of ‘self-
reliance’, a Philippine equivalent, some officials hoped, of Indonesia’s state ideology Panca Sila.\textsuperscript{18} Kabisig was a failure however since Congress refused to allocate funds, and since the bulk of the NGOs and POs at which it was aimed were by now too distrustful of the government.\textsuperscript{19}

Overall however, state overtures to NGOs resulted in a number of accomplishments. By 1990, 18 government departments and 5 specialised government agencies had established NGO Liaison Desks (NEDA 1992: 232–5) and the government had approved broad principles governing NGO participation in government programmes.\textsuperscript{20} Aquino also brought two more NGO leaders into the cabinet: Fulgencio Factoran, a former activist with the Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace (EMJP), and Salvador Enriquez, a former head of the National Economic Protectionism Association (NEPA).\textsuperscript{21} Aquino also involved NGOs in the making and implementation of socio-economic policy. In 1986, NGO and PO representatives participated in the preparation of the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for 1987–1992 (cf. GoP 1986: Appendices). The Plan outlined what was arguably the most comprehensive programme of collaboration between state agencies and NGOs/POs in the developing world, rivalling the Indian government’s seventh Five-Year Plan (1985–1990).\textsuperscript{22} In the plan, NGOs were seen largely as an extension of the private sector and allocated socio-economic roles, especially the identification, implementation and monitoring of specific projects (GoP 1986).\textsuperscript{23} The P5 billion (US$178 million) Community Employment and Development Programme (CEDP), for instance, one of the successes in the early years of the MDPTP, helped create 1.2 million jobs in 1987, exceeding the MDPTP target of 1 million (NEDA 1988: 17, 53, 143). With the bulk of CEDP expenditure channelled through the Department of Public Works and Highways, a department notorious for corruption and the patronage-based allocation of resources, the CEDP was potentially another ‘pork barrel’ to reward local politicians for their support of the Aquino government. NGOs however were contracted by the Department of Budget and Management to monitor project implementation, and, as a result, helped reduce corruption in the CEDP (\textit{Ibid.:} 17).

One of the extensive forms of collaboration in the 1987–1992 MTPDP was in the provision of housing for lower income groups. In 1991, the informal sector, largely composed of urban poor organisations working closely with NGOs, constructed 22,000 units, or 20 per cent of total units constructed, compared to 26,000 by government agencies, and 65,000 by private developers (NEDA 1992: 271). The sector raised almost P2 billion (£5 million or US$7.2 million), much of which came from the government. The Department of Trade and Industry also funded NGOs engaged in small enterprise development,
NGOs and the Philippine state

including P29.8 million channelled through its *Tulong Sa Tao* Self-Employment Loan Assistance programme, P30 million through the NGO Micro Credit Programme and P130 million through its Micro-Enterprise Development programme. In total, the department provided grants or loans to 1,027 NGOs in 1991 (*Ibid.*: 189, 236–7). Government funding was also channelled to NGOs through the Department of Agriculture’s Livelihood Enhancement for Agricultural Development programme.

Following his victory in the May 1992 Presidential elections, Fidel Ramos had even greater cause than Aquino to seek a strategic alliance with NGOs. NGOs were a more important political force in 1992 than in 1986. With only 23 per cent of the vote in a seven-way Presidential election, Ramos had a narrower popular mandate than Aquino while his *Lakas ng EDSA*-National Union of Christian Democrats (Lakas-NUCD) lacked a majority in Congress. To create a more popular mandate, Ramos sought a social coalition around a pro-reform, pro-growth economic programme called ‘Philippines 2000’. Devised by National Security Adviser General Jose Almonte, ‘Philippines 2000’ aimed to achieve official status as a Newly Industrialising Country (NIC) by 2000. In January 1993, during the programme’s formal launch, Ramos (1993: 23) set out its main objectives:

> During my watch of the Presidency, I want to see our per capita income rise to at least US$1000, our economy to grow by at least 6–8% [per annum] and our incidence of poverty to decline to at least 30% from the present 50%. Guided by this vision, our Medium Term Development Plan for 1993–1998 has taken up the twin themes of ‘global excellence’ and ‘people empowerment’. [Strengthening the] Export-orientation of the economy [will] enlarge the pie. Peoples empowerment [will] both enlarge the pie and distribute it more equitably.

To achieve these objectives, Ramos noted, ‘we must bring down the old economic order’ by eroding the positions of firms that are ‘too soft, too inefficient, too self-satisfied to compete in the world’; by dismantling cartels and monopolies; by eradicating corruption in state agencies; and by upgrading the quality of the country’s infrastructure (*Ibid.*). To this end, Ramos went on, the government needed ‘to forge a strategic alliance’ with business, labour and NGOs/POs (*Ibid.*).

The basis for this strategic alliance was set out in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan 1993–1998 (MTPDP 1993–1998), approved by the cabinet in December 1992. As with the 1987–1992 MTPDP, the plan provided the private sector with the leading role in promoting socio-economic
development but it also aimed to reduce the size of the government sector wherever possible, a significant commitment since the state sector was already relatively smaller than those of its South-East Asian neighbours. The plan argued that collaboration between state agencies, local government units and NGOs was crucial in attaining government targets in a number of areas, including sustainable agricultural development, redistributive agrarian reform, social services and community development, housing, training, and to the more general tasks of human resource development and nation-building (GoP 1995).

By 1996, many of the goals of ‘Philippines 2000’ had been secured. Philippine per capita GNP passed the US$1000 mark that year, almost two years ahead of Ramos’s schedule. Per capita GNP growth, sluggish in 1992 and 1993, averaged over 5 per cent per annum during the three years 1994–1996, as exports took off and as foreign investment flowed in. In addition, the number of people living below the government’s poverty line fell to 35.7 per cent by the end of 1994 (GoP 1995: 6). In part, economic growth was achieved through the dismantling of cartels and monopolies. Between 1992 and 1995, the government privatised more than 400 assets and agencies, netting more than US$1.9 billion in 1994 alone. By June 1995, the number of Government owned or controlled corporations had fallen to 101 (GoP 1996: 72). In other respects, however, attempts to dismantle the old economic order were undermined. Nationalist economic provisions in the 1987 constitution led the Supreme Court to overturn a number of government measures to liberalise and deregulate the economy while the traditional landed élite inserted loop-holes in tax reform bills. By 1996, anti-dynasty bills proposed by the government were still being obstructed by Congress, especially the House of Representatives.

The government’s relations with the NGO community illustrates some of the successes and failures of the ‘Philippines 2000’ plan and the extent to which a strategic alliance with NGOs has been created. In the early years of his administration, President Ramos took a number of concrete steps to establish both institutional and informal links with NGOs. On assuming the presidency, he appointed three NGO leaders to cabinet positions: Ernesto Garilao, Executive Director of Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) as Secretary for Agrarian Reform; Dr. Angel Alcala, an environmental NGO activist, as Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources; and Dr. Juan Flavier, former President of PRRM and its sister organisation, the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) as Secretary for Health. In addition, Salvador Enriquez was reappointed as Secretary for Budget and Management. Another measure involved frequent trips to the provinces, during which Ramos,
accompanied by television cameras and journalists, visited local NGOs and POs.²⁷

Ramos also established an institutional basis for relating to the NGO community. Aquino’s Kabisig, although smaller than originally intended, was still in existence, due largely to support from the conservative, USAID-funded, Philippine Institution of NGOs (PINOI). As a result, the movement was retained and given the more limited task of co-ordinating the government’s ‘moral recovery’ programme. Another Kabisig-style initiative was attempted however, when Ramos, helped by the Bishops’-Businessmen’s Conference, launched a ‘Social Pact’ with the support of 60 conservative NGOs and POs on 17 March 1993. In July 1992, Ramos established the Presidential Council for Countryside Development (PCCD) to link government agencies, NGOs and POs and the private sector in promoting rural development.²⁸ The same year, the government established the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) with the co-operation of environmental NGO coalitions, partly in response to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. NGOs were also involved in drafting the MTPDP 1993–1998.

During a speech to Kabisig’s 2nd National Assembly in July 1993, Ramos spoke of his commitment to fostering partnership between national government, local government units, and NGOs and POs, and cited models of the partnership he hoped to achieve (the National Solidarity Program in Mexico and the Saemaul Undong [New Village Movement] in South Korea).²⁹ In the years between 1993 and 1996, Kabisig never achieved this status but in June 1994 Ramos launched the Social Reform Agenda (SRA), a concerted attempt the government claimed, to tackle poverty through priority social development programmes as part of the 1993–1998 MTPDP. The SRA was negotiated primarily between the Ramos administration and Congress but NGOs were also involved, and through the new Social Reform Council (SRC) worked closely with NEDA to refine it. By 1996, NEDA claimed that spending on social development was equivalent to 15.79 per cent of government expenditure, up from 11.34 per cent in 1990.³⁰ Despite doubts about the figures, development NGOs felt the government had genuinely increased spending on social development, in part through deliberation with the development NGO community. Not only had government rhetoric improved, one NGO leader noted in late 1996, but it was now supported by tangible policy implementation.³¹

Equally, however, state–NGO relations, and the NGO community itself,
were undermined by the enduring and evolving patronage character of Philippine politics.

In 1991, Congress established the Countryside Development Fund (CDF), a new consolidated ‘pork barrel’ programme that enabled Senators and members of the House of Representatives to fund development initiatives in their constituencies directly. By 1996, the scheme was worth P2.952 billion (US$105 million) and allocated P12.5 million to each Representative, P18 million to each Senator, and P20 million to the Vice-President. CDF funding can be used to part-finance the local programmes of government departments, giving politicians a significant influence over spending priorities, but a high percentage is also channelled to NGOs and POs. Although under the control of the Department of Budget and Management, the CDF represents pork barrel politics in its purest sense and enables politicians to reward NGOs and POs that provide electoral and other forms of support. Dwarfing the President’s own CDF, the Presidential Social Fund, it represents a powerful weapon with which to oppose a strategic alliance between the executive and NGOs. In October 1993, the new Congress (like the 1987 Congress, dominated by the agrarian élite) approved the 1994 budget, and a CDF worth P2.97 billion, half the estimated total value of ‘pork barrel’ measures. Yet, few development NGOs with a ‘progressive’ or left-wing orientation made arrangements to avail of CDF funding and Congressmen experienced problems in using CDF funds to support them. The CDF therefore seems destined to stimulate the further proliferation of ‘élite’, patronage-based, and business-oriented NGOs. Table 4.1, for instance, suggests that the number of registered NGOs and POs increased by 32 per cent, from 53,000 to 70,197, in the 29 months from September 1992 to December 1995. By the early 1990s, however, donor assistance, a major stimulus to NGO proliferation in the 1986–1992 period had, fallen significantly. The 1992–1995 increase was partly due to the Local Government Code and to the continued establishment of development NGOs and grassroots POs, but equally the figures suggest that the CDF and other pork barrel measures are sustaining an otherwise untenable rate of growth. Supporting this point, one Filipino journalist argues that by 1996, NGOs or ‘foundations’ with links to Congressmen had replaced public works as the main conduit of CDF funding.

The CDF illustrates a more general problem undermining a strategic alliance between the executive and NGOs. Philippine politics, and Congressional politics in particular, remain heavily influenced by patronage concerns. The ruling party automatically attracts new affiliates from other parties after elections since many Senators or Representatives cannot afford to forego government patronage by opposing the ruling administration. Following the
May 1992 elections, Ramos’s Lakas-NUCD had insufficient seats in the House or Senate to provide the majority needed to sustain a legislative programme. As a result, Lakas-NUCD entered into an alliance with the LDP to form a grand ‘Rainbow Alliance’. In February 1993, the pro-Ramos coalition, Lakas-NUCD, had 77 seats in the House (See Table 4.2). With the support of Lakas ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP, Fight for Philippine Democracy) in a ‘Rainbow Coalition’, Ramos had an absolute majority in the 200-seat House, and controlled 18 of 24 seats in the Senate. In effect therefore, the only party-based opposition to Ramos came from the Nationalist Peoples Coalition (NPC) led by defeated Presidential candidate Eduardo ‘Danding’ Cojuangco.

Despite his majority, however, Ramos had relatively little scope to undermine the power of traditional socio-economic élites, or to implement key aspects of the ‘Philippines 2000’ plan such as the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program, with or without a strategic alliance with NGOs. To maintain the ‘Rainbow Coalition’, Ramos was forced to compromise on key aspects of his legislative agenda and to maintain the patronage or pork barrel character of Congressional politics. In addition to the CDF, the Ramos government used an even bigger pork barrel programme, the Congressional Initiative Allocation (CIA), to maintain Congressional support between 1992 and 1996. Created in 1994 to amalgamate a number of existing pork barrel provisions, the CIA allocates government funds to Senators, Members of the House of Representatives and to the President and Vice-President, for their own pet projects. In the 1996

Table 4.2 Party strength in the Senate and House 1992/93

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lakas-NUCD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDP (including PDP-Laban and the Nacionalista Party)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPC (including KBL)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccounted</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


budget, for instance, P12.23 billion (US$436 million) was allocated for the
CIAs of members of the House of Representatives, P10.22 billion (US$365 million) for Senators and P1.2 billion (US$42 million) for the President himself.\textsuperscript{38}

The Ramos government however was only partially successful in using patronage to maintain Congressional support. In the House, LDP members defected \textit{en masse} to Lakas-NUCD from late 1995 as Representatives sought access to the financial resources of the government in the run-up to the 1998 elections. The defections however made it no easier for the government to maintain its legislative programme and the House provided the bulk of resistance to the reform aspects of the ‘Philippines 2000’ plan between 1992 and 1996. In the Senate, however, a more reliable supporter of the Ramos reform agenda, the ‘Rainbow Coalition’ lost control in 1996 after allegations of corruption and fears that Ramos would try to stay in power beyond 1998.\textsuperscript{39} In October 1996, Ernesto Maceda was elected as Senate President following a ‘coup’ master-minded by the NPC. Those who voted for Maceda counted among the largest pork barrel spenders\textsuperscript{40} and his election suggested a return to a pre-martial law style of politics where the two main political parties, the Liberals and the \textit{Nacionalistas}, took turns to dominate the patronage spoils of government. This patronage character of Congressional politics inevitably played a crucial role in undermining the ‘strategic alliance’ between NGOs and the Philippine state throughout the 1992–1996 period.

\textbf{NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES}

In addition to the enduring patronage character of Philippine politics, relations between NGOs and state were also undermined in the late 1980s and early 1990s by the influence of the AFP. During the Aquino administration’s first year, military influence over state–NGO policy was minimal. The AFP of the Marcos days was reorganising itself, armed conflict in the countryside had abated as insurgent groups assessed the new government, and peace talks were imminent. By 1988 however, government-NDF peace talks had collapsed, the armed strength of the NPA was at a peak,\textsuperscript{41} and government forces were committed to an aggressive counter-insurgency policy that included the use of Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGUs).\textsuperscript{42} Social activists, especially NGO workers and human rights lawyers, became significant targets because of their high visibility, especially in campaigns for local elections held in January 1988, and because of a crack-down against NGOs and cause-
oriented groups perceived as sympathetic to the NDF-CPP-NPA. Human rights organisations, such as TFDP were singled out. To intimidate staff at its headquarters in Manila, for instance, the bodies of two dead men were left outside TFDP’s offices in April 1988. Other human rights activists were also killed, including three human rights lawyers killed in as many weeks. Others were arrested and tortured. On 28 November, for instance, two human rights NGO workers were arrested and tortured in Baguio, enduring electric shock, water cure, and cigarette burning.

Repression continued through 1989, and according to Amnesty International, ‘dozens of activists involved in lawful non-government organisations which military authorities and some government officials described as fronts for the CPP/NPA “disappeared”’, a significant portion of the estimated 200 victims of extra-judicial killings during the year (Amnesty International 1990: 3, 5). Overall, during 1988 and 1989, NGOs and cause-oriented groups experienced repression of an intensity unknown under the Marcos regime. By 1990, the violence had lessened, but one of the greatest atrocities against a single NGO occurred when three workers from the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction were murdered in Negros Occidental by cultists armed by the AFP as anti-communist vigilantes.

Left of centre NGOs also faced a new threat from formal links between the AFP and right-wing civic organisations. In April 1989, the AFP established Special CAFGU Active Auxiliaries (SCAAs), funded by private businesses and organisations. In Negros, where the counter-insurgency campaign was especially intense, the Sugar Development Foundation, an NGO established by the Confederation of Sugar Planters Associations, funded the training of over 1,400 SCAA members and allocated over 75 per cent of its revenues to the military’s counter-insurgency campaign (Silliman 1994a: 129). By 1991 however, tensions between NGOs and the AFP had abated slightly, and the AFP signed a memorandum of agreement with CODE-NGO, governing security for NGO workers. The agreement however was never implemented. Following the election of President Ramos in May 1992, the level of violence directed against NGO workers increased again, and at least two NGO workers were killed in the first 18 months. While the level of insurgency declined considerably after 1989, NGOs remained wary of violence from the armed forces because of continued indiscipline within the AFP, the government’s unwillingness to disband the CAFGUs, the presence in elective office of ex-military officers previously involved in the harassment of NGOs, and the
continued existence of private armies. By 1994 however, human rights abuses, generally and against NGO workers specifically, had waned dramatically. Relations between NGOs and the armed forces remained strained, but NGO involvement in the training of military personnel in human rights practices and legal procedures promoted greater accommodation and understanding.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, relations between NGOs and the government were also undermined by AFP policy of using NGOs in support of its counter-insurgency campaign. The strategy was implemented through a number of mechanisms. The first and most important was the National Reconciliation and Development Program (NRDP), created by Executive Order 103 of 24 December 1986. The NRDP, worth P220 million (US$8 million) in the 1993 fiscal year, included a National Reconciliation and Development Council which worked through Kabisig, the Cooperatives Development Authority, and the Philippine Institution of NGOs (PINOI). Another was the Rebel Returnee Livelihood Assistance Financing Program, in which NGOs were used as conduits for lending to rebel returnees.

One important figure who pioneered strategy on the use of civic organisations in counter-insurgency was Lt. Col. Victor Corpus. Corpus achieved fame in the 1970s when he defected to the New Peoples Army and served 6 years as an NPA commander before being captured and jailed. Released with other political prisoners in March 1986, Corpus rejoined the AFP. In a book on counter-insurgency, Corpus (1989: 141) argued that

The AFP and the civil government will exert all efforts to mobilize the strategic sectors of society (the working class, the peasantry, the teachers, the students, the business sector, the professionals, the clergy, the women and the media) into a broad United Front for a ‘Peoples War For Democracy’. As peoples’ power was used to bring down the Marcos dictatorship, peoples’ power will again be utilized to bring down the communist threat of another totalitarian dictatorship.

To this end, military officers became involved in a number of prominent NGOs in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Some foreign funders were prepared to support military attempts to establish civic organisations, and soldiers were permitted to establish their own NGOs by AFP regulations. Corpus, for instance, as Operations Officer of the 3rd Infantry Division, based in Capiz on the island of Panay, implemented his ideas through Barangay Communal Forest Cooperatives Inc. (BCFC), an NGO which he headed. BCFC organised farmers’
co-operatives in 25 barangays (villages) located on a 33,000 hectare military reservation,\textsuperscript{55} and was funded by the NRDP and the Countryside Development Fund of Senator Rodolfo Biazon, a former AFP General.

AFP responsibility for counter-insurgency, and the associated use of NGOs, made leaders of centre-left and left-wing NGOs wary of establishing concrete ties with government departments or with the executive itself until the mid-1990s. With the decline in encounters between the AFP and the NPA, responsibility for counter-insurgency policy was transferred from the AFP to the Philippine National Police in 1994,\textsuperscript{56} and moved from the control of the Department of National Defense to the Department of Interior and Local Government. By 1994 and 1995, senior military officials also sat regularly with NGO workers in regional committees of the National Unification Commission, further eroding the mutual mistrust. By the mid 1990s, the open conflict between NGO and the AFP had largely abated, but NGOs, scared by almost two decades of repression, continued to view the armed forces with suspicion, complicating the building of state–NGO relationships.

\textbf{NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND THE BUREAUCRACY}

During the late 1980s and early 1990s the governments of President Aquino and President Ramos were committed to the creation of institutional ties with NGOs. In many respects however this commitment was largely rhetorical and unsubstantive, and designed largely to promote democratic consensus and, in the late 1980s especially, to consolidate the fragile legitimacy of the regime. Despite the rhetoric however and the atmosphere of mutual suspicion and mistrust promoted by the AFP, individual government departments sought to promote important areas of public policy reform and developed substantive ties with the NGO community. In 1986, the Presidential Commission on Government Reorganisation launched the most far-reaching reform of the bureaucracy ever undertaken. The reform programme sought to remove civil servants who had loyally supported the Marcos dictatorship, and tens of thousands were dismissed, largely indiscriminately. The reorganisation also promoted privatisation, decentralisation, and community self-reliance, and as its powers and functions were whittled away, the bureaucracy established new relationships with local government units, the private sector, and the NGO/PO community (Cariño L. 1992: 127–41). Often the process was
antagonistic as Marcos technocrats battled to preserve their powers while new reformers actively sought out new partnerships to democratise the process of socio-economic development. But equally, as the following sections illustrate, the process led to working relations between NGOs and government ministries that promoted tangible public policy reform.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources

In July 1990, 1,700 people were killed when a mud slide engulfed the town ofOrmoc in Leyte. Caused by heavy rain, and a dam bursting on the mountain side that overhung the town, the disaster was blamed on illegal logging that denuded the mountain, exposing the top soil to the ravages of the rainy season. The disaster highlighted a greater problem: under a rate of deforestation of 200,000 hectares a year from 1950 to 1960, (down to 100,000 hectares a year by 1989), total forest cover in the Philippines fell to 23 per cent in 1993 (Vitug 1993: 66–7). The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), noted for corruption and ties to illegal loggers, seemed poorly placed to respond. In March 1987 however, Aquino appointed former human rights lawyer Fulgencio Factoran as Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources and during his five year tenure, the department developed some of the closest and most extensive ties with NGOs and POs. Under Factoran’s leadership, and with the recruitment of Delfin Ganapin, head of the Philippine Federation for Environmental Concerns, as Department Under-Secretary, more than US$1 billion was lent to the Philippine government for environmental projects involving NGOs between 1986 and 1992, boosting the DENR’s budget from P1.08 billion in 1986 to P4.5 billion in 1990 (Vitug 1993: 58). One of the biggest ODA-funded projects was the Contract Reforestation Programme (CPR), financed by a $120 million loan from the Asian Development Bank and $120 million from the Japanese Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (cf. ANGOC 1991) but others included a Natural Resources Management Program, funded by a $125 million loan from USAID, a US$2 million Debt-for-Nature Swap funded by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the Integrated Protected Area System (IPAS) programme, funded by the World Bank.

With the strengthening of capacity that resulted from the ODA receipts, the collaboration with NGOs, and a decentralisation programme that saw 85 per cent of the DENR’s 24,000 personnel assigned to regional offices, the department achieved some notable successes. Reforestation rates had risen...
slightly in 1986 and 1987, but between 1988 and 1991, they leapt to an annual rate ranging from 80,000 to 88,000 hectares. The DENR also succeeded in imposing an environmental fee on loggers in 1990, and from 143 in 1987, Timber Licensing Agreements issued by the department on an annual basis fell to 32 by June 1992. Between 1987 and 1992, 443 cases were taken against DENR employees suspected of corruption, sending a strong signal about the anti-corruption drive (Vitug 1993: 48–9, 59–61).

Links established during the Aquino years were consolidated under Ramos. In August 1992, Dr. Angel Alcala, an environmental scientist and board member of Haribon Foundation, was appointed Secretary of the DENR, after Ramos’s other choices met with the disapproval of environmental NGOs, and after Alcala’s name was recommended by NGOs including Haribon (Ibid.: 173). Delfin Ganapin remained as departmental Under-Secretary, giving NGO activists the top two positions in the DENR. Ramos also established the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, again in response to pressure from environmental NGOs (Ibid.: 192–3). In 1995 and 1996, the PCSD membership of 16 government and 7 NGO representatives drafted Philippine Agenda 21 (PA 21), a detailed and ambitious programme to reach targets set at the Rio 1992 conference. By late 1996, PA 21 had still not been costed, but NGOs still viewed it as a sophisticated consensus document and the product of fruitful collaboration between government and NGOs. NGO-DENR relations were undermined however by the passage of the Mining Act of 1995 (Republic Act 7942) and implementing rules approved by the DENR (Administrative Order No. 23) which liberalised legislation governing resource exploitation by Philippine and foreign companies.

The DENR encountered further problems in its dealings with NGOs. With the significant infusion of ODA funding, commercial enterprises masqueraded as NGOs to avail of DENR contracts. Many were established or secured contracts with the connivance of local DENR officials, while others overcharged for elaborate expenses such as aircraft hire, and corruption remained at a high level (Aquino 1994; Vitug 1993). Equally, however, the DENR was unable to find sufficient community-based NGOs with forestry management skills to implement its US$1.65 million USAID-funded Community Forestry Programme (CFP). Many contracts for the CFP and the ADB-funded Contract Reforestation Programme were issued to community-based NGOs that lacked the necessary experience (Vitug 1993: 160–1). NGOs also faced difficulties. Many NGOs involved in DENR contracts, especially those involved in monitoring illegal logging, endured harassment and violence which
undermined their role. Similarly, within the NGO community itself, many of the environmental NGOs argued over access to millions of dollars of foreign funding. Perhaps the biggest problem however, despite DENR-NGO collaboration, was that links between illegal loggers, local government officials, the military and national politicians undermined attempts to reduce illegal logging.61

The Department of Agrarian Reform

The Philippines has one of the most inequitable structures of land ownership in the developing world. In the mid-1980s, roughly 5 per cent of families owned 83 per cent of all farmland while 85 per cent of the 10 million people directly employed in agriculture were landless in the sense of having no secure title (Putzel 1992: 23 and 27). Given a population density of 202.3 per square kilometre, twice the South-East Asian average,62 land resources are under enormous pressure, and rural poverty is significantly greater than in urban areas.63 The Philippines has one of the worst levels of wealth inequality in South-East Asia.64 In the Philippines, for instance, the average income of the richest 5 per cent is 11 times greater that of the poorest 5 per cent, compared to a multiple of 4.5 in Indonesia.65 The effect of wealth inequality however was further exacerbated by even higher levels of land equality in the late 1980s.66 Redistributive land reform is therefore a crucial component in a programme of structural reform and collaboration between state agencies and NGOs in implementing a land reform programme constitutes a ‘strategic alliance’ in its most fundamental sense.

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), or rather a strong element of reform-oriented officials within it, had long sought a strategic alliance with NGOs. In August 1986, a UN inter-agency mission visited the Philippines at the invitation of the DAR to seek opportunities to implement the Principles and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development agreed in Rome in 1979. As a result of the mission, the DAR, with funding from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and in collaboration with the Asian NGO Coalition of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) and PhilDHRRA, organised a series of regional consultations on land reform in 1987–88, following the establishment of the Congress for a Peoples Agrarian Reform (CPAR) (ADB 1989a: 303). In May 1987, a Cabinet Action Committee tabled proposals for significant NGO
NGOs and the Philippine state

participation in a liberal reform programme. According to Putzel (1992: 248–9), the proposals

spelled out in detail the powers of the DAR . . . to acquire land, to determine the application of the right of retention by landowners and the ‘compensability’ of their claims, and to preside over virtually every aspect of the reform. The DAR’s decision would be binding and the only appeal would be to the Office of the President. This idea was based on the principle that a DAR transformed and working with peasant organisations, NGOs and a strong network of ‘Barangay People’s Councils’ would be free from interference by the political networks behind elected members of government and the courts which were known to be dominated by powerful local interests.

The proposals were defeated however by conservative forces within the cabinet, notably Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo, Defence Secretary Rafael Ileto and Finance Secretary Jaime Ongpin (Ibid.: 226–7), and a more conservative programme, signed into law by Aquino as Executive Order No. 229, became the basis for a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme (CARP) eventually approved by Congress in 1988. Following its enactment into law, CARP was implemented at a ponderous pace. Between 1987 and 1990, Putzel notes, ‘only 9,949 hectares of privately held lands, or 4.6% of the . . . target, were distributed ’ (Ibid.: 358). The failure arose in significant part because, Putzel (Ibid.: 249, 361) continues, ‘there was virtually no tradition of state action independent of the powerful political clans in society upon which the Aquino government could draw,’ and because the state–NGO alliance that could have created such a tradition, ‘was ruled out by those who defended the conservative approach’.

Land reform was largely ignored as an issue in Fidel Ramos’s presidential campaign, and during the early years of his presidency, the implementation of CARP continued to proceed very slowly, with only 11 per cent of the targeted 248,000 hectares distributed in 1995. One reason was cost; P221 billion or US$10.35 billion for the total ten year programme. Sixty three per cent of the budget, P139 billion or P13.9 billion per year should be spent on support services, yet between 1993 and 1995, the amount allocated fell year-on-year, from P3.6 billion in the 1993 fiscal year, to P3.31 billion in 1994 and P3.296 billion in 1995. Another reason is administrative capacity; in October 1993, NEDA admitted that with three quarters of the fiscal year already gone, only
30 per cent of planned government expenditure of P126 billion had been spent, due partly to delays in the release of funds.\textsuperscript{70} The work of the DAR has been significantly affected by this problem, and other forms of red tape. A third problem is a provision allowing for the redesignation of lands from agricultural to residential, industrial or commercial use five years after the enactment of CARP, leading to a rash of conversions which has reduced the land area devoted to agricultural production and available for redistribution. In the provinces surrounding Manila targeted by the government for rural industrial development, collectively known as CALABARZON, an estimated half a million farmers will be displaced by land conversions.\textsuperscript{71} By September 1992 alone, 833 of 1,209 conversion applications for the CALABARZON area had been approved.\textsuperscript{72} Other regions targeted for industrial development such as Cebu or the Cagayan de Oro-Iligan corridor in Mindanao have also been affected. CARP is also being undermined by the government’s decentralisation programme. Section 20 of the 1991 Local Government Code transfers the power to reclassify lands from the DAR to local governments, opening new opportunities for land developers and speculators.

Within this context of a weak government commitment to redistributive land reform and an equally weak capacity to promote it, Agrarian Reform Secretary Ernesto Garilao used NGOs to maximise the limited scope available: ‘without the active participation of the private sector, particularly the non-government organisations (NGOs)’, Garilao argued in 1993, ‘the DAR cannot cope with the implementation of CARP’.\textsuperscript{73} On paper, government targets were impressive: between 1993 and 1998, the DAR planned to distribute 7.57 million hectares of land, 2.75 million hectares of it privately-owned, to 4.6 million farmer-beneficiaries.\textsuperscript{74} The DAR however planned to allocate 70 per cent of the planned P103 billion expenditure between 1993 and 1998 to landlord compensation,\textsuperscript{75} undermining its capacity to provide the support services to beneficiaries on which CARP’s success ultimately depended. NGOs, and the ODA funds which they secured, were therefore vital, since most ODA donors were unwilling to fund the landlord compensation component of CARP.

One innovative strategy based on close collaboration between the DAR, NGOs and POs, involved the establishment of Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) around the country, using collective Certification of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs). The ARC concept is based on the use of privately owned land or estates foreclosed by banks when prices for commodities fell in the early 1980s, much of which had already been occupied by POs. In Negros Occidental, for instance, the Agrarian Reform Alliance of Democratic
Organisations in Negros (ARADO) worked with the DAR to create an ARC near Himamaylan, 75 kilometres from the provincial capital, Bacolod. An alliance of 12 NGOs and 22 POs, including the militant National Federation of Sugar Workers, ARADO and its affiliates were responsible for the occupation of 65,000 hectares of idle or abandoned land in 1987, an amount that had dropped to 45,000 by 1990 and 30,000 by 1993 as POs were driven off by landlords reoccupying their foreclosed land and by military counter-insurgency operations. ARADO had long demanded action by the DAR to enforce individual CLOAs already awarded, but the local Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer only agreed to implement the Aquino government’s Administrative Order No. 577 and co-operate with NGOs and POs, in March 1993. Of 93 cases taken by ARADO between 1987 and 1993, involving more than 5000 hectares of land, only 31 were resolved of which only 6 resulted in CLOAs being issued. In a desperate attempt to speed up the implementation of CARP, ARADO therefore co-operated with the DAR on additional ARC projects, a case of ‘critical collaboration’ however rather than ‘strategic alliance’. Equally, ODA donors such as the Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA) that have yet to channel significant amounts to NGOs or POs have embraced the ARC concept enthusiastically, as have donors who were hesitant about supporting the redistributive, as distinct from the technical, aspects of CARP. In October 1993, for instance, Ernesto Garilao signed a contract with the European Community for P1.2 billion (US$43 million) in aid to finance the establishment of 254 ARCs after 1995. With the help of NGOs, POs and donors alike, the government had established 1022 ARCs by April 1996 (DAR 1996).

The DAR also relied on NGOs and POs in other ways. CARP was badly affected by illegal land re-zoning carried out with the connivance of local government officials, and NGOs were instrumental in bringing ‘land scams’ to light. Hindered by insufficient staff numbers, an inability to reach all potential land reform beneficiaries, and intimidation of its staff by landlords, the DAR also relied on NGOs to organise farmers and identify land for redistribution and potential beneficiaries. In North Cotabato, for instance, the DAR signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement to identify lands and potential beneficiaries, and PRRM worked closely with the Municipal Agrarian Reform Officers (MAROs) in localities in which it was active, encouraging relationships between MAROs and local POs.

As with the DENR however, the personal relationships needed to ensure effective state–NGO collaboration often bordered on patronage. After
becoming Agrarian Reform Secretary, Ernesto Garilao, a former Executive Director of PBSP, the largest NGO in the country, recruited Butch Olano of PhilDHRRA as DAR Under-Secretary for Operations. Other NGOs claimed in 1993 however that Garilao and Olano favoured PBSP and PhilDHRRA in the awarding of contracts, and that staff from these and other social democratic-oriented NGOs were recruited to work in the DAR, especially in the Planning, and Management Services departments. In addition, the DAR experienced problems with NGOs abusing funds, and in October 1993, Garilao was forced to order a nationwide performance audit of NGOs awarded contracts under CARP following complaints from NGOs in Northern Mindanao about rampant abuse in the region.

The Department of Health

Population growth in the Philippines averaged 2.7 per cent between 1960 and 1991 (UNDP 1993a: 180). Although it had fallen to 2.4 per cent by 1992 it still represents a major impediment to raising living standards, especially among the rural poor. Both President Fidel Ramos and his Health Secretary from 1992 to 1994, Juan Flavier, were Protestants and determined to face down the Catholic Church on family planning. To do so however, the Department of Health (DOH) needed NGO support in implementing the Ramos government’s Philippine Family Planing Program (PFPP), launched in 1993, which aimed to cut population growth to under 2 per cent by 1998. With only 200 population control staff when Flavier took office, compared to a peak of 10,000 under the Marcos regime, the DOH was therefore reliant on NGO coalitions including the Philippine NGO Council on Population, Health and Welfare (PNGOC), the Family Planning Organisation of the Philippines (FPOP) which claims a membership of 12,000 people, and other spontaneous coalitions formed to support a government crusade.

The DOH also relied on NGOs more generally in the provision of health services. Public health expenditure in the Philippines, equivalent to 5.6 per cent of GNP in the early 1990s, was the highest in South-East Asia (UNDP 1993a: 158–9). Much of it was squandered however on bureaucracy, urban-based facilities, and capital intensive operations such as an Asian Heart Centre, built in Manila under Marcos. In contrast, health services in rural areas are sparse and inadequate, and the country as a whole had only one doctor for every 6,570 people, the second lowest rate in South-East Asia, and only one
As a result, the DOH relied heavily on NGOs for the provision of primary health care in rural areas, medical support services in the event of natural disasters, and medical assistance for communities displaced or affected by counter-insurgency operations. Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, the DOH experienced problems in recruiting young doctors to serve in rural areas, because government pay was so low, and because doctors, mostly from urban areas and privately educated at great cost to themselves or their families, emigrated or opted for lucrative practice in urban areas. In July 1993, Flavier announced that young doctors going to the barrios would be paid P24,000 per month (US$800), the rough salary of an urban-based professional, yet with the decentralisation of his department’s budget, the DOH experienced difficulty enforcing the policy nationwide. Most doctors in rural areas received only P6,800 per month in 1993 under the Salary Standardization Law, and as a result, many towns with populations exceeding 20,000 lacked even a single doctor. For many rural doctors, NGOs became a lifeline and NGOs supplemented doctors’ salaries (by as much as 300 per cent of the government salary) or provided equipment and medicine. From 1994, when Flavier stepped down as Health Secretary, the DOH has continued to work closely with NGOs. Under the Partnership for Community Health Development, for instance, the DOH in alliance with local government units, has sub-contracted the provision of services such as training to NGOs.

As with the DENR and DAR, however, relations between the DOH and NGOs were undermined by a number of problems. Health care throughout the Philippines was adversely affected by the devolution of health services in the wake of the 1991 Local Government Code, especially between 1992 and 1994. Health NGOs disagreed over the effects of the Code and the desirability of working with the DOH. In 1995, Bukluran Para sa Kalusugan ng Bayan (Coalition for Peoples Health), an alliance of health care NGOs, disbanded because of the dispute. In rural areas, especially, collaboration between NGOs and the DOH to promote family planning provoked tension. The Local Government Code provided local governors with the power to stop government programmes and in Laguna, Governor Joey Lina banned government agencies in 1996 from providing family planning services. Lina tried to extend the ban to NGOs and POs, provoking rallies and motorcades in opposition. As with other government departments, collaboration between NGOs and the state at national level was often more difficult to implement at the local level.
CONCLUSION

In the 10 years from 1986 to 1995, the number of NGOs in the Philippines increased by 160 per cent, from an estimated 27,100 to 70,200. During that time, NGOs acquired a significant role in Philippine politics, collaborating in the implementation of government programmes and participating in government policy making fora. By 1996, relations between NGOs and the Philippine state did not quite suggest the ‘strategic alliance’ sought by President Ramos in his ‘Philippines 2000’ plan. Nevertheless, in ten years, NGOs and the state had forged one of the closest relationships to be found anywhere in the developing world. After the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986, NGO leaders were appointed to the cabinet and to other positions in government ministries or agencies. NGOs were also expressly recognised in the 1987 constitution, were given significant roles in a radical decentralisation programme introduced from 1991 and forged close relationships with government departments including Environment and Natural Resources, Agrarian Reform and Health. In a country where politics have long been dominated by an agrarian élite resistant to the structural change, state–NGO collaboration thus took on a strategic character.

State–NGO co-operation in the 1986–1996 period helped to strengthen the embedded autonomy of the Philippine state. It helped to undermine corruption and patronage-based decision making processes. It provided a degree of strategic partnership that enabled government ministries and other state agencies to attack entrenched socio-economic élites, including landlords, mining corporations, and logging concessionaires. It filled voids in the government’s social service provision role. Finally, it helped to provide intermediate institutional ties that linked the government to traditionally disempowered strata of society, thus mobilising popular support for those in government committed to structural reform.

State–NGO relations partly weakened the patronage character of Philippine politics and the obstacle to structural change which they have long represented. Equally, however, that patronage character endured and undermined state–NGO relationships. To maintain Congressional support, both the Aquino and Ramos administrations were forced to establish mechanisms such as the Countryside Development Fund and the Congressional Initiative Allocation which consolidated the ‘pork barrel’ character of policy making and enabled political forces to oppose the structural change sought by most NGOs. Similarly, government departments such as
NGOs and the Philippine state

Environment and Natural Resources, Agrarian Reform and Health that formed close relationships with NGOs were in many ways marginalised from the real loci of political power within the Ramos government. Big spending and powerful departments such as Finance, Public Works and Highways, National Defence and Trade and Industry remained beyond the reach of most NGOs.

In many ways therefore, the links formed with NGOs by both the Aquino and Ramos administration were more rhetorical than substantive, designed to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of government at a time when it remained weak. Here, the case of the Philippines suggests that states in Asia, Africa and Latin America instinctively relate to NGOs by trying to co-opt them. A partial explanation for this reflex can be found in what Migdal describes as the ‘duality of state strength’, where states seem able to penetrate society extensively, yet ‘are unable to implement goal-oriented change’ (Migdal 1988: 8–9). To NGOs however, this duality is less apparent than the actual manifestations of state strength, namely its control over the allocation of resources and its infrastructure of military power, weapons used systematically against them in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Yet, in this light, the links forged between 1986 and 1996 seem all the more remarkable. With rhetorical flourish perhaps, President Ramos speaks of the ‘Five Ds of Philippine People Power’; devolution, decentralisation, deregulation, democratisation, and development on a sustainable basis. With the exception of deregulation, state–NGO collaboration played an important role in sustaining each, suggesting a form of collaboration close to the ‘strategic alliance’ sought by the President.

The Philippines lacks the long tradition of NGO–state collaboration found in India. Yet, the great strides made in the period since 1986 suggest a new, durable, tradition of collective action and of intermediate institutional linkages between state and society that help consolidate the quasi-democratic character of the Philippine polity. Effective state–NGO relationships are by no means a panacea for the development dilemmas with which the Philippines is faced. They have however proved themselves to be an important component in an overall programme of reform. Here, the central argument is that NGOs have a significant role to play in empowering states in the developing world and helping them to implement structural and public policy reforms. Yet, in the Philippines, NGOs not only relate to the state through a complex web of linkages but also to a range of other institutions active in civil society. As chapter 5 explores, delineating these relationships is an important step in developing a fuller picture of the roles played by NGOs in Philippine politics.
5 Beyond the state

The organisation of the NGO community

INTRODUCTION

One of the advantages of the term ‘non-governmental organisation’ is that it suggests an inverse, even a dialectical, relationship between NGOs and the state. In practice, this inverse and dialectical relationship represents the very raison d’être of NGOs. In the developing world, counter-mobilisation in response to short comings in state performance in promoting economic development and in mobilising broadly-based, popular support represents the most significant aspect of NGO action. Strong NGO communities are invariably found in developing countries where the state lacks the capacity to promote economic development and political participation effectively and where the state tolerates, if not encourages, the voluntary sector. Thus, while the mainstream NGO literature suggests that development NGOs represent a response primarily to socio-economic deprivation, in reality, the response of NGOs to development dilemmas is determined primarily by the particular character of the state.

Much of the political significance and the political character of NGOs however can only be seen by looking beyond the state and beyond the limited framework of state–NGO relationships. This chapter therefore examines two important aspects of NGO politics. First, the organisation of the NGO community and second, the institutional forces that underpin it. The level of organisation among NGOs is an important determinant of their political character and efficacy. Where NGOs are not outrightly suppressed, states instinctively relate to NGOs by trying to attract and co-opt their support. Opposition to the vast financial resources and coercive machinery of the state therefore depends on organisation among and co-ordination between NGOs. Second, the political character of the NGO community is also a reflection of the institutional forces that underpin it and the agendas, political and otherwise, which they seek to advance through their support of NGOs. In the Philippines, four institutional forces have been particularly influential in the
growth of the NGO community: élite philanthropists; the Christian Churches; overseas development assistance agencies and the underground left. For different reasons and to varying effect, each force has promoted separate but overlapping sections of the NGO community. Few NGO studies discuss the influence of non-state institutional forces yet, like the state, such forces threaten the autonomy of NGOs and exert a powerful influence over NGOs and the NGO community.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE NGO COMMUNITY

The Philippine NGO community is characterised by a high degree of heterogeneity and by conflicting political or strategic orientations. Constantino-David, in a refinement of her earlier typologies (1991, 1992) captures much of this heterogeneity and conflict in Figure 5.1. The typology illustrates two important features of the Philippine NGO community. First, a strong distinction exists between membership-based organisations and those established as service agencies or institutions, echoing similar distinctions internationally. Since 1986, ‘People’s Organisation’ has become a generic label for a complex range of largely traditional organisational structures such as trade

![Diagram](image-url)

Figure 5.1 Typology of Philippine NGOs

Source: Karina Constantino-David, interview, 9 July 1993.
unions, peasant associations or rural co-operatives. NGOs by contrast represent a more recent institutional innovation, dating back largely to the 1970s. Boundaries between POs and NGOs in the Philippines are rapidly blurring: many NGOs are promoting membership while POs are acquiring professional staff and bureaucratic structures and are by-passing NGOs to secure foreign funding directly. Second, ‘DJANGOs’ (Development, Justice and Advocacy-focused NGOs)¹ account for only 11.5 per cent of the total number of (non-membership) NGOs according to Constantino-David, numbering over 2,000 in 1991 (1992: 138).² Writers such as Carroll (1992) however equate DJANGOs (using equivalent labels) with the NGO community as a whole, and often ignore the complex and hostile political environment in which DJANGOs invariably operate.

A survey of 69 NGOs in Cebu by Uy-Etemadi (1993) suggests however that DJANGOs are stronger and more prevalent than Constantino-David concedes. According to the survey, 27 per cent of Cebu’s NGOs are committed to consciousness raising and 21 per cent to community organising as the primary strategy through which they fulfil their goals. A further 8.29 per cent concentrate on lobbying and 6.08 per cent on rallies and demonstrations, leaving a minority committed to Korten’s ‘first generation’ strategies; 18.78 per cent to service delivery and the remaining 18.84 per cent to relief operations and to charitable activities (Ibid.: 4). Uy-Etemadi’s findings may need to be treated with caution however since élite/philanthropic NGOs or Constantino-David’s ‘MUNGOs’ actively engage in community organising.

Philippine NGOs are predominantly small. According to ADB research, Philippine NGOs typically have less than 50 staff and annual budgets of less than P2 million (See Table 5.2) (ADB 1989a).³ Only three Philippine NGOs have more than 200 staff (See Table 5.1). Most national level NGOs function effectively as networks that co-ordinate autonomous local level organisations, and primary NGOs with unitary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1 The Top Three: the Philippines’ largest NGOs, 1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Business for Social Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Force Detainees of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

**Sources:** PBSP, PRRM, TFDP.
Table 5.2 Selected development NGOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGO</th>
<th>Income (Pesos)</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency for Community Education Services Inc. (ACES)</td>
<td>1.5m</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Assistance Board (FAB)</td>
<td>1.5m</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapwa Upliftment Foundation (KAPWA)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyte-Samar Rural Development Workers Association (LABRADOR)</td>
<td>3.8m</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCO)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation for Training, Research and Development (OTRADEV)</td>
<td>1.7m</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Research Organisation of Communities in the Struggle for Self-Reliance (PROCESS)</td>
<td>1.5m</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:


structures and nationwide reach such as PRRM and TFDP are very much the exception. PBSP, for instance, engages in direct programme work but is primarily a donor institution which co-ordinates a network of supported NGOs and POs. Similarly, the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA) had 75 staff and income of P5.2 million in 1992 but, with 62 member organisations scattered throughout Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao, is one of the few NGOs with a genuinely national presence (PhilDHRRA 1992).

A number of factors account for the prevalence of small NGOs. First, of 7,000 islands in the Philippines, 2000 are inhabited, with about 100 islands accounting for 80–90 per cent of the population. Similarly, 80 distinctive languages are spoken with 8 languages accounting for 90 per cent of the population, enhancing cultural diversity (Wurfel 1988: 27). Inter-island NGO programmes require considerable resources (financial, administrative and personal) to maintain, making it difficult for national NGOs to maintain nationwide structures. Second, during martial law, political activists consciously promoted small and multiple NGO programmes to prevent the repression that a more centralised NGO community would have incurred. Third, in the difficult environment of the 1970s and 1980s, building NGO programmes of above-
average size required enormous charisma and leadership skills but many potential NGO leaders associated with the NDF or other left groups were killed or imprisoned. Fourth, the value placed on affinity groups in Filipino culture undermines larger structures dependent on less personal structures. Finally, many NGOs eschew the bureaucratic structures associated with the government bureaucracy to which they seek an alternative, enhancing the preference for small NGOs.

Philippine NGOs are primarily local-based, focused on operations at the municipal, provincial or regional level. Generally, they proliferate in areas with a tradition of collective organisation and mobilisation, rather than the poorest regions where the need for development NGOs is greatest but where political obstacles to NGO or PO organising are significant. A survey of NGOs registered under the 1991 Local Government Code provides one guide to NGO regional distribution (see Table 5.3) but should be treated with caution since many NGOs do not participate in local government structures. When correlated with population and average family income data (see Table 5.4), the survey indicates that NGO density is high in the Cordillera mountains, a region with a strong tradition of collective mobilisation and anti-state protest but with above average family income for rural areas. By contrast, NGO density is lowest in the Central Visayas (excluding the capital, Manila, which is anomalous) where family incomes are below the rural average, but

Table 5.3 Regional distribution of NGOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Accredited NGOs (Total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1 (Ilocos)</td>
<td>2,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2 (Cagayan Valley)</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3 (Central Luzon)</td>
<td>1,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4 (Southern Tagalog)</td>
<td>1,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5 (Bicol)</td>
<td>1,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6 (Western Visayas)</td>
<td>1,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 7 (Central Visayas)</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 8 (Eastern Visayas)</td>
<td>1,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 9 (Western Mindanao)</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 10 (Northern Mindanao)</td>
<td>1,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 11 (Southern Mindanao)</td>
<td>1,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 12 (Central Mindanao)</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Capital Region (Metro Manila)</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordillera Autonomous Region</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16,834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 Regional distribution of NGOs: population and poverty correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population (000's)</th>
<th>NGO Density</th>
<th>Average Family Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>3,551</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>34,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>2,341</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>32,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>6,199</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>46,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>8,266</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>37,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>3,910</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>26,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>5,392</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>31,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 7</td>
<td>4,593</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>27,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 8</td>
<td>3,055</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>25,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 9</td>
<td>3,159</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>31,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 10</td>
<td>3,510</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>35,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 11</td>
<td>4,457</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>37,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 12</td>
<td>3,171</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>35,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCR</td>
<td>7,929</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>79,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>1,146</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>33,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total/Average</td>
<td>60,685</td>
<td>0.325</td>
<td>40,408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
2. NGO density: NGOs per 1,000 people as per table 5.3.
   Average rural family income = P28,284.


where social polarisation is intense and where links between landlords, politicians, the military and local government officials inhibit the proliferation of DJANGOs. The link is not clear cut however. The Eastern Visayas, the poorest region in the country, has a relatively high NGO density, while Central Luzon, the traditional focal point for peasant rebellion has a relatively low density, reflecting the relatively greater availability of government support services.

THE INSTITUTIONAL PILLARS OF THE NGO COMMUNITY

The heterogeneity of the Philippine NGO community is explained in large part by the institutional forces that underpin it and the competing objectives that motivate their support. Implicit in most analyses of NGOs, especially of
development NGOs, is the assumption that NGOs share an almost uniform political orientation, characterised by concern primarily for the poorest of the poor and a commitment primarily to their political and economic empowerment. Korten (1990: 98), for example, argues that

A healthy voluntary sector is characterized by a substantial number and variety of independent [voluntary organisations], representing an array of distinctive and often conflicting commitments. Their small size, independence and focused value commitments give them a capacity for social and institutional innovation seldom found in either government or business. . . . Their commitment to integrative values over political or economic values gives them a natural orientation to the perceived needs of politically and economically disenfranchised elements of the population that are not met through the normal processes of government or the economic processes of the market.4

In reality however, ‘the conflicting commitments’, which he acknowledges, rule out any uniform or coherent ‘natural orientation’ towards ‘disenfranchised elements of the population’. As the previous section illustrates, NGO ‘communities’ are characterised by ideological, personality and regional cleavages. As the following section illustrates, different institutional forces promote NGOs in the Philippines, leading to important institutional cleavages.

Élite philanthropy

In the Philippines, élite philanthropy represents a political force in a number of respects. First, prominent business groupings support the work of PBSP, the largest NGO in the Philippines, established in 1970 by the Council for Economic Development, the Philippine Business Council and the Association for Social Action. Inspired by the Venezuelan Dividendo Voluntario para la Comunidad (Voluntary Dividend for the Community) and established as ‘the private sector’s united and systematic response to the [country’s] socio-economic problems’, PBSP aims to support economic projects implemented by low-income groups (Callanta 1988: 121). Corporate members set aside 1 per cent of net profit before tax for social development, of which 20 per cent is committed to PBSP (PBSP 1992: 1). Second, many of PBSP’s 158 corporate members support their own foundations with the remaining 0.80 per cent of net profits committed to social development. The Soriano family, for instance, lead shareholders of San Miguel Corporation (SMC), the Philippines’ largest
business conglomerate, supports community development projects through the Andres Soriano Group of Foundations, in addition to direct support for PBSP. Companies and families not associated with PBSP also support their own development NGOs. The Zobel de Ayala family, lead shareholders of Ayala Land, another of the Philippines’ largest conglomerates, funds development activities through the socio-economic division of the Ayala Foundation. In addition to Ayala family backing, the foundation receives funding from USAID, Chase Manhattan Bank, Levi Strauss International and J.P. Morgan.

Third, family or business foundations consolidate their influence through coalitions such as the Association of Foundations (AoF) which includes 9 corporate and 14 family foundations among its 102 members (AoF 1990). As founding networks, AoF and PBSP helped to establish CODE-NGO in 1991.

Élite philanthropy is used to pursue a variety of political objectives. Often it is directed to securing commercial gain. Ayala Foundation activities in Cebu City and Bacoor, Cavite, for instance, support Ayala Land property developments; ‘squatters on properties bought by Ayala Land are resettled elsewhere with the foundation providing infrastructure, credit facilities and skills training’. Second, in the Philippines, where Presidents must seek cabinet ministers and other officials outside Congress, prominent businessmen also support philanthropic activities to increase their public profile and to secure political office. In the case of PBSP, for instance, 10 board members joined the Ramos administration in 1992 including Alberto Romulo (Foreign Secretary), Ramon del Rosario, (Finance Secretary), Rizalino Navarro (Trade and Industry Secretary), Roberto Sebastian (Agriculture Secretary) and Jose Cuisia (Central Bank Governor) (PBSP 1992: 7). Third, philanthropy helps to undermine insurgency and business donations to NGOs echo the ebb and flow of insurgency (see further in chapter 3); PBSP was established in 1970 amid renewed rural unrest but as insurgency weakened after 1990, for instance, its corporate donations fell from P36.6 million in 1991 to P27.9 million in 1992 (PBSP 1992: 41).

Finally, philanthropy helps to undermine pressure for increased state spending on social services, increased taxation, or structural reforms such as land redistribution while also helping to depoliticise NGO action.

Élite philanthropic NGOs represent an even greater force in local politics. Well-funded and politically-connected foundations of prominent local families attract foreign funding, undermine insurgency and popular organisation initiatives, influence other NGOs or NGO coalitions or oppose government structural reform programmes. In Panay, the Gerry Roxas Foundation secured a large share of USAID funding to the island in 1993, and its role in providing
credit to other voluntary organisations coincided with the USAID and Philippine government strategy of undermining communist insurgency on the island. In Cebu City, the Ramon Aboitz Foundation Inc. (RAFI) has become an influential force in local NGO politics. With funding from USAID, RAFI began construction in 1993 of the Eduardo Aboitz Development Centre Inc., a purpose-built six-story building, to house other NGOs and to host NGO conferences and training seminars. ‘Progressive’ NGOs saw the planned centre as an attempt to co-opt Cebu’s vibrant NGO community, to undermine its political and socio-economic impact and to make it a captive force for local élite politicians.

The island of Negros illustrates the competing political objectives that often animate the socio-economic development strategies of élite philanthropic NGOs. In the mid-1980s, Negros accounted for 68 per cent of Philippine sugar production, while 90 per cent of the 1.8 million population was dependent on the sugar industry (Jagan and Cunnington 1987: 4). Underpinning intense social polarisation, 4 per cent of landowners owned nearly 50 per cent of land while 72 per cent of the population of Negros Occidental and 80 per cent in Negros Oriental, the island’s two provinces, were poor, compared to 49 per cent nationally (IBON Databank 1993). Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, Negros was racked by crisis as prices for sugar fluctuated on world markets. The worst occurred in 1985 when sugar production fell to 1.6mt (metric tons) (from 2.9mt in 1975 and 2.2mt in 1979) (Malhorta et al. 1988), leaving 250,000 sugar workers unemployed and famine conditions that killed hundreds. In the municipality of Kabankalan, 25 to 30 children a month died at the height of the famine (Jagan and Cunnington 1987: 4).

Traditionally, landlords in Negros supported workers during the fallow season between sugar crops, and bore significant responsibility for food supply, housing, education, health and credit on the island. State agencies, except those concerned with security and the purchase of sugar, were relatively weak. During and following the famine of 1985, ODA donors sought partners in Negros to deliver emergency food supplies to vulnerable communities and to boost the production of subsistence foodstuffs. By 1985, a number of landlord foundations were already active in providing emergency relief, and in the absence of appropriate state agencies, ODA donors provided substantial funding to them. As a result, landlord-controlled development NGOs, established to attract and to channel ODA funding, proliferated on Negros.

After 1986 however, Negros’s special plight intensified national debate about land reform, and, under pressure, the island’s élite NGOs pursued three distinct political strategies. The first strategy was pioneered by PBSP, some of whose corporate members owned land in Negros (for instance, SMC and
Beyond the state

the Central Azucarera Don Pedro). After February 1986, PBSP focus in Negros shifted from micro-enterprise development to land reform, and under its Negros Land for a Productive Life Programme (NLPLP), PBSP collaborated with the provincial government and the Philippine National Bank to enable 1,005 farmer beneficiaries in 13 settlement areas to acquire 3,000 hectares of land foreclosed by PNB. In 1988, it helped 817 employees of the Kabankalan Sugar Company (KABUCO) to form the KABUCO Agricultural Workers Co-operative Inc. and buy a 1,000 hectare KABUCO farm under CARP from Philippine Investments Management Consultants (PHINMA), a PBSP member (PBSP 1992: 9, 19).

Many sugar planter NGOs however were against CARP and sought to balance the return of sugar estates to their owners with a diversification of Negros’s monocrop economy and a more liberal and institutionalised approach to traditional paternalism. Organised by Daniel Lacson, a number of sugar planter NGOs formed the Associated Council of Organisations for Development (ACCORD) and the Multi-Sectoral Alliance for Development (MUAD) to provide project partners for ODA donors who pumped millions of dollars into Negros following the 1985 famine (see further below). Most of these NGOs, and their patrons, supported Lacson’s ‘60–30–10’ plan to rehabilitate an estimated 330,000 hectares of foreclosed land (under which 60 per cent would be returned to landowners, 30 per cent committed to nucleus estates owned by farmer co-operatives producing high-value non-food crops, and 10 per cent given to landless farmers for subsistence crop production) (IBON Databank 1993: 4). Lacson promoted a number of ambitious ODA funded plans which depended on broad support from NGOs, including those linked to prominent sugar planters. Instead however, schemes such as the Negros Relief and Development Programme (NRDP) and the Economic District Management System (EDMS) divided them, and by 1991 the EDMS had collapsed.

The conflict essentially pitted the élite philanthropic NGOs along with those with a social democratic orientation, against the politically-active NGOs and POs who broadly supported the programme of the National Democratic Front (see further below). Yet it also illustrated the extent to which NGOs had become new institutional vehicles to advance the political interests of traditional family clans. Liberal planter NGOs such as the Chito Foundation, founded in 1976 by sugar planter Eduardo Locsin in memory of his son, were estranged by Daniel Lacson’s hostility to established NGOs in Negros such as PBSP and his attempts to displace them. Many also suspected that ACCORD and MUAD served primarily as vehicles to advance the political
career of Lacson and felt the NRDP and EDMS created a bureaucracy that curbed their autonomy. Emerging triumphantly from the conflict however, Lacson was appointed by President Ramos as Chairman of the state-owned Philippine National Bank (which controlled much of the foreclosed land on Negros) and Presidential Adviser on Rural Development in June 1992.

Sugar planters to Lacson’s right used NGOs to mobilise a third political strategy. The most important was the Sugar Development Foundation, an adjunct to the anti-communist and anti-land reform campaigns of the Movement for an Independent Negros (MIN) and the Negros Anti-Communist Crusade (NACC). The Sugar Development Foundation paid for arms and training for Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Units (see chapter 4) which attacked mass-based POs occupying foreclosed land. The most prominent targets were the 80,000 strong National Federation of Sugar Workers-Food and General Trades (NFSW-FGT) and the Small Farmers Association of Negros (SFAN). By the early 1990s, as the level of insurgency declined, the SDF had fragmented into 12 units, corresponding to Negros Occidental’s 12 sugar milling districts, each supporting CAFGU units in its area. Charting its demise, a journalist noted in 1993, ‘some planters believing that communists [are] no longer a threat and many planters have stopped contributions to the SDF altogether. In one district, only 8.5% of about 1,000 planters now contribute’.19

In the Philippines of the mid-1990s however, it is no longer the NGOs or foundations with links to the traditional agrarian élite that dominate élite philanthropy. Economic growth from the early 1990s has empowered businessmen with minimal investments in agriculture or rural landholdings. Instead, these businessmen, and women, are active in manufacturing, retail trade and banking and enjoy close links to the Ramos administration. The Metrobank Foundation, for instance, the philanthropic arm of George Ty, one of a small group of taipans mobilised by President Ramos to support large scale investment projects, and one of the Philippines’ wealthiest Chinese businessmen, had assets of P840 million (US$30 million) in 1994 and channelled 60 million pesos (US$2 million) annually to health and education projects.20 Like élite philanthropists before them, this new generation of businessmen uses philanthropic foundations to legitimate its economic power, to maintain its political ties to the ruling administration and to deter the increased taxation needed to improve state intervention in social development.

The Christian churches

In the Philippines, the Christian churches were uniquely placed to promote
the proliferation of NGOs and played a significant role as a result. With Muslims, concentrated in Manila and Mindanao, accounting for almost 10 per cent of the population, Islam played a small but increasingly important role in promoting NGOs in the early 1990s.\textsuperscript{21}With 85 per cent of the population Catholic however, the Catholic church was especially well placed. It rivalled state institutions in ideological coherence, nationwide reach, ability to permeate remote barrios and to affect the lives of marginalised social strata. Yet, throughout the twentieth century, Protestants in the Philippines have contributed to national life out of all proportion to their small numbers, and the Protestant churches are another important force in NGO politics.

Catholic church institutions began to organise peasants and farmers during the 1940s and in 1953 the Catholic Charities was established to co-ordinate Catholic welfare activities (Fabros 1988: chapter 2).\textsuperscript{22} During the mid-1960s, the Catholic Church’s involvement in socio-economic development was consolidated under the influence of Vatican II and liberation theology. In 1966 the Catholic hierarchy established an independent Episcopal Commission on Social Action which in turn established the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) (\textit{Ibid}.: 97). By mid-1968, 2,000 church-sponsored projects existed, including credit unions, improved rice production, cottage industries, medical clinics, youth recreational centers, farmers’ associations, piggeries, poulteries, housing projects, . . . land tenure [projects], and one electricity cooperative. . . In 42 out of 48 dioceses and prelatures . . . , a social action director had been appointed . . . . Eight dioceses had established social action secretariats manned by full-time priest-directors and about twenty professionally-trained lay workers. About 400 parishes out of 1,650 were engaged in some socio-economic endeavour.\textit{(\textit{Ibid}.: 127)}

These activities ‘went beyond the social welfare and relief orientation’ but, Fabros (\textit{Ibid}.) notes,

they dealt primarily with cooperative and nonconflictual aspects of community development. Nothing significant was done toward the organisation of farmers, land distribution, and other community development projects that would involve conflict between groups and change the existing social structures.

With the declaration of martial law in 1972 however, powerful church institutions responded by intervening directly in group conflicts. NASSA
established three regional secretariats by 1974; the Luzon Secretariat for Social Action (LUSSA); the Visayas Secretariat for Social Action (VISSA); and the Mindanao-Sulu Secretariat for Social Action (MISSA). By 1981, there were 68 diocesan social action centres nationwide (Youngblood 1990: 76), important umbrellas that sheltered popular organisational initiatives from military repression. NASSA promoted community organising further in 1975 through its Basic Christian Community-Community Organizing (BCC-CO) programme. In time, BCCs, ‘priestless prayer groups of thirty to fifty people’ (McCoy 1984: 161), became an important force in launching POs and NGOs. Lay facilitators sought to ‘conscienticise’, i.e. raise the critical consciousness of, parishioners through bible-sharing sessions and seminars and invited members to join sectoral organisations. By 1980, according to Jones (1989: 209), BCCs were active in one-third of dioceses and were viewed by one military authority as ‘practically . . . an infrastructure of political power in the entire country’. In another important stimulus to the establishment of sectoral-based POs and NGOs, the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) established a number of task forces in 1974,23 many of which were run by nuns.24 The AMRSP also established an Office for Justice and Peace to assist NASSA’s Justice and Peace Commission, and continued financial support for prominent POs including the Zone One Tondo Organisation, the Samahan ng Kristiyang Komunidad (Christian Community Association) and the National Federation of Sugar Workers (Youngblood 1990: 85).

A number of factors animated this process of institution-building. First, Catholic funding agencies in Europe and North America such as CEBEMO (The Netherlands), or MISEREOR (Germany) multiplied the financial resources which Catholic church institutions committed to NGOs and POs. Similarly, Protestant funding agencies associated with the Geneva-based World Council of Churches, such as ICCO (Netherlands), Bread for the World (Germany) and Christian Aid (Britain) funded programmes of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP). Second, the diversity of ideological opinion within the church enabled it to work with other important forces: élite philanthropists, foreign donors and the underground left, cementing the role of NGOs in mobilising opposition to the Marcos regime. NASSA and the NCCP co-ordinated with foreign donors while the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Bishops-Businessmens Conference (BBC) worked closely with prominent philanthropists. Philippine Priests Incorporated (PPI), and the underground Christians for National Liberation (CNL) (among others) linked church institutions to the underground left. Third, NGOs and POs provided an important institutional base for activists to develop the ‘praxis’
of liberation theology, institutionalising a split between a popular church, and the hierarchical church embodied in the CBCP.25

The debate over liberation theology was sharpest in Mindanao. In 1980, Mindanao had only one priest per 14,634 Catholics (1 to 20,000 in parts) and only 14 per cent of available priests (compared to 21.5 per cent of the population) (Kinne 1990: 14). As a result, the Mindanao church depended on the participation of the laity and a level of organisation among local communities that made their Christian character self-sustaining. To institutionalise lay participation in church life, Mindanao’s bishops established the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC), a body of bishops, priests, religious and laity modelled on the All-India Pastoral Conference. The MSPC met triennially from 1971 (Ibid.: 43–4). In 1977, a MSPC secretariat (MSPCS) was established. Karl Gaspar, former manager of PBSP’s Mindanao programme, was elected as MSPC Executive Secretary and in 1978, MSPC absorbed MISSA. The three developments further stimulated MSPC’s role in supporting NGOs. In 1982 however Mindanao’s bishops disassociated themselves from MSPC over fears of collaboration between NASSA, the various MSPC apostalates, (especially social action) and the underground left.26

The 1982 disassociation shattered what Kinne describes as the ‘main point of convergence in Asia of Christian and Marxist social struggle’ (Ibid.: 155). Over 15 years, thousands of BCCs mushroomed in Mindanao, but were violently suppressed by AFP counter-insurgency operations; of 1,200 grassroots lay leaders trained by the Community Formation Center between 1967 and 1988, for instance, 15 met with violent deaths. NGOs however, often located within diocesan social action centres, enjoyed greater physical security, and greater financial security than BCCs which mostly eschewed foreign funding (Ibid.: 52). Professionally trained staff also strengthened the capacity of NGOs to endure military or para-military repression, while the socio-economic thrust of NGO programmes made them less vulnerable to hierarchical censure. As a result, NGOs represented arguably the main institutional legacy of MSPC.

Church-based NGOs, Thompson (1991a: 458, 461) notes, played a significant role in the ‘EDSA Revolution’ of February 1986, the rallies along Manila’s Epifanio de los Santos Avenue that precipitated the collapse of the Marcos regime. The rallies were largely spontaneous and led by individuals, but Church organisations, notably Aksyon sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan (AKKAKPA, Action for Justice and Peace), had trained many of the leading activists in the preceding months. Since 1986, the Christian churches have remained a significant force in NGO politics. Church-based NGOs played a prominent role in the main sectoral coalitions active between 1986 and 1996, especially
those concerned with peace,\textsuperscript{27} and three of the ten NGO networks that founded CODE-NGO in 1991 were church-based; NASSA, NCCP and the Ecumenical Center for Development. At the Second Plenary Council of 1991, NGO action was reaffirmed by the Catholic hierarchy as ‘a concrete putting into practice of two key ideas much stressed in recent papal teaching on social issues: solidarity and love of preferences for the poor’ (CBCP 1992: 13). Overall however, church antagonism to the CPP affected the NGO community in a number of respects. First, NASSA was reorganised in 1987 to bring it under greater CBCP control. The CBCP also strengthened its Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC) programme at the expense of NASSA’s BCC-CO programme, especially in decisions taken at the Second Plenary Council (\textit{Ibid.}: 52–3). Second, AMRSP relationships with its subordinate task forces led to acrimonious debate at annual conventions after 1986. Although dwarfing the AMRSP itself, task forces (especially TFDP) sought continued AMRSP sponsorship, given the uncertain character of the democratisation process while opponents condemned them as national democratic (i.e., pro-NDF). By 1993 however the task forces retained AMRSP sponsorship, an important protective umbrella for associated church-based NGOs. Third, CNL activists who previously supported NDF united front work by establishing NGOs in ‘white areas’ (i.e. government-controlled, predominantly urban), turned to new NGOs after 1986 to develop an institutional base to challenge CPP hegemony. Edicio de la Torre, for instance, one of CNL’s founders, helped establish the Institute for Popular Democracy in 1987 and later, the Education for Life Foundation. Gerry Bulatao, AMRSP Secretary General from 1974 to 1976 before going underground with CNL, worked with the DAR before he helped establish KAISAHAHAN with Florencio Abad in 1990, becoming its Executive Director.

**Development assistance**

Development assistance, official and unofficial, is the life blood that sustains the Philippine NGO community. In 1991, development assistance to the Philippines amounted to US$1.4 billion (UNDP 1993: Foreword) of which roughly $102 million or 7.2 per cent was channelled through NGOs.\textsuperscript{28} Development assistance, however, is a controversial force in Philippine NGO politics. According to David (1988: 71–2), it promotes ‘parasitism and dependence . . . exacerbating jealousies and rivalries . . . imposing an externally-generated priority system . . . eroding the norm of selflessness and commitment . . . [and depoliticising] NGO work.’ Official Development Assistance (ODA)
first became a significant factor in the growth of the NGO community in 1972 when a small number of governments, mainly European, replaced support for government projects with aid to NGOs through co-financing agencies. Dutch aid after 1972, for instance, was channelled almost exclusively through CEBEMO, ICCO, Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Ontwikkelingsaanwerk (NOVIB, Netherlands Organisation for International Development) and SNV, averaging $7 million to $8 million per annum (Van Eldik Thieme 1992: 2).

Among voluntary organisations influential in NGO politics, the Rockefeller, Ford and Asia Foundations had a virtual monopoly until the mid-1960s when European Catholic and Protestant church funding agencies began to support NGO programmes through Philippine church partners (primarily NASSA and NCCP). European support (church and non-church) increased dramatically after 1972 and by the late 1970s, agencies such as NOVIB, CEBEMO and ICCO (Netherlands), MISEREOR (Germany) and Oxfam (Britain) had become important supporters of ‘progressive’ (i.e. left of centre) Philippine NGOs, leading to accusations of their support for insurgency.29 NOVIB’s philosophy, for instance, of providing large grants to large NGOs and acting as lead agency in consortia provides significant influence over the strategies and orientations of some of the biggest NGOs, including PRRM and TFDP. In the case of Ford and Asia Foundations, the presence of representative offices and staff in Manila and the particular programme strategy enhances their influence, despite the relatively small size of their programmes.30 By 1991, support from voluntary agencies in Europe, North America and Japan amounted to roughly $40 million or 40 per cent of total foreign funding to Philippine NGOs.31

Of the official donors, USAID and CIDA are the most influential. Between 1980 and 1991, USAID provided over $45 million to more than 200 NGOs and POs (USAID 1992a: 1), $10 million in 1991 alone (Goertzen 1991a: 20), making it the single most important foreign source of NGO funding. Most went to philanthropic NGOs,32 leading to criticisms that USAID was promoting ‘a network of élite NGOs identified with and beholden to big business’ (Lara 1990: 4). In January 1992, in a pioneering debt-for-nature swap designed to support environmental NGOs, USAID launched the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE) with the WWF, PBSP, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Philippine Central Bank. Under the plan, USAID agreed to release US$25 million in phased tranches for the purchase of discounted Philippine debt on international markets. Interest and capital repaid on the debt, honoured in full by the Central Bank, finances an FPE endowment fund, which in August 1993 stood at US$22 million, yielding
annual interest of roughly $2 million to fund NGO environmental projects (Silliman 1994b: 18).

Since 1986, CIDA has established a firm rapport with broad sections of the NGO community, through support for NGO coalition-building initiatives and innovative funding mechanisms. In March 1993, for instance, CIDA had C$46 million (US$25 million) committed to ‘third generation’ projects (see Table 5.5), including the Philippine Cooperative Development Assistance Programme, the WID NGO Umbrella project and the Philippine-Canada Human Resources Development programme (PCHRD).

In the late 1980s however, CIDA was criticised for marginalising established development NGOs from the design and implementation of ODA programmes, especially in Negros where CIDA projects served mainly to strengthen sugar planter NGOs. In 1986, CIDA launched a C$100 million five-year programme in the Philippines, increasing ten-fold the 1981–1986 aid of C$11 million. The central objective was to support immediate impact community-based government and non-government initiatives. C$11 million (P165 million) was committed to the three-year Negros Relief and Development Programme (NRDP), designed as a follow up to UNICEF’s US$2.4 million Emergency Quick Action Programme (ENQAP) 1985–1986, and in September 1989

Table 5.5 CIDA project support to NGOs, March 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost C$m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Co-operative Development Assistance Programme</td>
<td>1987–92</td>
<td>4.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination of Ferrocement Rainwater Catchment System</td>
<td>1989–93</td>
<td>0.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCRFW Institutional Strengthening Project</td>
<td>1990–95</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in Development NGO Umbrella Project</td>
<td>1990–95</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines-Canada Human Resources Development Programme (PCHRD)</td>
<td>1990–95</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine NGO Assistance Development Programme (PDAP) Phase 1</td>
<td>1986–90</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>1990–95</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Fund for Local NGO Initiatives</td>
<td>1992–93</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>46.008</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CIDA provided an additional C$0.6 million (P9 million) for the first stage of the Economic District Management System (EDMS) programme. The bulk of the C$11 million however was captured by sugar planter NGOs empowered by the ENQAP (BIND 1990; Cadagat n.d.). According to one source, more than 400 sugar planter NGOs were established to avail of ENQAP, NRDF or EDMS funding, marginalising reputable development NGOs and mass-based POs.\(^3\)

In response, 30 Philippine and 12 Canadian NGOs attended a conference on CIDA’s Country Review Programme in June 1988 determined to ensure that Canadian aid was in future directed to genuine development NGOs and their PO partners. The result of the review was the establishment of the PCHRĐ, an innovative arrangement that transferred grant-making responsibilities from Canada to the Philippines. As Arquiza notes, ‘PCHRĐ . . . set a precedent. For the first time, Philippine NGOs would have substantial control over funding [and] more than 90% of funds would now pass through the Manila-based [Philippine-Canadian Joint Committee]’ (Arquiza 1993: 17). The early 1990s in general heralded a number of innovative new donor-NGO relationships. As Arquiza (*Ibid.*: 25) notes, by late 1993, FPE and PCHRĐ had proved relatively successful:

> In both cases, the Philippine NGO community succeeded in gaining access, albeit in a limited sense, to ODA decision-making processes. In both . . . a coalition of Philippine NGOs positioned themselves to be a major recipient or conduit of ODA monies. In the process of two consecutive coalition successes, the Philippine NGO participants have developed among themselves substantial points of unity.

Despite the FPE and PCHRĐ successes however,\(^36\) substantial differences remain between foreign funders and Philippine NGOs, making ODA a significant variable in NGO politics. By the mid-1990s, these differences were in many ways exacerbated as ODA funding to the Philippines declined and as donors encouraged NGOs to seek other sources of funding.

**The underground left**

The Communist Party of the Philippines, with its armed wing, the New People’s Army and its united front, the National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF), has long been an important force in Philippine NGO politics. Since the late 1970s, the triumvirate has influenced existing NGOs, established new ones
and used NGO funding to support its armed struggle. Yet, within the CPP itself, NGOs have also been a bitter source of tension, especially in the post-1992 ‘Reaffirm’ vs. ‘Reject’ debate (see further below).

The CPP-NPA-NDF played a relatively minor role in NGO politics until the late 1970s. Under the Chairmanship of Jose Maria Sison, the CPP adhered to orthodox Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tse-Tung Thought (MLMTT). Broadening the anti-Marcos united front through the NDF was relegated in importance to strengthening the CPP’s vanguard role and establishing the primacy of armed struggle, so the party itself paid little attention to legal front organisations.37 Second, organisations such as CNL that could have established NGOs to strengthen the united front were in disarray in the early years of martial law as activists were arrested or fled to the mountains.38

Nevertheless, between 1972 and 1978, leading underground activists such as Ed de la Torre, Gerry Bulatao and Edgar Jopson helped establish important NGOs. With close church and social democrat connections, each brought ideas to the underground of institutions that could organise legitimately and secure foreign funding. Building on the successful La Tondeña strike of October 1975, for example, Jopson, founder of the Church Labor Center, and other activists mobilised church-based NGOs, cementing ties with the NDF.39 NGOs were thus, according to one former NDF leader, an idea that the CPP borrowed from the church.40

In 1978, serious tensions developed between the CPP and NDF activists following the arrest of Jose Maria Sison in November 1977. Even more hostile than Sison to the concept of a united front, new CPP Chairman Rodolfo Salas ordered a review of the Community Organising (CO) approach popularised by NASSA, and in the resultant paper presented to the Central Committee in January 1978, CO was roundly condemned:

CO radicalism should read reformism . . . Its main concern is small events, small issues, small targets, tangible victories, small communities, small and manageable organisations etc. It goes around structural problems and deals with only their manifestations like poor water, light, health and recreational facilities. It builds issues around them, identifies personally responsible targets and concentrates agitation, mobilization and organisation on them. By avoiding real and substantial issues and targets and keeping people from revolutionary actions, CO objectively works only to amend some sick parts of the rotten totality. It evades as much as possible all problems which require armed struggle for their solution.41

(CPP 1978)
Despite its unease however, the CPP was unable to enforce effective discipline, especially beyond Manila or Central Luzon where the leadership was largely concentrated. NDF activists enjoyed a significant degree of individual autonomy, and the number of NGOs and POs established with their help grew rapidly in the late 1970s, especially in Mindanao.

By 1985, according to Chapman (1987: 232), the CPP’s united front had become enormously successful:

NDF organisers were active in at least one-fifth of the country’s barrios ... and in hundreds of them NDF Barrio Committees were the actual government. The penetration of labour unions and other non-communist organisations was proceeding swiftly even in Manila where grassroots work had been traditionally slow. Perhaps most significantly the party had in place the semblance of a true popular united front in Bayan, especially in the cities of Mindanao and the Visayas. ... The front’s own strategy of promoting people’s strikes as the first stage of a national insurrection was becoming more and more popular.

Behind this apparent success however, relations between the CPP and NDF progressively deteriorated between 1980 and 1986, soured by NDF draft programmes of January 1982 and January 1985 which sought to erode the CPP’s vanguard role (cf. Rocamora 1992). During the early 1980s, the CPP leadership expanded its effective authority beyond Luzon and the autonomy of NDF activists was significantly reduced. By 1986, according to Putzel (1992: 168), the NDF was ‘more of an idea or a political programme than an independent organisational reality’, and NDF barrio committees were, in reality, tightly controlled CPP structures. The clampdown was, in many respects too late however, and NGOs established by NDF activists became an institutional base from which the CPP soon faced significant opposition.

CPP failure to give meaningful autonomy to the NDF fuelled the proliferation of NGOs after 1983. First, activists in sympathy with the NDF programme but frustrated by its organisational weakness used NGOs to bring organisational strength (and foreign funding) to their efforts. Disenchantment increased following the CPP’s boycott of the 1986 Presidential elections and as rumours circulated of a brutal purge in Mindanao in which NGO workers were murdered or tortured. Second, breakaway national democrats regrouping under the new rubric of popular democracy used NGOs as a critical institutional base to launch a new tendency within the Philippine left. Third, activists associated
with left-wing groups opposed to armed struggle (i.e., the social democrats, democratic socialists, and independent socialists) established their own NGOs in an attempt to create rival institutional power-bases of the left and to prevent their marginalisation by the underground left.

Between 1987 and 1990, the CPP’s mass base eroded under the impact both of the government’s intensive 1987–1990 counter-insurgency programme and its own strategic blunders.

From 1987 to 1990 the membership of the mass base was reduced by almost 60% from the base year of 1986, . . . the number of barrios covered by guerrilla fronts by 16% and . . . Party membership by 15% . . . Furthermore, the number of officers and fighters of the people’s army fell by 28% or below the level of 1985.43

As a result, the CPP came to rely increasingly on NGO funding from 1987. Throughout the 1970s, the CPP derived barely enough income from NGOs to finance the United Front Commission. Under Rodolfo Salas’s chairmanship, however, CPP finances were systematised.44 According to one source, CPP cadres in NGOs began to submit funding proposals to overseas donors in ‘the latter part of the 70s’,45 and in 1980, according to another, regular ‘taxation’ of NGOs was introduced.46 By 1989, according to the Philippine military, 60 per cent of an estimated US$6 million–$9 million received by Philippine NGOs from abroad was funnelled to the CPP/NPA.47 This is a gross overestimate however. According to Clad, the CPP spent P22 million (US$0.75 million) in 1987 of which 60 per cent came from ‘legal “projects” . . . including laundered businesses’, and 22 per cent from ‘revolutionary taxation’ including the confiscation of assets from ‘reactionaries’.48 Since the CPP derives income from NGOs in two main ways (levies on NGOs operating in CPP-controlled territory49 and appropriations from a minority of directly-influenced NGOs), NGO income probably falls under these two categories. Assuming that NGOs accounted for 40 per cent of 1987 CPP income, and projected 1988 income of P55 million (US$1.9 million) (Clad 1988), it accounted for a tiny portion of overall foreign assistance channelled to Philippine NGOs, and an even smaller portion of total NGO income.

By the early 1990s however, this level of support had begun to decline. First, NGOs and other legal front organisations became increasingly resentful of CPP ‘taxation’. Ka Mer, a leading CPP cadre in Bicol, notes that in 1989 the
regional party was forced to reduce its revenue intake from legal organisations under pressure from NGO and PO staff (Putzel 1995: 654). Second, in the early 1990s, a split opened up within the CPP, pitting ‘reaffirmists’, supporters of decisions taken at the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee in 1990 (cf. CPP 1992a) against ‘rejectionists’, those opposed to orthodox MLMTT Thought and the Chairmanship of Armando Liwanag (Jose Maria Sison). As a result, contributions from NGOs and POs to the party fell sharply. Following the reaffirmation of CPP orthodoxy at the 1990 Plenum, public attacks on former leading cadre, and the July 1993 breakaway of the Manila-Rizal Committee which formalised the split, NGOs and POs were drawn into a bitter ideological dispute. Legal organisations traditionally sympathetic to the CPP-NPA-NDF such as Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU, May First Movement) and Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, Philippine Peasants Movement) fragmented into opposing camps, and ‘rejectionists’ secured control of important bank accounts, reducing the revenue and assets of the ‘reaffirm’ or orthodox camp. Amid intense polemical debate within the CPP, CPP relations with legal front organisations and the very basis of NGO action were called into question. As former NDF Spokesperson Satur Ocampo explains:

the [CPP] place[s] great emphasis on basic organising among . . . workers . . . peasants and other sectors, mainly to develop these potential forces in support of the armed struggle. There is a very strong current within the party that discourages, if not outrightly opposes, organising for above ground, for socio-economic programs, because of the probability that such activities, such organising and mobilizing among the people, would tend to deflect their interest and efforts in supporting the underground, particularly the armed struggle, and would be siphoned into what the movement refers to as reformist tendencies.51

Underlining this hostility, the CPP (1992a: 61) condemned Church NGO attempts to promote peace talks between the Ramos government and the NDF. It also attacked party cadres on government wanted lists for endangering security by maintaining contact with ‘former political detainees . . . personalities, organisations and institutions under probable and certain enemy surveillance’, an explicit attack on links with prominent NGO activists (Ibid.: 77).

By 1993, when the internal split formalised and spilled over, NGOs and NGO coalitions had largely avoided the effects, and mass organisations bore the brunt. Within NDF and CPP circles, prominent leaders worked to minimise
the effects of the split on supportive NGOs. Speaking in late 1993, for instance, Satur Ocampo voiced the concern felt by many NGOs:

I have always taken the position that the internal struggle should be resolved within the proper structures so that the spill over into the NGOs and open formations may be prevented from causing more damage. The argument put forward by the dominant side in the debate [however], the mainline party leaders, is . . . let the process run its course and then lets pick up the pieces later . . . . Hopefully, reason and practical considerations and the overall consideration of what is good for the people and the progressive movement will prevail.52

By 1994 however, the orthodox camp had begun to re-establish its authority and even leaders such as Ocampo who had worked to keep lines of communication open were forced to declare their loyalty to party leader Jose Maria Sison. Human rights NGOs and human rights coalitions were among the worst affected (see further in chapter 8) but by 1995 all the major NGO coalitions were affected and CODE-NGO, the largest, lost two of its member networks when the Council for People’s Development (CPD) and the Ecumenical Center for Development (ECD) left as a result of the split. At the grassroots level, POs were badly affected. In Central Luzon, historically, the area of greatest peasant organisation and activation, an estimated 1,000 POs and co-operatives existed at the beginning of the debate. By 1995 however, many alliances had crumbled, farmers had lost interest and PO subscriptions to mass organisations had plummeted.53 By 1996, the worst of the crisis was over, and NGOs and POs, weakened and, in many cases, demoralised, worked to rebuild their lost momentum. The crisis weakened the formerly close links between a large section of the NGO community and underground left and undermined those NGOs vis-à-vis the rest of the NGO community. Whatever its other long term effects, the dispute illustrated the complex ideological environment in which NGOs sympathetic to the national democratic perspective have traditionally worked, illustrating a significant dimension to their relations with the Philippine state (see chapter 4).

**CONCLUSION**

‘In aristocratic societies’, Alexis de Tocqueville first wrote in 1840,

men do not need to combine in order to act because they are strongly held together. Every wealthy and powerful person constitutes the head of a
permanent and compulsory association composed of all those who are dependent upon him or whom he makes subservient to the execution of his designs.

(1900: 115)

But in ‘democratic nations’, de Tocqueville countered, ‘associations ought. . . to stand in lieu of those powerful private individuals whom the equality of condition has swept away’ (Ibid.: 117). De Tocqueville’s prescription echoes an important theme in contemporary Philippine political discourse. Growing ‘equality of condition’, wrought by political reform and economic change, is sweeping ‘powerful individuals’ away and NGOs have become important institutions in sustaining the process. Inevitably, vested interests fight for influence if not control over institutions which disrupt the status quo. In the Philippines, traditional politicians, landlords and businessmen opposed to structural reform use NGOs to advance their political agendas. In this sense, the associations that de Tocqueville sees as important instruments in undermining feudalism are also potent weapons in the hands of recalcitrant élites. In the sections above, this chapter described a range of forces that have stimulated the proliferation and growth of NGOs, each interacting, sometimes supporting, sometimes opposing each other.

The Philippine NGO community is extraordinarily heterogeneous and characterised by distinct cleavages: between NGOs and POs, between different types of NGOs, and between different levels in a complex hierarchy. In significant part, this stems from the different institutional forces that support the NGO community. For the NGO community as a whole, development assistance has been the most influential, helping established NGOs to consolidate and expand their programmes but also injecting resources that are eagerly sought by other political forces. The estimated US$102 million channelled by donors to Philippine NGOs in 1991 was second to Indonesia in absolute terms and to Cambodia in per capita terms, but it still counted as a significant commitment on the part of the international donor community to strengthening the NGO community’s role in channelling development assistance to the poor and in expanding the scope of civil society to encompass previously marginalised groups. Donor support however is now declining as the Philippine economy grows, as democracy consolidates and as donors direct their support to the NGO communities in countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam. Inevitably this will affect the NGO community, as NGOs close or scale back their activities, seek domestic sources of funding or compete with
NGOs for fee-paying members. For first generation NGOs, those committed to traditional relief and welfare activities, élite philanthropy has been, and remains, the dominant institutional force. Yet as the chapter notes, élite philanthropy also plays a role in the second and third generation strategies of prominent NGOs such as PBSP. For development NGOs, or Constantino-David’s ‘DJANGOs’, the underground left, along with the Catholic Church, was a very significant force, even in the establishment of church-based NGOs. The split within the Philippine left, combined with the fall in donor assistance has exerted pressure on this section of the NGO community in particular (see further in chapter 6).

Thus, this chapter argues, the commitment of institutional forces to the NGO community plays an important role in shaping its political character, especially the balance between NGOs committed to competing first, second and third generation strategies. As chapters 3 and 4 argued, the state plays a critical role in defining the context in which NGOs can elaborate their own political role. The consolidation or institutionalisation of ‘civil society’ essentially involves the state making areas of society beyond its control increasingly subject to rules that are primarily of its design. But as this chapter also argues throughout, DJANGOs, development justice and advocacy NGOs or third generation NGOs also contend with a complex political environment shaped by actors beyond the state, complicating attempts to promote popular empowerment. This in turn influences the ability of NGOs to organise and mobilise as a political force; a subject explored in chapter 6.
6 Arenas of intervention

INTRODUCTION

As chapter 4 noted, the Philippine government increasingly viewed NGOs from 1986 as potential partners in a strategic alliance that could underpin economic growth and democratic consolidation. In large part, this reflected the success of Philippine NGOs in organising and mobilising as a political force in a relatively short period of time. Yet, chapter 4 and chapter 5, left unanswered important questions about how and why NGOs, especially the politically active third generation NGOs, organise in pursuit of political goals. Organising, especially the organising of POs and PO-NGO coalitions, has become a critical role of Philippine NGOs, perhaps even their very raison d’être. ‘As the heart of NGO work, mass-based organising is the lynchpin [sic] of all other . . . activities’, Morales (1990: 124, 127) argues; ‘NGOs have increasingly engendered a heightened level of consciousness among peasants. Simultaneously, perhaps as a result, mass action has also been on the rise’. This is especially true of the third generation NGOs that have proliferated since the 1970s and the era of martial law, but it also applies to second generation development NGOs and to a large number of first generation traditional relief and welfare organisations. As a whole, the NGO community has played an important role in representing specific new constituencies and in inducting new groups into politics. Cala (1994b: 284–5), for instance, notes that:

[Since 1986] . . . NGOs . . . [have] locate[d] themselves . . . in new and less-ideologically encumbered areas of progressive discourse: development, peace and empowerment. From their initial single-concern or localized days, they have grown to tackle the larger issues of development . . . . Through
these efforts, NGOs have introduced a new frontline in progressive praxis in the Philippines. The groups in this frontline confront the question of powerlessness and strive for immediate impact and gains even while the conservative overhang of the state remains and continues to be struggled against.

Two main factors explain the centrality of NGO mass-organising in the Philippines. The first is the transition from semi-feudalism to more capitalist-based relations of production and of social formation. Philippine society was predominantly rural in 1990–91, with 57 per cent of the population living in rural areas. However, although agriculture, forestry and fisheries employed close to half the labour force, it accounted for only 22 per cent of GNP (UNDP 1993: 178, 186; Putzel 1992: 23). Slowly, the relationship between land and economic power and in turn with political power is unravelling, enhancing scope for political participation by marginalised rural communities. Nevertheless, rural élites remain a substantial economic and political force. As Putzel (1991) notes, despite a horizontal diffusion of power within the élite (and within the state), ‘there has not been a vertical diffusion of economic and political power to the broader base of society’. Obstacles to reform resulting from this stand-off between traditional, predominantly agrarian, élites and the state have been an important stimulus to the increasingly political profile of NGOs.

Second, NGOs fill a vacuum left by the party political system. From 1946 to 1972, two parties dominated politics, the Nacionalistas (Nationalists) and the Liberals. Both were characterised by minimal inter-party ideological debate, minimal intra-party solidarity, endemic inter-party switching for personal advancement and very narrowly-based party membership (Landé 1964: 1). Thus, parties functioned as electoral vehicles for the interests of a small number of powerful families largely dependent on semi-feudal agriculture. But during the martial law period, profound social changes undermined the social structure on which the two-party system thrived. Agriculture declined in importance as industry and the service sector expanded. In response, the formerly homogenous economic interests of the élite became more differentiated (cf. Turner 1984), with participation in or exclusion from the economic opportunities of martial law a critical cleavage. When martial law was lifted in 1981, new political parties were established. Again, their ideological basis was weak and they served mainly to advance the interests of prominent personalities or clan-machines. Political parties proliferated, some of them ephemeral, forming loose coalitions which lacked discipline or durability. Political parties failed to expand membership beyond the ranks of professional
politicians, especially at the local level where parties had no permanent infrastructure, or to present issued-based manifestos with which the public could identify. Effectively the toys of the élite, parties remained by the early 1990s, the objects of profound popular cynicism. As a result, NGOs and POs play an important role in mobilising and articulating the political demands of workers, peasants, marginalised sectors and sections of the middle class traditionally estranged from the party political system.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The Philippines has a long history of popular activation and mobilisation. As chapter 3 noted, peasant or trade union social movements throughout the twentieth century have challenged an economic and political system seen as agrarian-élite dominated and biased against the interests of the rural poor, through a combination of mass protest and armed struggle. These movements were typically broad, class-based, ideologically cohesive and centred on the peasantry of Central Luzon. Economic, social and political change in the 1970s and 1980s however fundamentally altered the nature of popular activation and mobilisation and since the late 1980s, contemporary social movements have represented a complex blend of institutional or organisational types, including trade unions, peasant associations, student groups and more recently, sectoral- or issue-based POs and NGOs. There are a number of general sociological reasons for the increasing role of coalitions, and of NGOs. First, class-based social movements have fragmented considerably in recent decades. From the 1930s to the early 1980s, class represented a central and straightforward cleavage around which social movements were mobilised (e.g., the Sakdalistas in the 1930s, the Huks in the 1950s (see chapter 3)); political actors were either for or against a semi-feudal, semi-colonial system of export agriculture and the government apparatus which protected it. Through the 1980s and early 1990s however, social movements became increasingly focused, pursuing more concrete objectives, and more sectoral- or issue-specific agendas, drawing a narrower range of actors. Second, the archipelagic nature of the Philippines, the enduring cultural resonance of small affinity groups and the lack of a geographically-concentrated industrial sector all prevented the emergence of a mass party of the left.

Organisational factors however played an equally significant role. First, NGOs have access to significant ODA funding (multilateral, governmental and non-governmental) dwarfing resources mass organisations can derive from their own memberships. Second, the well-resourced nature of the NGO sector makes it both a training ground and source of employment for the
leaders and personnel needed to sustain contemporary social movements. Third, NGOs use direct experience in providing services as a springboard to more political activity since a history of effective service delivery enhances their ‘legitimacy’ in the eyes of other political actors. Equally, direct experience informs NGO political activity which is therefore more clearly conceptualised, more thoroughly researched and documented and more clearly based on practical realities. Fourth, while the notoriously fractious tendencies of the Philippine left are increasingly willing to co-operate with each other, NGOs and NGO leaders acting as autonomous ‘honest brokers’ are needed to generate and sustain momentum. Fifth, for the national democratic movement, NGOs continue to provide an important legal front through which to explore the post-1986 boundaries of ‘democratic space’, albeit one which increasingly exercised its autonomy from party dictat.

Two of the most important multi-institutional, social movement-based, coalitions between 1986 and 1993 were the CPAR and the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC). CPAR was launched in May 1987 in anticipation of an inevitable battle with a landlord-dominated Congress elected that month. Composed of twelve national peasant organisations/coalitions, CPAR united a peasant sector long divided by ideological, territorial and regional disputes, and its broad political character represented a landmark in Philippine politics. NGOs such as PhilDHRRA, the Philippine Peasant Institute (PPI) and PRRM and NGO leaders such as Joel Rodriguez of Forum for Rural Concerns (FRC) and Corazon ‘Dinky’ Juliano-Soliman of ACES played an important role in launching CPAR and in sustaining the unity to which it gave birth. In 1986, for instance, PhilDHRRA and the Centre for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (CENDHRRA) organised regional and national consultations which improved the climate for a major organisational initiative on land reform. As Grageda (1994a: 71) notes,

Parallel efforts were also [initiated] by several other NGOs [including] FRC, PRRM, the Center for Community Services (CCS), Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) and the Asian NGO coalition, which conducted consultations with their respective partner organisations. Church-based groups like the Urban-Rural Missionaries of the NCCP and NASSA were likewise involved.

CPAR became an important actor in the national debate on land reform legislation. It drafted its own legislative programme, the People’s Agrarian Reform Code (PARCODE), advocating essentially liberal measures and campaigned for its adoption in Congress. PARCODE attracted significant support, including that of Rep. Bonifacio Gillego, Chairman of the House
Committee on Agrarian Reform and Rep. Florencio Abad (later appointed Secretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform). In newspapers, PARCODE was debated with almost the same attention and vigour as the Congressional proposals, attracting unprecedented attention for an extra-parliamentary initiative. According to the 1987 constitution, a national referendum could be called by popular demand if supported by 10 per cent of registered voters. CPAR therefore launched a popular petition seeking 2.5 million signatures in support of PARCODE, the first initiative of its kind.⁵

The second great issue of national political debate in the late 1980s and early 1990s in which NGOs played a significant part was foreign debt. In 1988, total Philippine foreign debt amounted to US$28 billion, equivalent to 10,000 pesos for every Filipino (Pineda-Ofreneo 1991: 2). Interest payments on foreign debt of US$3.67 billion in 1989 (Ibid.) consumed 17 per cent of export earnings (World Bank 1991: 250). To co-ordinate public pressure on the government to adopt a tougher stance with international creditors, FDC was established in March 1988. Membership was drawn primarily from the main political blocs, yet FDC was viable because NGOs (including PRRM, and the Philippine Center for Policy Studies) acted as brokers, helped with secretariat support, and undertook the research needed to make a complex issue accessible. As with CPAR, FDC leaders advised legislators while the media brought the campaign to a national audience. In March 1988, 90 NGO/PO leaders attended FDC’s national Congress, again underlining a new degree of unity over a divided landscape.

CPAR and FDC failed to achieve their main objectives. The 1988 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law was the very antithesis of PARCODE, while Congress refused to impose a debt cap and Philippine foreign debt was rescheduled on terms notably less favourable than those achieved by Latin American debtor nations. According to former KMP leader Jaime Tadeo, CPAR was too broad, and too far removed from the real frontline of peasant struggle.⁶ Others felt FDC was similarly too broad:

[FDC] should really have concentrated its efforts on Congress. Policy-making with respect to debt is fairly centralised, much more so than other policy issues such as labor or electricity. A broad base was not necessary to effect a policy change. A focus on Congress was also necessary because it was very much a battle between the Executive and Congress and ultimately Congress won.⁷

Yet, CPAR and FDC achieved specific results. FDC for instance launched a nationwide educational drive that increased popular interest in the debt debate and helped sustain a global anti-debt campaign that led the US government to
introduce the Brady Plan. Primary NGO/PO/political bloc membership grew from 90 in 1988 to 250 in 1992 and three regional coalitions were established in Naga, Iloilo and Cebu cities (Grageda 1994b: 163). CPAR meanwhile collected almost 1 million signatures supporting a national referendum on agrarian reform, and in 1989, secured an increase in the government support price for rice, from P3.00 to P5.00 and then P6.00 (Grageda 1994a: 76–7). More importantly however, nationwide multi-tiered coalitions represented a major innovation in a country where legal mass movements have proved difficult to sustain on a nationwide basis.

Benedict Kerkvliet’s seminal 1990 study of village-level politics in the Philippines documented everyday peasant resistance to prevalent patterns of authority, centred on status and class, counterpoised against a weakness that stemmed from a lack of opportunities to organise and to undermine these patterns (Kerkvliet 1990). By then, however, NGOs, through their participation in issue-based social movements such as CPAR and FDC, had become important intermediary institutions linking local-level struggles to national level debates.8 Cala (1994a: 3) argues that ‘coalitions have been and will continue to be an important, if not the most important facet of Philippine progressive work’.

NGO COALITIONS

NGOs and POs have played an important role in contemporary social movements, but beyond these movements, NGO coalitions have been an important arena of political activity and have provided NGOs with the opportunity to develop a political role relatively independently of the main political groupings of the Philippine left. Given the prevalence of small, locally-based NGOs in the Philippines, the NGO community faced the threat of political marginalisation following the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986. Opposition to the Marcos regime provided a platform around which NGOs could unite and coalesce with other political forces, and with its collapse, important sectoral, ideological, regional and personality differences threatened to dominate. By the early 1990s however, the political prominence of NGOs had increased. NGOs consolidated and strengthened through a plethora of coalitions, especially through tertiary NGOs, secretariats that coalesced national and/or regional networks and their primary NGO/PO memberships. By 1993, according to one source, the Philippines had ‘the most organised and well-developed NGO community in the world’.9

The most important and elaborate NGO coalition formed was the Caucus of
Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO), established in May 1990 by 10 of 13 national NGO networks (see Figure 6.1). By 1991, CODE-NGO had 1,500 primary NGOs (Constantino-David 1992: 138), and by July 1993, as regional networks joined, an estimated 3,500. CODE-NGO was formed for a number of reasons. First, with the proliferation of ‘MUNGOs’, mutant NGOs, many development NGOs ‘felt it necessary to . . . rescue the definition of non-governmental organisations from . . . being devalued and . . . to define the parameters of social development’ (Constantino-David 1991: 9). One of CODE-NGO’s first successes was the approval in 1991 of a Covenant on Philippine Development, ‘a milestone in NGO efforts to promote an alternative vision of Philippine development’ (CPD 1992: 3). Second, NGOs felt increasingly threatened by governmental and donor attempts to influence NGOs programmes and sought greater autonomy through force of numbers and enhanced co-ordination. Similarly, ODA donors faced enormous difficulties in dealing with a fragmented NGO community and CODE-NGO became a forum through which Philippine NGOs could strengthen relationships with national government agencies, ODA donors, and foreign partners. Third, NGOs increasingly engaged in advocacy and campaigning after 1986 but as Aldaba notes, became disillusioned by unsuccessful campaigns on issues such as agrarian reform and increasingly aware of the need to act collectively (Aldaba 1994: 34). Fourth, during the 1980s, many NGO networks effectively operated as ideological ‘transmission belts’ for left-wing groups (specifically, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan [BAYAN, the New Nationalist Alliance], Demokratikong Sosyalista Koalisyon [DSK, Democratic Socialist Coalition] and Bukluran sa Ikauunlad ng Sosyalista Isip at Gawa [BISIG, Movement for the Advancement of Socialist Ideas and Action]). While CODE-NGO’s ten national networks were mostly aligned with specific political positions, labels endemic to debate within the Philippine left were avoided and NGO distance from the ‘Reaffirm v. Reject’ and other intra-left debates was enhanced.

Other important NGO and PO coalitions were formed at the national level. As environmental NGOs proliferated after 1986, for instance, four environmental NGO coalitions were established; the Philippine Ecological Network (PEN), formed in 1988, and three launched in 1990, the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (SAC), the Philippine Environmental Action Network (PEAN), and Green Forum Philippines (GFP). Environmentalism is popularly regarded as an issue that unifies both traditional and non-traditional activists, and despite problems with funding, leadership, low technical capacity and political strategy, GFP alone had 200 primary NGO members in mid-1992 (Legazpi 1994: 136), signalling growing unity and enhanced capability among environmental NGOs.
Figure 6.1 CODE-NGO Structure 1993
Other NGO coalitions were established at the regional level such as the Mindanao Coalition of Development NGOs (MINCODE). MIN-CODE was established in 1992-93 by eleven island-wide NGO networks (De la Rosa 1994). Inspired by CODE-NGO, though not formally related, it sought to unify NGO responses to development plans for South Cotabato and the Cagayan de Oro-Iligan Industrial Corridor programme sponsored by the multilateral Philippine Aid Plan (PAP) consortium. At the Mindanao NGO-PO Congress of July 1993, however, NGOs disagreed over a unified development agenda and were unable to mount a unified opposition campaign to the projects. Despite this failing, the Congress led NGO-PO consortia to prepare alternative economic development plans which NGOs and POs subsequently promoted in local government bodies and in election campaigns.

ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

The collapse of Marcos dictatorship in February 1986 led not only to the installation of a democratic regime with a strong degree of legitimacy but to the restoration of a complex and elaborate electoral system, modelled on the United States, that enabled a landed élite to dominate elected office through the use of money and patronage power. In 1987, 17,260 elected posts were contested in the combined Congressional and local elections, or roughly one post for every 1,400 voters (PnB 1993; Anderson 1988: 30). The passage of the 1991 Local Government Code further increased the number of elected posts.

Traditionally, the plethora of elected positions, especially at local level, has enabled local, regional and national élites to secure political office and to defend their socio-economic prerogatives. As a consequence, electoral politics in the Philippines has traditionally meant transactional politics, the politics of patronage and especially of election-time dole-outs. Election campaigns are expensive, an average P4 million to P6 million (US$140,000–210,000) in 1992 for a seat in the House of Representatives and P10 million–P20 million ($350,000–710,000) for the Senate. Most House or Senate members fall into debt during elections. Congressmen expect a return on their investment and expect government to smoothen their paths in future election campaigns, reducing their appetites for significant opposition. Yet, given Filipinos’ deeply ingrained faith in the electoral process, NGOs must participate in elections if they are to become a legitimate force for structural change. As Rivera (1992:
notes, ‘a strategy of building a broad, popular political coalition . . . must necessarily emphasize the various legal forms of struggle, with the electoral struggle as a special case’. Abad (1993: 159) agrees: ‘NGOs cannot simply avoid politics or leave it in the hands of traditional politicians’.

Until the May 1992 elections (Presidential, Congressional and local), NGOs had little experience in projecting their growing political influence into the electoral arena. In the 1987 Congressional elections, a number of NGO and PO leaders, including PRRM’s Horacio Morales, ran with Partido ng Bayan (PnB, People’s Party), but fared poorly. PnB’s pronational democratic campaign suffered from military and church opposition, a large part of the explanation for its defeat, yet PnB also suffered from prematurely launching a national campaign in a country where elections are won and lost at the local level. As one NGO source notes,

In 1987, Partido ng Bayan spent 80% of its election funds on the campaign. Only 20% was retained for monitoring vote counting. The PnB poll-watchers were all hungry because they had no food allowance and there was no provision for feeding or for rotating poll-watchers. . . . You can have 20,000 votes and your opponent can have only 2,000. All he has to do is knock one of your ‘0’s and add one to his own figure.19

NGOs fared even more poorly in the local elections of 1988, largely because of violence that saw many NGO candidates killed, but also from the lack of campaign machinery.

By 1992, according to Abad (Ibid.: 155), NGOs had matured ‘in size, expertise and political wisdom’ and, compared to 1987, were much better placed for electoral participation. Progressive political formations such as BAYAN, BISIG and DSK had weak local machinery but expectations were high that NGOs could provide the infrastructure the left needed to make an electoral breakthrough. Abad noted five causes for optimism. First, a relatively young electorate, with wide exposure to the media; second, the prevalence of non-traditional groups, especially NGOs; third, Church determination to counter terrorism, coercion and bribery; fourth, previous successes by reform-oriented candidates; and fifth, a decline in the utility of traditional mechanisms for voter registration (Ibid.: 159–60).20

In the first organised and deliberate intervention in the electoral arena by NGOs, three political blocs, the Movement for Popular Democracy (MPD), BISIG and DSK, in alliance with supportive NGOs, formed AKBAYAN to
merge two main NGO electoral coalitions: Project 1992, co-ordinated by MPD, and Project 2001, a DSK initiative with PANDAYAN as its main member. Running no candidates of its own, AKBAYAN supported the Liberal *Partido Demokratikong ng Pilipinas-Lakas ng Bayan* (LP-PDP-Laban) coalition at the national level, including Jovito Salonga’s candidacy for President and Aquilino Pimentel’s for Vice-President. AKBAYAN support proved crucial to the LP-PDP-Laban ticket. Early in the election campaign, defections by Orly Mercado, Ernesto Maceda, and Teofisto Guingona and failed attempts to coalesce with Joseph Estrada’s *Partido Masang Pilipino* led to a collapse in financial support from the business community for the LP-PDP-Laban slate. Without this support, LP-PDP-Laban would have been unable to finance its local campaign but with NGO support it acquired a nation-wide machine with significant potential to mobilise voters and monitor election count centres. As Clark Soriano of the Movement for Popular Democracy explains,

Traditional politicians [running for Congress] only spend about 50% of their election expenses on the campaign itself. In an average province, about 30,000 votes are needed from about 200 precincts, about 150 votes per precinct. The traditional politician has a representative in each precinct responsible for identifying those voters and distributing to them P200 pesos each, about P30,000 per precinct or P6 million in total. The politician doesn’t have to buy every vote, maybe 20,000, which brings the cost down to P4 million. What we needed was a precinct-based approach. What we had to do was have a few people in every precinct and on every day in the week or two leading up to the election campaign for each to persuade one or two voters to support a particular candidate. This for us was very work intensive whereas for the traditional politician its cost intensive.

In addition to local candidates, AKBAYAN also supported Florencio ‘Butch’ Abad, a former member of the House of Representatives and former Secretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform, who ran for the Senate as an NGO activist under the LP-PDP-Laban umbrella.

Despite expectations, AKBAYAN and LP-PDP-Laban fared poorly. Jovito Salonga won only 2.3 million votes, 9 per cent of votes cast, finishing sixth in the seven-way Presidential race. Compounding matters, Imelda Marcos finished fifth, a clear victory for the *trapos*, traditional politicians over *guapos*, the alternative, issue-based politics of AKBAYAN and LP-PDP-Laban.
the race for the 24 seats in the Senate, ‘Butch’ Abad finished 38th with 1.8 million votes. But even Abad’s vote couldn’t be counted as an NGO vote, more an ‘NGO plus’ vote, given his use of the Liberal Party’s reputation and the coat-tails of Salonga and Pimentel.24 Even at the local level, AKBAYAN fared poorly. Only 5 AKBAYAN-supported candidates won office as mayors: 3 MPD candidates and one each from BISIG and PANDAYAN.

A number of factors help explain AKBAYAN’s poor performance.25 First, in 1992 it was still very difficult for NGOs to make an impact at the national level. They had minimal financial resources;26 had few nationally-known personalities and found it difficult to replicate national-level coalitions at the local level. Second, NGOs were divided over forms of electoral intervention and over cooperation with rival left formations. Project 2001, for instance, was adopted as an official project of CODE-NGO but the breadth of political positions represented within the coalition ensured tension over levels of electoral intervention.27 Within CODE-NGO, the Association of Foundations eschewed formal participation, others confined their activities to voter education and mobilisation, while some, notably PhilDHTRA, intervened directly to support particular candidates. Third, AKBAYAN failed to establish a modus vivendi with the national democratic-aligned Partido ng Bayan, splitting left-wing ranks.28 Fourth, NGOs and left formations alike waited until too late in the election campaign to launch their campaigns. Fifth, NGOs placed too much emphasis on the national level when their strengths (community mobilisation, voter education and election count monitoring) were best deployed at the local level. Sixth, traditional patronage politics remained the dominant force in provincial campaigns, co-opting many NGOs.29 Suspicion that NGOs were used extensively to support established politicians during the May 1992 elections were fuelled in June 1993 when Rep. Ramon Bagatsing filed House Bill 9195 to amend the Omnibus Election Code of 1992. The bill sought to prohibit public officials awarding grants to NGOs within 45 days of elections.30

In some parts of the country, NGO electoral participation met with some success. In Irosin, Sorsogon, according to George, NGO activists were elected as Mayor and Deputy Mayor while a slate of eight NGO/PO activists won seven seats on the local Municipal Council. Illustrating attempts by political parties to attract or co-opt NGO/PO support, and NGO/PO willingness to mix ‘traditional’ with ‘alternative’ politics, the slate received endorsement and funding from Lakas-NUCD, the Nationalist Peoples’s Coalition and the Liberal Party (George 1994). In Cebu, 25 per cent of NGOs surveyed by Uy-Etemadi joined Project 2001 while others supported the United Rural Sectors Electoral
Coalition (URSEC) which remained outside AKBAYAN (Uy-Etemadi 1993: 9). URSEC asked leading candidates to sign a social contract reflecting development NGO demands and on 1 May 1992, in one of the biggest election rallies held in Cebu City, Vicente de la Serna and Apolonio Abines Jr., LDP candidates for Governor and Vice-Governor, signed, publicly tapping NGO support. De la Serna and Abines were both elected and by mid-1993, URSEC members had met the new Governor to monitor the implementation of the contract.

Failure in the 1992 elections made NGOs more realistic about future electoral prospects. According to Bulatao, the alternative to traditional politics is not necessarily one that rejects traditional politics totally. Name recall, he argues, is important and NGOs need links with mainstream parties to avail of this ingredient. For future elections, Bulatao argues, greater territorial focus, a scaling down of national expectations and a political party distinct from NGOs (i.e., a new NGO political project) are needed. For Macuja (1992: 20), future priorities include sustained participation in local government structures, greater territorial focus and multi-sectoralism, and electoral training and ‘conscientisation’ among NGOs and POs.

The next opportunity to test these ideas will come in May 1998 when Presidential and Congressional elections will be held. The most significant aspect of the 1998 elections will be an innovation to strengthen the participation of smaller political parties in Congress. Under the revised Election Code of the Philippines (Republic Act 7941 passed on 25 July 1994), 50 seats in the House of Representatives, or 20 per cent of the total number, will be contested under a party-list system. The five main political parties/coalitions (Lakas-NUCD, Laban, NPC, Liberals and KBL) will be banned from contesting these seats, allowing smaller parties the opportunity to secure seats. Under this system, 2 per cent of the vote will be sufficient to secure a seat and NGOs and POs hope that they can secure three or more seats through electoral coalitions established for this purpose.

Whatever the outcome of the 1998 elections, NGOs and POs seem sure of a continued role in Philippine election campaigns in years to come. On the one hand, the continuing strength of patronage politics and the electoral machines supported by it, will continue to marginalise NGOs and POs. Development NGOs also risk being marginalised by ‘mutant’ or ‘élite’ NGOs, especially at the local level. On the other hand however, the continuing debility of the political party system, the fragmentation among left-wing political blocs caused by the ‘Reject’ vs. ‘Reaffirm’ debate and the declining utility of traditional voter mobilisation mechanisms ensure a continuing role.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Just as the electoral system restored in 1987 was deeply engrained in Philippine political culture, despite the Marcos dictatorship, so the system of local government established in 1991 has clear historical antecedents. Local government in the Philippines dates to American colonial rule and to attempts both to establish de Tocquevillean democracy in the Philippines and to weaken the power of the (Spanish) central state. Local government however, as Anderson (1988) notes, played a central role in the development of cacique or landlord democracy, and further local government programmes, the 1955 Barrio Council Law and the 1958 Barrio Charter Law, consolidated this system of élite political domination.

Within this context, the 1991 Local Government Code (LGC) presented NGOs and POs with a dramatic opportunity to increase the scale and impact of their participation in politics but equally NGO and PO participation risked legitimating rather than challenging long-established political practices that NGOs opposed. Arguably the most important piece of legislation passed during the Aquino presidency, the Code provided NGOs and POs with the possibility of a significant role in proposed new local government structures, including:

1. representation on elective bodies at the municipal, provincial and regional level, including 25 per cent of Development Council seats at each level;
2. sectoral representation in the local legislative assemblies (the sanggunian panlalawigan or provincial assembly, the sanggunian panlungsod or city assembly, and the sanggunian bayan or municipal assembly);
3. consultation on programmes and projects planned or administered by national government agencies.

The Code also allowed Local Government Units (LGUs) to establish NGOs and POs, to enter into joint ventures or co-operative arrangements with them or to provide them with assistance, financial or otherwise.

The Code’s passage presented NGOs and POs with acute dilemmas. First, many doubted whether local institutions had the capacity to absorb the functions devolved to them and felt the code provided a licence for rampant graft and corruption. Local élites were expected to be the primary beneficiaries, using MUNGOs and private sector representative associations to marginalise ‘genuine’ NGOs and POs (cf. Cariño J. 1992: 23–4, 34–9). Second, NGOs steeled by the years of resistance to authoritarian rule remained wary of the Aquino
and Ramos administrations and viewed participation as a stamp of approval on democratic reforms instituted since 1986. Third, militant NGOs feared the confrontation with landlords, businessmen, military officials, politicians and bureaucrats to which their participation would inevitably lead in many parts of the country. To vent these tensions, to plan strategy and to maintain a unified position on the LGC, NGOs and POs formed another NGO coalition, the National Coordinating Council on Local Governance (NCC-LG). The NCC-LG was launched in December 1992 by 22 national NGO and PO networks (NCC-LG 1992), and in October 1993 held a major conference in Bulacan with local government agencies to review the LGC’s implementation (LGA 1993a).

Following the LGC passage in 1991, many NGOs saw considerable opportunity for partnership with local government structures, given the complementarity between LGU technical capabilities and NGOs/PO community organizing strengths, matching services and peoples (Bautista and Tigno 1993: 12). By 1996 however, successful partnerships had only been established in a small number of areas, predominantly those with strong NGO-PO networks where ex-NGO or political activists occupy important local government positions. In Davao, for instance, NGOs have become an important force on the Davao City Development Council40 and in Central Luzon NGOs and POs are active in the Regional Development Council.

Evidence to date suggests that many of the expected problems have materialised, especially in the years 1992 to 1994, including faulty accreditation processes, resentment on the part of LGU officials at the involvement of NGOs and marginalisation or exclusion of NGOs perceived as ‘political’ (cf. ISDS 1993; Bruno and Simeon 1993). One major problem has been the slow pace of implementation. Implementing Rules and Regulations were only passed in 1993, two years after the LGC’s passage, and by 1996, Local Development Councils had still not been convened, nor NGOs consulted, in many parts of the country (Tigno 1996). Even where local government structures were convened and NGOs elected ‘their actual participation in policy-making, development planning, and monitoring and evaluation has been quite minimal’ (Ibid.). In the early years of the Code’s enactment, and where structures existed, another problem was that NGOs to the right-of-centre saw the LGC as a potent weapon in undermining insurgency. The LGC ‘will definitely pull the rug under the insurgency’ a PBSP official claimed in a Philippine newspaper in 1993; the newspaper concerned noted ‘The local government program appears to be part of USAID’s [1992–1998] Democratic Pluralism Initiative’.41 As a result, many national democratic NGOs and POs boycotted LGC structures.
In Negros for instance, the NGO-PO coalition ARADO sought to ‘expose and oppose’ features of the LGC such as Section 19 (dealing with immanent domain) and Section 20 (regarding the reclassification of agricultural lands). ARADO also protested the failure to include farmers among the sectoral representatives in Negros Occidental’s various sanggunian. Thus by 1996, it still remained far from clear whether NGO participation in local government could effect genuine reform or undermine the tradition of local élite domination of politics. NGOs in many instances lacked the professional expertise and political authority to exert significant influence, but equally local politicians and government officials proved adept at marginalising NGOs from influence over substantive policy and at confining their influence to minor committees and to rhetorical commitments. NGOs however, remained confident that their influence would develop as staff acquired experience, as local government structures were opened in more provinces and as the overall local government reforms consolidated.

CONCLUSION

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Philippine NGO community was remarkable as one of the largest, best organised and most politically active in the developing world. Fuelled by the increase in their numbers from the early 1980s and by the inclusionary political regime heralded by the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, the NGO community carved a significant niche for itself. As this chapter argues, however, the rise to political prominence was also the product of a commitment to organising and mobilising as the primary objective of NGO work, or rather of the third generation NGOs that proliferated, especially from the 1980s. In turn, the rise was also influenced by the specific mechanisms available to NGOs to participate in politics. In the Philippines, a relatively liberal political regime since 1986 has tolerated or actively facilitated a variety of arenas in which NGOs have participated in political debates.

The rise of contemporary social movements, with their multi-class appeal and their issue-specific focus and their complex blend of participation and protest was both cause and affect of the increasing political prominence of NGOs. As this chapter notes, prominent social-movement based coalitions such as the CPAR and FDC were sustained in large part because of the financial, leadership and secretarial resources supplied by prominent NGOs. Equally, these coalitions pushed NGOs to reconsider their political strategies
and to increasingly use NGO coalitions distinct from contemporary social movements, to advance political objectives. As the chapter also notes, NGOs in the Philippines play a significant role in local government structures and in election campaigns, roles denied to, or eschewed by, NGOs in other developing countries. This helps to explain the political prominence of NGOs and the degree of political mobilisation and activation which they sustain.

In a sense, however, Philippine NGOs have crossed a rubicon. The last years of the Marcos dictatorship and the tentative years of the Aquino regime were in many respects a watershed, an era of ‘high’ politics characterised by systematic opposition to authoritarianism centred on broad coalitions and sustained mobilisation, to an era of ‘low’ politics, characterised by institution-building and consolidation and an emphasis on discrete issues by smaller more focused coalitions. As Philippine democracy consolidated in the middle years of the Ramos presidency, a process of demobilisation unfurled as contemporary social movements lost momentum and as NGOs and POs that participated in them turned to the more focused goals of service delivery and institutional development. As chapter 5 notes, factors such as the decline in ODA to Philippine and the split within the Philippine left contributed to this process of demobilisation. Within this context, NGOs sought to define new roles. Yet as this chapter also argues, NGOs remain actively involved in politics and play an important role in representing the interests of constituencies long marginalised from political participation.
7 The Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement

INTRODUCTION

For analysis of NGO political roles and politics, readers must turn to mainstream NGO, rather than political science, literature, partly because political scientists have been slow to treat NGOs as significant political actors. The socio-economic thrust to the NGO literature, however, has meant that economic strengths and weaknesses of NGOs have overshadowed their political impact. Similarly, concern with participation has meant that the role of NGOs in mobilising beneficiary communities has been highlighted at the expense of a more complex range of political interventions. Third, focus on links between ‘Northern’ and ‘Southern’ NGOs in the mainstream NGO literature has underscored their influence in multilateral fora, overshadowing their influence in national politics.

In a review of the dominant literature, Sanyal (1994: 40) argues that ‘the political impact of bottom-up [NGO] projects has been . . . less striking than their economic impact’. As solidarity groups, Sanyal argues, NGOs and POs have largely failed in pressuring local élites or local government. Their main success has been to enforce discipline and compliance among beneficiaries or members, especially in the repayment of credit. Sanyal lists a number of reasons for this putative failure. First, NGOs needed élite support but in reality élites have proved adept at manipulating NGO programmes for their own benefit. Second, NGOs lacked the wider institutional linkages (with political parties, government etc.) needed to confront local élites. Third, because of competition for donor funds, NGOs were unable to co-operate with each other, or form institutional linkages among themselves (Ibid.: 40–1).

Lacunae in Sanyal’s arguments and in the broader literature are best illustrated with respect to individual NGOs and chapters 7 and 8 provide
detailed case-studies of two of the Philippines’ leading NGOs. PRRM, the focus of this chapter, is the second largest NGO in the Philippines and the largest primary NGO committed to rural development. Founded in 1952, it is also one of the Philippines’ oldest rural development NGOs, and its rich political history illustrates the essentially political character of NGO action.

The economic and political fortunes of prominent NGOs in the developing world are dependent on trends in national politics as much as on support from foreign donors. First, particular regimes exert great influence in promoting or retarding the development of NGOs. PRRM’s fortunes closely mirror developments in Philippine politics over four decades, rising with President Ramon Magsaysay’s inauguration in January 1954, falling with the declaration of martial law in September 1972 and rising again with the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986. Second, the political fortunes of individual NGOs are significantly influenced by institutional forces. Like many of the developing world’s leading NGOs, PRRM’s success at particular stages in its history correlates closely with the involvement of highly dynamic individuals with significant leadership skills. Élite philanthropists, foreign donors and the underground left have been important influences on PRRM strategy and PRRM’s political strengths and weaknesses stem in large part from the need to reconcile the competing political objectives of each. Third, the ability of NGOs to influence élites, government agencies and the like, and to advance their political agendas or those of beneficiary POs or communities depends on the particular means by which NGOs participate in politics. This chapter examines PRRM’s role in Philippine politics.


PRRM’s early history is inextricably bound up with the history of the Chinese Mass Education Movement (MEM), and its founder, Dr. Yang-Chu (Y.C.) James Yen. Born in Szechwan province in 1897, the son of a Protestant pastor, Yen graduated from Yale University in 1918 as a medical doctor and travelled to France to work with Chinese labourers. Appalled at their illiteracy, Yen reduced the complex character-set of classical Chinese to 1,000 characters, organised literacy classes, and established a newspaper, *The Chinese Worker*, based on the new character-set (Bartlett 1976: 4). Returning to China, Yen established the Mass Education Movement in 1923 to popularise his innovative teaching methods.

In 1929, Yen established a ‘social laboratory’ at Ting Hsien in Hopei province
to pioneer broad approaches to rural development. Schools were built and experimental agricultural production centres constructed on donated land. Health workers were trained in conjunction with the Department of Public Health. Other organisations were also established, including Self-Help Societies, Village Cooperatives, Integrated Co-operative Societies and Farmers’ Institutes. Based on experience at Ting Hsien, Yen popularised a four-fold approach to challenge the ‘fundamental weaknesses of Chinese life’: livelihood to combat poverty, education to combat ignorance, health to combat disease, and self-government to combat civic disintegration (cf. Yen 1934: 5).2

During World War II, Japanese forces closed Yen’s schools and the MEM never recovered. In 1948, Yen became a Commissioner of the newly established and US-funded Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR), and moved to Taiwan in 1949 with the JCRR following the collapse of the Kuomintang regime (Yager 1988: chapter 1). Yen resigned from the JCRR in 1950 and, with the support of American friends, established the International Mass Education Movement (IMEM) in New York in 1951. In February 1952, he embarked on a tour of Asian countries including the Philippines, seeking a base for a new movement (Mayfield 1985: 29).3

Yen was invited to the Philippines by a group of prominent philanthropists led by Dean Conrado Benitez, a University of the Philippines educationalist. Touring the country, he was accompanied by Senator Tomas Cabili, prominent Chinese banker Dr. Albino Sycip and Manuel Manahan, publisher of the Tagalog daily *Bagong Buhay* (Manahan 1976: 167). Back in New York, Yen recommended the Philippines to the IMEM board, but was opposed by others who favoured India (Reddi 1983: 28). According to Yen, the decisive factor in favour of the Philippines was ‘the presence of a small but influential group of public-spirited civic leaders who have a profound concern for the sad plight of their peasant countrymen’ (Yen 1967: 20). A more probable explanation, however, was that the Philippines, like pre-revolutionary China, was racked by rural insurgency and that US support for the counter-insurgency campaign of the Quirino government increased the likelihood of securing official US funding.

Amid inauspicious beginnings, PRRM’s incorporation papers were signed on 17 July 1952 by a cross-section of Manila’s political, philanthropic and business élite.4 Its first base was a single table in the office of Benitez and Co. in downtown Manila (moving soon after to free accommodation in the Social Welfare Administration) and during 1952, it raised only P13,700 pesos, mostly from its original incorporators and trustees (PRRM 1977: 6).5 Yen’s speaking
tour aroused great interest but PRRM could only recruit 200 students to train as Rural Reconstruction Workers (RRWs) because of its weak finances. During the first six months training course, 127 quit, and of those who finished, only 24 agreed to work for the first year without pay (PRRM 1965).

With the inauguration of President Ramon Magsaysay in January 1954 however, PRRM’s fortunes changed. Echoing Yen’s work in Ting Hsien, PRRM chose Nueva Ecija and the neighbouring province of Rizal as a ‘social laboratory’ in which to develop Yen’s four-fold programme, the former, according to PRRM, because it was ‘the most communist-infested [province] in the country’ (Ibid.). PRRM had close ties to the new administration. Its main political strategist, Sen. Tomas Cabili, was a key Magsaysay supporter and Manuel Manahan, who had been impressed by Yen’s speaking tour, served initially as Chairman of Magsaysay’s pet project, the Presidential Complaints and Action Committee (PCAC).

Magsaysay was initially sceptical of PRRM, viewing it as a threat to his planned Community Development Planning Council (CPDC) and he had previously chided Yen that educated youths would never work without pay in rural barrios (Abueva 1971: 362; Manahan 1976: 170). On 5 April 1954 however, Magsaysay attended PRRM’s first RRW ‘graduation’ ceremony at Guimba, Nueva Ecija. Impressed with Yen’s work, Magsaysay invited PRRM to develop the pivotal San Luis Katubusan (Redemption) project (PRRM 1965). In Executive Order 36 of 1954, Magsaysay created the San Luis Project Committee, naming PRRM’s Executive Director, Ric Labez, as Chairman.

The San Luis project originated in a letter to PCAC Chairman Manahan from Huk leader Luis Taruc soon after Magsaysay’s inauguration, probing Magsaysay’s intentions (Manahan 1976: 172). Mandated by Magsaysay and accompanied by cub reporter Benigno Aquino Jr., Manahan met with Taruc, initiating negotiations leading to Taruc’s controversial ‘surrender’ on 17 May 1954. San Luis, Pampanga, nestled on the slopes of Mt. Arayat, and centred on Luis Taruc’s home barrio, Santa Monica, lay deserted following military counter-insurgency operations. After the army had supervised the reoccupation of San Luis, eight PRRM RRWs reactivated the San Luis FACOMA, provided loans to 300 farmers, distributed seeds and seedlings and established plant nurseries (PRRM 1977). In June 1955, the project was pronounced a glorious success by the national media. Established primarily to demonstrate Magsaysay’s bona fides to Taruc, the project played an important, if symbolic role, in ending the Huk insurgency. According to Manahan, PRRM played a key role:
Within PRRM however, the close identification with San Luis led to tension. Ric Labez differed with Yen over the latter’s emphasis on politically sensitive barrios or those favoured by Magsaysay,9 and two years later, PRRM withdrew from the project (PRRM 1965).

Despite San Luis however, PRRM’s future was far from secure. In 1953, PRRM generated income of P64,385 but was still dependent on a small circle of élite benefactors. After Magsaysay succeeded Quirino as President in 1954, PRRM sought official funding from Philippine and American sources. Cabili and Yen encouraged the establishment of a joint Philippine-American Presidential Action Committee on Rural Reconstruction, securing Magsaysay’s endorsement. In an amended plan, Abueva notes, the US House of Representatives called for the establishment of a Joint Commission on Rural Development (JCRD), but the plan fell through (Abueva 1971: 362–3). With the decline in insurgency, donations from landlords and businessmen collapsed and PRRM’s income fell cumulatively to P45,713 in 1954, P44,770 in 1955 and P32,170 in 1956.

Despite financial uncertainty, the 1950s were successful years for PRRM. Under the direction of Sen. Tomas Cabili, Congress approved Republic Act 1245 on 10 June 1955. Known popularly as the Barrio Council Law, it provided for the direct election of barrio council leaders. Councillors for health, education and livelihood were also included, mirroring other planks in the PRRM programme (Flavier 1970: 182).10 The law was expanded in 1958 in Republic Act 2370, the Barrio Charter Law, steered through Congress by newly elected Senator, Manuel Manahan. Again modelled on PRRM’s self-government programme, the Act gave barrios similar powers to municipal corporations including the right to raise taxes, borrow money, initiate public works and organise agricultural, industrial or commercial co-operatives (PRRM 1977: 9).11 In another endorsement of PRRM’s programme, a new government agency, the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD, later renamed the Presidential Arm on Community Development) was established in succession to the ill-fated CDPC. Despite Magsaysay’s antipathy to training barrio workers along PRRM lines, the PACD adopted the PRRM model and in
April 1956, 220 community development trainees, 50 agriculturists and 67 home demonstrators embarked on PACD’s first training course (Abueva 1971: 369).12

Local government legislation proved a major fillip to PRRM’s activities. With the help of teams of eight to ten RRWs in each test barrio, residents were mobilised through Rural Reconstruction Mens Associations (RRMAs) that implemented agricultural and livelihood projects, Rural Reconstruction Womens Associations (RRWAs) that managed health programmes, and Rural Reconstruction Youth Associations (RRYAs) that promoted education and citizenship programmes (Morales 1990: 145). Residents organised barrio farmers seminars and workshops; extension farms and plant nurseries; co-operative credit societies; barrio clinics; literacy classes and barrio schools and overall policy-making was co-ordinated by Barrio Councils funded by PRRM in its pilot barrios. By 1960, PRRM was active in about 100 barrios, mostly in Central Luzon and RRMA, RRWA and RRYA federations had a combined membership of roughly 18,000 (Villanueva 1961: 118; Mayfield 1985: 35).

Yet despite this putative success, problems were already apparent, according to Villanueva. First, despite PRRM’s commitment to Yen’s ‘Release, Not Relief’ philosophy, barrio sponsorship, PRRM’s main fundraising device, promoted dependency in assisted barrios. Second, PRRM’s programme was excessively project-oriented, with tangible projects falsely equated with success. Third, projects aimed to secure individual or family benefit, weakening attempts to forge collective identities and widen the interests of barrio residents. Fourth, expenditure on salaries, transport and supplies led to high administrative costs (an estimated 20 per cent of total operations), undermining project viability. Fifth, because of a rigid and uniform programme that ignored local contexts, beneficiaries often failed to empathise with PRRM projects (Ibid.: 125, 91, 118, 124, 127, Appendix C, 126).

These specific problems were closely related to political characteristics of PRRM’s modus operandi. First, although RRWs represented the views of RRMA, RRWA and RRYA members within PRRM, policy-making was centralised and élitist. Financially, the IMEM helped PRRM significantly, donating one US dollar for every peso raised in the late 1950s, and providing the bulk of the funding for PRRMs National Training Institute and new headquarters, opened in Nueva Ecija in 1957. Similarly, the IIRR, established in 1960 to launch Rural Reconstruction Movements throughout the developing world, provided funding in the late 1960s along with the Asia Foundation, CARE, MISEREOR and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Nevertheless, funding
remained dependent on a small cross-section of the country’s banking, industrial, commercial and landowning élite, both Filipino and foreign. In turn, membership of the Board of Trustees was determined by financial contributions rather than professional expertise in community development. Between 1968 and 1970, trustees generated over 10 per cent of PRRM’s total income, with one trustee alone (Jose Ma. Soriano) generating over 3 per cent.13

Trustees and others often used PRRM in pursuit of private interests. In Toledo, Cebu, for instance, the Soriano-owned Atlas Consolidated Mining Co. contracted PRRM to supervise the construction of 3,000 homes for employees. PRRM also supervised a housing project for another Soriano-owned company, the Bislig Bay Lumber Co. in Baler, Quezon.14 More infamously, Benigno Aquino brought PRRM into Hacienda Luisita soon after it was purchased by his inlaws, the Cojuangcos, to quell unrest generated by Huks.15 Reinforcing its élite character, PRRM maintained close ties with government, through its Council of Governors16 a close working relationship with the Social Welfare Administration and informal contacts through its well-connected trustees. Former Commerce and Industry Secretary Cornelio Balmaceda, PRRM President 1957–1962, became Chairman of the National Economic Coordination Office in the Macapagal administration while his successor, Dr. Amando Dalisay, previously Executive Director of the National Economic Council became Agriculture and Natural Resources Under-Secretary. Dalisay’s successor as PRRM President, Gregorio Feliciano, joined the Marcos government as Social Welfare Administrator in 1967.17

A second major characteristic of PRRM’s political orientation was a close identification with government, especially counter-insurgency, policy. PRRM collaborated with the AFP in civic action activities in the early 1960s, and began training US Peace Corps volunteers in 1960. In 1964, it began training AFP civic action teams at Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija and Camp Aquino in Tarlac, and, from 1965, at its Nueva Ecija headquarters (PRRM 1977: 48; PRRM 1965). Courses continued throughout the late 1960s.18 PRRM also trained AFP personnel attached to the Philippine Civil Action Group (PHILCAG) (the Philippine mission to Vietnam), including future President Capt. Fidel Ramos in 1966 and future Defence Secretary Capt. Renato de Villa in 1967, often using Vietnamese trainers trained by the IIRR. Officials also helped the Marcos government in developing counter-insurgency strategy. IIRR President (and former PRRM Acting President) Dr. Juan Flavier, a future cabinet minister under Ramos, was appointed as a consultant on government operations in Central Luzon in 196619 while PRRM Chairman Manuel Manahan, author of
the 1967 Manahan Report on the ‘invisible government’ of Central Luzon (in reality nothing more than remnant Huks) was appointed by Marcos as Chairman of the Central Luzon Study Commission in 1969 (Lachica 1971: 251).

A third characteristic was PRRM’s disavowal of structural reform, including land reform. In 1970, Manahan was appointed Chair of the Advisory Council for the Marcos government’s land reform programme and held discussions with USAID about possible PRRM participation in the land reform programme in Nueva Ecija. PRRM trustees however felt involvement would sidetrack the organisation from its original objectives. PRRM’s programme in the 1960s and 1970s was based on ‘a very simple formula’; ‘first, selecting good leaders in the barrio; second, training these good leaders in managerial skills within their capabilities; third, supervision of their co-operative enterprises; and fourth, ‘pump-priming’ credit unions on a selective basis to finance the small versions of consumer cooperatives, the Buyers Clubs’ (PRRM 1969: 4). The formula posed little threat to the elite interests supporting PRRM. ‘The main causes of rural poverty are limited acreage and antiquated methods of plant and animal production’, argued PRRM (1965), suggesting that increased productivity rather than improved tenancy conditions, the main demand of the Huks, was the key to rural stability. PRRM was teaching peasants to make do with the little they had.

At a time of declining agricultural wages and political instability in rural areas, PRRM was poorly equipped to mediate tensions caused by the introduction of more capitalist-based relations of production and more militant peasant demands. PRRM’s work in its Nueva Ecija ‘social laboratory’, and the local government legislation it helped introduce between 1955 and 1963 had little impact on provincial politics where Governor Eduardo Joson was re-elected in 1963, 1967 and 1971, each time with a comfortable majority.

Over the years Governor Joson built a network of followers and political leaders (lider) down to the [barrio] level. These retainers assisted in disbursing patronage and favours to constituents and in winning votes during elections. Joson earned the gratitude of many people in the [barrios] with his programme of free medicines and hospitalization to indigents. One of Joson’s other programmes promoted education for barangay children, providing them with loans for schools in Manila that are paid after graduation. In addition, the governor offered free room, tuition and medical insurance to nearly 700 students throughout the province studying in colleges in Cabanatuan City.

Wolters (1991: 209)
Most of these programmes were paid for by local government expenditure facilitated by the Barrio Council and Barrio Charter laws. Before their passage, barrio lieutenants were appointed and served mainly to help re-elect town mayors who in turn helped Governors or local Congressmen on whom they were dependent for election funding. The laws failed to change that situation. Barrio officials were elected but were now dependent on local mayors, and in turn on Governors. PRRM had in fact indirectly helped to strengthen traditional politics in Nueva Ecija and other provinces throughout the country. PRRM according to Wolters, ‘was a typical Community Development Organisation’. In the barrio of Larcon, Bongabon municipality, where Wolters conducted research in the early 1970s, PRRM

established a credit union and a cooperative store in 1966, both of which were failures. PRRM officials were hardly taken seriously in the village. They worked via one of the local landlord families and some of the farming families in the village. PRRM did not criticize the landlords, did not promote land reform (before 1972), did not address the existing social inequality, did not provide credit. They only . . . [planted] some trees, [and taught] bookkeeping, village beautification, [and] raking the village gravel paths. Only a few people attended the meetings that PRRM workers occasionally held. . . . Its impact on the village was negligible.

By 1970, the missionary zeal that had animated PRRM in the 1950s had largely evaporated. The PACD, with 2,000 staff operating in more than 10,000 barrios had eclipsed PRRM while the launch of PBSP dealt another heavy blow. James Yen, the main intellectual force, had largely withdrawn from PRRM, tensions existed between PRRM and IIRR, short-term barrio sponsorships affected project continuity, specialist RRWs were unable to implement PRRM’s broader programme and after 18 years PRRM regarded its programme as ‘technically . . . still in an early stage of evolution’. Disaffected, most of PRRM’s corporate supporters deserted to PBSP or diverted a large portion of their funding, including the Soriano group of companies, Ramon del Rosario’s Bacnotan Cement Industries, Shell Oil, La Tondeña Distillers, MERALCO and Benguet Corporation.

Amid growing financial concerns, the declaration of martial law in September 1972 represented another significant blow to PRRM. Because of the funding problems caused by defections to PBSP, PRRM’s regular staffing was reduced from 116 to 75, operations were retrenched and redirected, and key projects
cancelled or transferred to PBSP. More importantly however, the Marcos regime moved quickly to curb the autonomy previously enjoyed by development NGOs such as PRRM. By February 1974, PRRM concluded that our government under the new society has adopted and is implementing the objectives of our own four-fold program in its nationwide rural development programs. Because of this massive government support, the role of the private sector has diminished considerably.30

In response to the expanding role of the state and the shrinking space occupied by the voluntary sector, PRRM expanded co-operation with the Marcos regime. Throughout the martial law years (1972–1981), PRRM trained AFP civic action teams working in strategic areas, including Muslim Mindanao31 and collaborated with government ministries including Agriculture (MA), Social Services and Development (MSSD) and Human Settlements.32 Although largely abandoned by its corporate funders, PRRM attracted international support during the 1970s and by 1979 had 148 staff and assets of over P7 million.33 By then however the four-fold programme, especially the commitment to self-government, was effectively abandoned and PRRM had become a virtual project sub-contractor for international funders and government ministries.

PRRM had endured numerous bouts of financial uncertainty and had come close to folding in 1973. In 1982–84 however, PRRM faced its gravest crisis yet. Between 1966 and 1979, PRRM received the proceeds of one weekly Philippine Charity Sweepstakes draw per year. Providing over 20 per cent of total income, the allocation was cancelled in 1979 and PRRM received its last payment in April 1981. Manuel Manahan appealed the decision directly to Ferdinand Marcos: ‘PRRM has worked in unity and self-reliance with your administration since your first assumption to the Presidency and has continued to do so in the interests of the Filipino people’, Manahan wrote in a letter to Marcos dated 2 July 1981. The appeal proved unsuccessful however, and soon after USAID withdrew its accreditation, plunging PRRM into financial crisis. By 1982, PRRM had debts of P100,000, the staff retirement fund, worth P67,000 in 1979, was exhausted; staff had either resigned or transferred; and those who remained were demoralised. ‘There were cliques, deep rivalry and hatreds, vandalism and pilferage of properties and facilities’, a PRRM assessment later noted. Income generating projects were badly managed and needed subsidies to survive. ‘Above all’, the report noted, ‘the reputation of PRRM was gone’.34 PRRM stumbled through 1983 on small contracts from
overseas funders. Its last government contract, with the Ministry of Health and worth P1.4 million, expired in March 1984.\(^3\)\(^5\) PRRM ‘literally ran out of funds in January 1984’, and with only four RRWs in its staff, virtually ceased to exist as an NGO.\(^3\)\(^6\) Its administrative structures preserved by the IIRR, PRRM lay moribund until a dramatic revival in 1986.

**A PHOENIX FROM THE ASHES: THE REBIRTH OF PRRM**

In late 1984, a committee composed of PRRM Chairman Manuel Manahan, IIRR President Dr. Juan Flavier and Flavier’s assistant Conrado Navarro launched a search for a new PRRM President. After PhilDHRRA Chairman Dr. Antonio Ledesma turned it down,\(^3\)\(^7\) Navarro offered the post to Horacio ‘Boy’ Morales during a visit to Fort Bonifacio in Manila where Morales was detained as a political prisoner. If he accepted the post, Navarro told him, PRRM would work to secure his release. Morales accepted, but remained in prison. Finally released on 2 March 1986, he received a visit from a committee representative within days, and two weeks later, accepted the position on a two-year trial.\(^3\)\(^8\)

A former chairman of the *Partido Makabansa* (Nationalist Party) at the University of the Philippines, Morales became a Senior Economist with the Presidential Economics Staff before he helped to establish the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) in the early 1970s.\(^3\)\(^9\) As DAP Executive Vice President, and at the age of 34, Morales was named one of Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) in 1977.\(^4\)\(^0\) Scheduled to receive the award from President Marcos on 26 December, Morales sent word to the ceremony that he had defected to the underground NDF.\(^4\)\(^1\)

Serving initially as the NDF’s official spokesperson,\(^4\)\(^2\) Morales became Convenor of the NDF Preparatory Commission in 1981,\(^4\)\(^3\) and worked extensively with farmers in Nueva Ecija, studying vegetable farming and the feasibility of co-operatives, co-operative banks and other farmer organisations for the NDF. On 21 April 1982 however, Morales was arrested, and severely tortured.\(^4\)\(^4\) Three months later, he was charged with rebellion, vilified by the Marcos-controlled press as a leading communist cadre, and became a minor celebrity when the Supreme Court ordered an unprecedented investigation of his detention and torture.

One of Morales first initiatives in reviving PRRM was the introduction of new staff. Four ex-DAP staff were recruited to senior, and young former NDF/ CPP activists to junior, positions. The most radical appointment however was
that of Isagani Serrano, formerly a senior cadre in the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), as Deputy President and PRRM’s main theoretician. Serrano worked with the Philippine Ecumenical Committee for Community Organisation (PECCO) before being arrested in 1973. Released in 1976, he resumed his work with PECCO as a researcher and assistant training director for Metro Manila. As a senior figure in the underground, he became a member of the Politburo, the CPP Central Committee in 1978, and in 1980 at the eighth party plenum was elected to the CPP’s National Executive Committee. Arrested again in 1982, Serrano remained in prison until 1986.

With other prominent activists, Morales launched Volunteers for Popular Democracy (VPD) in late 1986 to test the extent of the February ‘revolution’, and a think-tank, the Institute for Popular Democracy (IPD). In 1987, the CPP sanctioned the activities of the ‘pop dem’ activists to avoid losing ‘fall-outs’ following the mass release of political prisoners in March 1986. As a result, Morales was able to participate in the CPP-approved PnB slate that ran in the 1987 Congressional elections. Morales ran for the Senate with six other prominent activists but fared poorly, exposing the need for a sound institutional base from which to build popular democracy as an alternative progressive project. As a result, PRRM became the pivotal institution within the popular democratic camp within two years.

How did PRRM, a conservative NGO with close ties to the Marcos regime and long controlled by élite interests, come to be led by a former NDF Convenor and a former CPP Executive Committee member? The appointment of Morales underlined traditional features of Philippine politics but it also illustrated significant changes hastened by the collapse of the Marcos regime. Traditionally, Philippine politicians and leaders have been judged on their personal strengths and relationships rather than their ideological positions. Politicians rarely committed themselves to detailed policy positions. When they did, they were usually dictated by pragmatic considerations and usually proved ephemeral and pliable. A politician’s ideological position was therefore seen as secondary and ideological lapses were thus quickly forgotten. In the case of PRRM, many of the board members already knew Morales personally as a dynamic civic activist and government technocrat and his association with the NDF was easily forgiven. Second, as a traditional NGO, PRRM had been historically dependent on the personal dynamism of key leaders such as Y.C. James Yen and Conrado Benitez, and Morales was seen as a traditional leader who could enforce tight personal control.

Equally, however, key board members recognised that PRRM’s financial
demise was triggered in large part by the emergence of a new generation of rural development NGOs. Most had developed with significant, especially European, donor support; espoused structural change including redistributive agrarian reform; and worked closely with grassroots POs. Following an international campaign in support of his Supreme Court case, Morales was well known to European funding agencies, while his NDF work had brought him into close contact with grassroots POs. Financial considerations were pre-eminent given the depth of PRRM’s financial crisis and because USAID and Asia Foundation, traditional PRRM supporters, had been eclipsed as leading funders of Philippine NGOs. Morales was therefore well equipped to lead PRRM back into the rural development mainstream. Second, PRRM strategy was traditionally based on close collaboration with government agencies. The old PRRM was closely identified with the Marcos regime, was widely discredited and had significantly less links to the new regime than other prominent NGOs, notably PBSP. Morales, however, had close personal ties to the new administration through a group of ex-DAP officials popularly known as the ‘Morales Boys’.51 Third, after February 1986, arriviste political forces interacted with the old in a heady but uncertain political cocktail and the traditionally-prized ability of leaders to forge wide ranging personal ties was at a premium. In Morales, the PRRM board found a dynamic and assiduous networker with ties to key actors crucial to the organisation’s revival. Morales’ reputation as a civic activist and technocrat made him acceptable to the philanthropists and businessmen of the PRRM board, his imprisonment made him well known in foreign donor circles, and his DAP connection provided a network of contacts in government. In addition, past activities in the NDF not only provided contacts in the mainstream NGO/PO community, the centre of gravity of which had moved significantly since the early 1970s, but his ties to the underground were important if PRRM was to work in parts of the country effectively controlled by the CPP.

REBUILDING THE MOVEMENT

A dynamic civic activist, Morales made rapid progress in rebuilding PRRM. With support from IIRR and European funding agencies, PRRM embarked on a multi-project socio-economic programme in Negros based on the P27.23 million Negros Food Aid Program (FAP), launched in October 1986 with the help of local POs and funded by the German Freedom From Hunger Campaign.
In May 1987, the Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB), arranged for Morales and Serrano to visit partner NGOs in India and Bangladesh to study the feasibility of an integrated rural development programme. As a result, NOVIB agreed to fund a 3-year P25 million Rural Development and Democratization Program (RDDP), consolidating PRRM's revival. Incorporating the ideas of Morales and Serrano and crystallised by their experience in India and Bangladesh, the RDDP was launched in January 1988. Designed to balance a commitment to political empowerment and to socio-economic work, the RDDP entailed four main components: organising and consciousness-raising; livelihood; savings and credit; and village primary health care.

In addition to securing new funding, Morales also embarked on a broader programme of institutional development. First, chapters were established to encourage national membership, to develop an institutional base for VPD and to help establish branch offices to implement projects: Nueva Ecija, Manila, and Bataan in 1987; Ifugao in 1988; and North Cotabato in 1989. Second, a National Assembly was held in February 1988 at which a new Board of Trustees was elected, removing many of the old élite guard, yet retaining the traditional mix of government officials, educationalists, and businessmen. Third, Morales launched a programme of decentralisation, giving full corporate powers to chapters and allowing them to secure separate registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The rapid pace of development inevitably provoked tensions. To set up its Negros programme, PRRM leaders reputedly negotiated with the CPP regional leadership and worked with mass organisations and POs tagged by the military as pro-NDF, provoking allegations of communist sympathies. PRRM became embroiled in brief national controversy in May 1988 when Defence Under-Secretary Fortunato Abat accused Morales of raising funds abroad for the CPP, only to withdraw the allegations in a letter to Morales three days later. Negros Occidental Governor Daniel ‘Bitay’ Lacson also accused PRRM of communist allegiances, while PRRM board members and programmes suffered military harassment. PRRM also became embroiled in organisational tensions. By January 1989, implementation of the RDDP was three months behind schedule, and only 70 per cent of budgeted expenditure was committed. Morales admitted that 1988 ‘was a period of trying to expand very fast into so many areas, trying to get new projects, new programmes and new funding [and] at the same time trying to build . . . staff capability’. Other problems were experienced in dealing with project partners, local POs who expected to
be involved in project design, and disputes frequently developed with local NGOs over ‘turf’, poaching of staff, ideology, and personality issues.

In addition, PRRM was forced to engage in direct organising, bringing it into conflict with membership-based POs and the mass organisations to which they were aligned. The RDDP had presumed an existing level of organisation, i.e. a relatively dense network of POs and NGOs with which PRRM could collaborate. Yet even in provinces such as Bataan and Negros Occidental with a strong history of activation and mobilisation, PRRM found pockets where local communities were unorganised, forcing it to engage in direct organising from 1989. Despite the problems however, the RDDP was a general success and in 1991, PRRM launched a new 10-year programme, the Sustainable Rural District Development Programme (SRDDP), again with NOVIB funding. After the launch of the SRDDP, PRRM continued to grow at a rapid pace. By 1995/96, it had a budget of P167 million, four times the 1992 budget, a staff of 339, and was active in 475 villages in 17 provinces.

MANDATE REVISION

In 1986, according to Morales, PRRM had minimal resources, had no membership base, had ‘strayed from the mainstream of the Philippine agrarian movement and . . . lagged far behind other non-governmental organisations in supporting the cause of the peasant struggle’. A central reason, he acknowledged, was the ‘failure to address the structural causes of underdevelopment’ (Morales 1990: 153). After six months of consultations with other NGOs, government officials, and peasant leaders in 1986, a PRRM ‘task force’ defined a ‘new philosophical orientation for the organisation’, embodied in the new slogan ‘rural development through people’s empowerment’ (Ibid.). Adhering closely to the organisation’s historical mission, PRRM retained the Yen four-fold approach (education to combat illiteracy, livelihood to combat poverty, health to combat disease and civic government to combat inertia). Radicalising the approach however and making it more relevant in the political ferment of the early Aquino years, PRRM put civic government at the centre.

PRRM philosophy traditionally espoused barrio-level structures that encouraged citizen involvement in small-scale local development programmes and the new programme reactivated this long-standing formula: sectoral organisations of poor peasants, landless workers, rural women, youth and other marginalised sectors of rural society; co-operatives for socio-economic
activities; and community organisations that could evolve into ‘people’s councils’ (Ibid.: 154). PRRM also espoused ‘popular democracy’, a radical agenda that represented a significant departure from PRRM’s traditional vision, especially in terms of its scale: an activist government; a vibrant network of POs; thorough-going agrarian reform; a nationalist industrialisation strategy; and diversified international relations (Morales 1986: 16–25). The basic philosophy embodied in the SRDDP entailed a new four-fold approach:

1. empowerment (mobilising people through rural institutions);
2. local economic development including alternative finance and marketing schemes;
3. protecting, restoring and upgrading the environment;
4. advocacy, development co-operation and collaboration with government and multilateral agencies combined with criticism when required.62

In the new international language of NGO action, PRRM packaged its new programme of interventions as a ‘fourth generation strategy’ (FGS), a term coined by Isagani Serrano in 1989.63 ‘The basic characteristic of a [FGS]’, Serrano explains

is comprehensive systems change . . . [T]here are different levels or arenas of struggle. At the lower level, you can see very simple reforms, civic responses to certain social problems . . . relief, responding to a basic humanitarian need, responding to people suffering as a result of a natural disaster . . . so long as this is linked to broader goals that have transformative elements in them, then I consider them part of a bigger transformative project . . . . Now, as to what is the trajectory and who are the carriers, I consider mass movements still as a key and not just simple NGOs.64

As the core programme of PRRM, the SRDDP represents Serrano’s FGS in its clearest form.

Beyond mere criticism of [government] policy NGOs and POs are . . . pro-actively building and demonstrating the viability of an alternative model of development [to] . . . address the continuing poverty and environmental crisis with a view towards eventually pushing the alternative to the mainstream.

PRRM (1993a: 6)

A key component in this strategy, the SRDDP is based on the idea of
Sustainable Rural Districts (SRDs), localities of roughly 50,000 households ‘woven around a variety of ecosystems, production processing and marketing linkages’ (Morales 1992: 6). Within a maximum range of 4 to 8 municipalities, the population of an SRD (200,000 to 300,000) represents a minimum ‘critical mass’ needed to transform local economies and politics, and demonstrate the viability of the SRDDP as an alternative development strategy (PRRM 1992: 3–4). Launched in five provinces by 1993 (Ifugao; Nueva Ecija; Bataan; Camarines Sur and North Cotabato) and covering 273 barrios in 38 municipalities, the SRDDP is based on five specific strategies:

1. organising people’s institutions from the village to the district level;
2. conscientisation and education;
3. mobilisation;
4. leadership formation; and
5. skills development and technology (Ibid.: 5; PRRM 1993b: 6).

These however fall into two broader strategies. The first, Integrated Area Development, promotes self-governance through rural institutions; sustainable local economic development; food security and basic social services delivery. Using the SRDDP as a springboard however, the second, policy advocacy, promotes the incorporation of PRRM philosophy into government policy, i.e., the ‘mainstreaming’ of its development alternative (PRRM 1992). Integrated Area Development clearly falls within Korten’s definition of a third generation strategy, although as Serrano notes above, is nevertheless an important component of an evolving FGS. The policy advocacy function however reveals the most innovative and important aspects of the FGS and shows PRRM fulfilling many of the traditional roles of interest groups in liberal democracies.

**ENGAGING THE STATE**

The SRDDP, as the practical embodiment of its philosophy commits PRRM to political empowerment and local-level socio-economic development. In practice, both objectives require PRRM to engage the Philippine state. Advocacy, through the building and support of NGO or social movement-based coalitions is one important mechanism through which PRRM engages the Philippine state and PRRM has become one of the leading NGOs in attempts to build broad NGO-PO coalitions with political weight. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, PRRM played an important role in broad issue-based coalitions. In May 1987, it helped launch the Congress for a People’s Agrarian Reform
The PRRM, brokering the institutional and ideological rivalries needed to create the necessary unity,\textsuperscript{67} and in particular, securing the support of foreign funders and the NDF/CPP.\textsuperscript{68} In March 1988, ‘PRRM practically set up’ the Freedom From Debt Coalition (FDC);\textsuperscript{69} for the first 6 months, three PRRM staff worked full time in the FDC office and PRRM covered the bulk of FDC’s costs in its first year.\textsuperscript{70} By 1988 in a dynamic and almost aggressive approach to coalition-building, it had also become active in the NGO Coalition for Cooperatives Development, the Council for People’s Development, the Forum on NGO Ethics and the Philippine Council for Rural Savings and Finance.

PRRM was also active in local level coalitions. In North Cotabato for instance, in the early 1990s, it participated in the Koalisyon Kuryenteng Kotabato (KKK, Cotabato Electricity Coalition) which protested against electricity price increases (providing the secretarial support) and PAGMAKA (Paghiusa Mag-uuma sa Kotabato, the Alliance of Cotabato Farmers) which protested against government rice policy. It also participated in Task Force Apo Sandawa (TFAS, named after Sandawa, God of Mt. Apo), an NGO-PO-COG coalition formed to oppose plans by the Philippine National Oil Corporation (PNOC) to build a geothermal electricity plant on tribal ancestral land in the Mt. Apo national park, and NGO Forum, a local NGO coalition.

PRRM’s rapid growth however has led to tension with other NGOs and POs. As one internal document notes,

> There’s a negative side to PRRM’s visibility, size, and operational reach. At the very least, PRRM appears very threatening to many groups. Fair or not, it has been the object of jealousies and sometimes hatred. The External Relations Office has yet to find an effective way of dealing with this situation.\textsuperscript{71}

In a polity where political parties organise and mobilise predominantly around patronage concerns, PRRM plays an important political role in mobilising constituencies through broad coalitions that unite NGOs, POs and the main political formations/cause-oriented groups around specific political issues. PRRM’s strategy however reveals the complexity of coalition politics since 1986. PRRM refused to join CODE-NGO when it was launched in 1990 and withdrew from the Council for Peoples Development (CPD) which became a founding network of CODE-NGO. According to IPD’s Clark Soriano, PRRM left because its area-centred focus clashed with CPD’s national orientation.\textsuperscript{72} Soriano’s explanation, however, highlights more sophisticated institutional and ideological rivalries since PRRM retained a significant national orientation. Before 1986, NGO commitment to ‘high politics’, unified and systematic
opposition to the Marcos regime, mitigated ideological and professional cleavages. With the collapse of the Marcos regime however came a new emphasis on ‘low politics’, organisational expansion, programme development and issue-based campaigning. Ideological and professional differences proliferated. PRRM and CODE-NGO shared a commitment to agrarian reform or indigenous rights but differed, for instance, on relationships with funders, especially USAID. PRRM also saw CODE-NGO as an attempt to build an institutional power base capable of rivalling the national democrats and nascent popular democrats.

PRRM’s strategy of organising a ‘critical mass’ in operational areas in support of the SRDDP strategy brought it into sharp conflict with the CPP-NDF, national-level NGOs, and local NGOs/POs. Following its withdrawal from CPD, PRRM established Convergence for Community Centred Area Development (CONVERGENCE) in February 1991 and by 1993 had 17 NGO members committed to integrated area development. The establishment of CONVERGENCE however exacerbated conflict between PRRM and the CPP/NDF. According to former NDF official spokesman Satur Ocampo,

The major part of the movement is critical of PRRMs programs that tend to compete at least, or to deflect the energies and sentiments of people in the rural areas from the revolutionary movement. But to the extent of introducing modern techniques of agriculture or political organising, the NDF indirectly supports the movement and generally helps in arousing and organising the people in the countryside. . . . Another aspect of the criticism of the PRRM is that it becomes some sort of magnet in attracting former leaders of the movement who have been imprisoned and who have been released. Instead of going back to the mainstream underground, they are being absorbed or go to the PRRM.

The weakening of the CPP and the breakdown in the traditional relationship between the CPP and sympathetic NGOs undermined the force of this condemnation. Nevertheless, the CPP’s critical stance had enormous implications for PRRM and CONVERGENCE operations. Many POs with which PRRM and CONVERGENCE sought to co-operate remained loyal to the orthodox side in the internal-CPP split and refused to work with either organisation and by 1996, CONVERGENCE had withdrawn from the provinces of Isabela, Quezon, Sorsogon, Negros Occidental and Leyte. In addition to the internal CPP split, tension with local NGOs and POs also undermined the potential for broad coalitions and for NGO–PO co-operation critical to fourth generation strategies. In establishing branches in the late
The PRRM provoked resentment by encroaching on territory, paying relatively high salaries and poaching staff from other NGOs and POs. Philippine NGOs and POs, according to Cala, thrive on their capacity to represent issues and many feared losing their mandate in the ‘politics of representation’ battle that PRRM’s arrival heralded. Within CONVERGENCE, Cala notes, the programmes of member NGOs were not sufficiently developed to facilitate ‘interfaces’ with others. Individual NGOs suspected that their own ‘recipes’ would be poached and in the climate of the CPP internal debate, political trust was undermined. As a result, CONVERGENCE, in contrast to PRRM, floundered through much of the mid-1990s and by 1996 had only 11 members, including PRRM.

Beyond grassroots organising and coalition building, electoral participation has been another important means by which PRRM engages the Philippine state. PRRM played little part in the 1987 Congressional elections (apart from Morales’ participation in Partido ng Bayan’s Senatorial slate) or the 1988 local elections. By 1992 however, when the climate for NGO participation in elections had changed, PRRM’s branch and chapter structure and its close identification with the Movement for Popular Democracy enabled it to play an active role. MPD was limited organisationally by 1992, with membership effectively confined to NGOs within the popular democratic ‘cluster’ (including PRRM, IPD, Cooperative Foundation of the Philippines Inc. (CFPI), Popular Education for Peoples Enlightenment (PEPE, a network) and the Centre for Urban Community Development (CUCD) but in the few areas where it was strong, notably Bataan and North Cotabato, MPD achieved notable success. In Bataan, two MPD candidates were elected as town mayors (in Orani and Morong) and MPD contributed to the re-election of Congressman Felicito Payumo on the Liberal Party slate. In North Cotabato, MPD contributed to the re-election of Congressman Gregorio Andolana on the Lakas-NUCD slate. Nationally, MPD claims to have had 22 of its own or its supported candidates elected including Naga City where an MPD candidate became mayor, insignificant in light of 17,000 positions available in the campaign, yet indicative of growing NGO involvement in election campaigns. PRRM also participated in the 1994 local elections, supporting POs involved in its programmes to contest local seats. Although the results as a whole were disappointing, PRRM’s intervention brought a few successes. In Hermosa, Bataan, for instance, candidates from the Madamba Homeowners Association, a local PO organised with PRRM’s help, won a majority of seats on the new Barangay Council. As a result, a local politician who owned land on which many members had houses, was forced to enter into negotiations for the sale of the land (PRRM 1995: 9).
PRRM’s next opportunity to participate in national and local elections will come in 1998. As of mid-1996, many NGOs and POs had yet to begin negotiations on the electoral coalitions to be established for May 1998, and much discussion revolved around possible electoral slates and party platforms. Within PRRM, staff and senior managers considered the possibility of supporting Joseph Estrada, Ramos’s Vice President, in the Presidential race. A former actor and Senator, Estrada is a populist with significant public support and in mid-1996 was the clear favourite to win the 1998 Presidential race. Without significant financial resources of his own, Estrada’s campaign is expected to be financed by Danding Cojuangco, a former Marcos crony and large landowner, and the business community views the possibility of an Estrada Presidency with trepidation. To NGOs such as PRRM, however, Estrada’s populism and the weaknesses of his institutional base, Partido Masamong Pilipino (PMP, Party of the Philippines Masses) might provide large NGOs with possible leverage. Horacio Morales enjoys a close relationship with Estrada and might be expected to secure cabinet office if Estrada is elected. In addition, the failure of Akbayan and Project 2001 to propel Jovito Salonga, Aquilino Pimentel and Florencio Abad to national office in 1992 (see chapter 6), has made many NGOs wary of supporting candidates without significant public support and more willing to acknowledge the enduring role of traditional patronage in a political system where elections are the essential source of legitimacy. On the other hand, however, PRRM support for Estrada, if it materialises, will inevitably embroil it in patronage politics and in conflict with other NGOs and POs with consequences that are difficult to predict.

Participation in local government structures is a third important mechanism through which PRRM engages the Philippine state and PRRM leaders see significant potential to ‘mainstream’ their development alternative through local government. In 1988, PRRM participated in Regional Development Councils (RDCs) established by the National Economic and Development Authority and PRRM staff assisted in the preparation of the final draft of the 1991 LGC. In North Cotabato, PRRM joined the Provincial Peace Secretariat convened by the National Unification Commission (NUC) after the election of President Ramos in June 1992. PRRM also participated in the Peace and Order Council administered by the provincial Governor in co-operation with the Department of Interior and Local Government.

In September 1993, after the passage of the Local Government Code, PRRM participated along with 80 other NGOs and POs (including an estimated 20 to 25 from the ‘progressive’ and ‘cause-oriented’ sector) in elections for 10 seats
on the North Cotabato Provincial Development Council. In contrast to ‘traditional’ NGOs such as the Cotabato Chamber of Commerce, PRRM co-ordinated strategy with other NGOs and won a seat, along with one other ‘progressive’ NGO. In addition, it participated in Municipal Development Councils (MDCs) in 6 of the 8 municipalities in its North Cotabato SRD in 1993, as well as 3 municipal health boards.

PRRM’s experiences in local government raise mixed emotions among staff. In 1993, in Bataan, for instance, the Branch Manager, Lisa Dacanay, represented PRRM and the environmental NGO sector on the Central Luzon RDC where she also headed the RDC sub-committee on coastal resources. NGOs, she argues, faced a losing battle, swamped by the bureaucracy of elaborate consultation processes yet frustrated by the dominance of patronage concerns and the difficulty NGOs face in upholding elementary procedures. On 14 October 1993 for instance, the RDC voted 22–2 in favour of the controversial Masinloc coalpowered electricity generating station in Zambales which PRRM has long opposed. RDC procedures required a quorum of 50 per cent of the 85 members (i.e., 43 votes) but PRRM’s objections were swept aside by the RDC Chairman, the concurrent Governor of Zambales and one of the projects staunchest backers. Yet participation has also brought tangible gains. In 1993, when the Bataan branch encountered difficulties in negotiating with the Asian Development Bank and Department of Agriculture (DA) over changes to the Fisheries Sector Programme, PRRM turned to the RDC. After lobbying, the Coastal Resources Sub-committee, followed by the Committee on Economic Development and finally the Executive Committee of the RDC, passed resolutions calling for modifications, forcing the DA to establish a technical committee with PRRM representation.

A key component of the SRDDP strategy involves PRRM ‘work[ing] for a government that is accountable, responsive, and democratic’ (PRRM 1992: 42) and since 1986, PRRM has become enmeshed in a complex web of relationships with the Philippine state. Soon after his release in March 1986, Horacio Morales was offered the post of Under-Secretary for Economic Planning with the National Economic and Development Authority, but rejected it ‘because at that time we were still not sure that the Aquino government was really committed to a change of the system . . . from élite democracy to popular democracy’. Two months later, Morales became a Consultant to the Presidential Committee on Government Reorganisation on a three month contract, tasked with making recommendations on the future of the Ministry of Human Settlements. ‘Shortly after I finished my work’ Morales adds, ‘there was [a] red scare . . . people looking for [those] in the government who had
connections to the movement in the past and a lot of high ranking officials under the Aquino government were removed. Throughout the remainder of the 1980s, PRRM remained effectively marginalised from the Aquino government. PRRM, Morales (1992: 7) argues, ‘had to switch to a more critical stance when the scope for reform started to narrow down’.

Scope for reform however broadened dramatically following the election of Fidel Ramos in June 1992, especially when Ramos appointed former PRRM President Dr. Juan Flavier as Secretary for Health. Flavier took charge of the Department of Health (DoH) at a critical stage in its history, charged with implementing the DoH’s decentralisation strategy under the terms of the 1991 Local Government Code. With no experience of running a government department and faced with opposition from DoH mandarins opposed to decentralisation, Flavier convened a group of five advisers including Horacio Morales. Flavier incurred significant opposition internally to his ‘kitchen cabinet’ and to formalise his position, Morales became the head of the DoH’s Task Force Devolution and a consultant to the DoH on an annual salary of P1. Under the DoH’s decentralisation plan, 45,000 of its 75,000 staff would transfer to local government units, responsibility for 80 per cent of bedspace would be devolved and the DoH would lose responsibility for half its budget of P10 billion; Morales’ task force was given four months to plan decentralisation strategy. Morales drafted PRRM Deputy Vice President Rose Nierras to help and although the task force completed its work in December 1992, both Nierras and Morales retained close links with Flavier and the DoH until Flavier moved to the Senate in 1994.

PRRM’s association with Flavier and the DoH raises interesting questions about the relationship between NGOs and the Philippine state. IPD’s Cala argues that the Philippine state is effectively a series of patronage networks and thrives on transactional relationships. NGOs therefore run the risk, Cala adds, of spinning an alternative patronage web. According to Morales, mutual trust is essential in developing relationships between NGOs and government ministries. If a minister is closely associated with a particular NGO, then trust is well established and underpins the relationship. According to Nierras however, DoH relationships with NGOs under Flavier differed significantly from those between NGOs and the DAR under Ernesto Garilao, where NGOs in CONVERGENCE felt disadvantaged by the DAR’s close links with PBSP and PhilDHRRA. Under Flavier, 10 former NGO leaders were brought into the DOH at grades of Service Director or higher, from a politically diverse range of NGOs including the Medical Action Group (MAG), Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko (I Love My Neighbour) and the United Nations Children’s
Emergency Fund-Philippines (UNICEF-Philippines). The success of the Task Force Devolution was partly credited to Flavier’s participatory management style, according to Nierras, and led to the establishment of Joint Task Forces linking DoH and NGO/PO personnel to oversee DoH programmes such as the Community-Based Maternal and Child Health Care Programme and the Community-Based Health Financing Scheme. The DoH also subcontracted a number of activities to NGOs including the preparation of ODA loan proposals.

PRRM also worked closely with other government departments including the Department of Agriculture where PRRM acted as a lead partner in the Asian Development Bank-funded Fisheries Sector Programme and the Department of Energy, with which PRRM in alliance with other NGOs involved in Task Force Energy, helped to prepare a Common Framework for Alternative Energy Development. Since Juan Flavier’s shift from the DOH to the Senate in 1994, PRRM’s closest relationships have been with the DAR especially at the local level and the DENR. In Negros Occidental, for instance, PRRM supports the work of the Agrarian Reform Provincial Council of Support Services, a network of local government agencies, including the DAR, and NGOs that provides support services to agrarian reform beneficiaries. Similarly, in North Cotabato, PRRM helped to establish an Agrarian Reform Community (ARC) in the three barangays of Makilala, one of the municipalities in PRRM’s North Cotabato SRD and in 1993 helped establish a rubber co-operative processing plant producing slippers and other products. PRRM also helped the DAR to identify land covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme in Kidapawan, Makilala, Mlang and Matalam where many of the beneficiaries were PRRM partner PO members. PRRM also enjoys a close working relationship with the DENR, through the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development on which PRRM is represented and through NGOs for Integrated Protected Areas (NIPA). NIPA is chaired by PRRM President Horacio Morales and collaborates with the DENR in the implementation of the Integrated Protected Area Systems (IPAS) programme funded by the World Bank’s Global Environmental Facility.

Despite the collaboration with government departments however, PRRM has staunchly criticised both the Aquino and Ramos administrations. In 1993, PRRM attacked the Ramos government’s 1993–1998 MTPDP for ‘its export-oriented and foreign investment-led growth strategy’ which it argued will lead to further depletion of the nation’s natural capital (PRRM 1993a: 2–3). Throughout the 1994–1996 period, PRRM continued to criticise the MTPDP and its affects on the rural poor, especially in late 1995 when a fall in rice
production and a failure of government intervention mechanisms led to rice prices rises of almost 100 per cent (Morales 1995; Vizmanos 1995). 100 Yet, PRRM also supports aspects of Ramos’s drive for Newly Industrialising Country (NIC) status, especially asset reform measures and the development of a more ‘activist/interventionist’ government (Ibid.: 4). The approach reveals an ambiguous view of the state. On the one hand, Serrano (1993: 46, 56) argues, PRRM seeks ‘a strong state and a strong civil society’, yet on the other it seeks to overcome civic inertia by reducing ‘citizens’ . . . dependence on state mediation’. Most Philippine NGOs, Cala argues, aspire to being microcosm states101 and PRRM is in many respects a perfect example. Morales (1992: 6), for instance, writes of co-operatives, economic organisations and community organisations federated into local People’s Councils ‘which run parallel to, but interfac[e], with government’ and PRRM programmes include disaster relief, reforestation, livelihood projects, primary health care, credit schemes and education, supported by policy research and planning, mirroring the broad range of social services provided by the state.

CONCLUSION

For all the problems that have marred its history, PRRM is one of the Philippines’ most successful NGOs. At the end of 1995, village-level POs organised by PRRM numbered 544, with a combined membership of 23,000 (PRRM 1996: 7), making PRRM one of the most significant NGOs in Asia in terms of its ability to organise and mobilise a mass constituency. Yet, PRRM is as interesting and significant for its long history as for its current successes. In the 1950s and 1960s, it established a remarkable reputation for institutional innovation: launching community development as a key weapon of government counter-insurgency policy; providing the model for the Presidential Arm on Community Development, for two separate pieces of local government legislation, and later for the Samahang Nayon programme; and triggering the proliferation of Rural Reconstruction Movements throughout the developing world (Colombia, Ghana, Guatemala, India and Thailand). Like other civic organisations before it, PRRM also played an important role in mobilising Protestant civic leaders. 102 Like its predecessor, the Chinese Mass Education Movement, PRRM’s success was primarily in the political realm, undermining Sanyal’s assertions in the introduction. More ambiguously perhaps, PRRM was significantly influenced by philanthropic and business élite interests and their support underpinned PRRM’s impact on public policy reform. Equally however, élite influence was
a restraining factor and contributed to PRRM’s decline in the early 1970s and again in the early 1980s.

Successful NGOs, as PRRM illustrates, are remarkably vulnerable to the machinations of states. PRRM growth in the 1950s was facilitated by the overhaul of legislation governing civic organisations in 1952 and collaboration with government agencies in counter-insurgency operations. Once the counter-insurgency threat had passed however, PRRM was marginalised by the PACD as President Magsaysay and his successors expanded the administrative machinery of the Philippine state. Similarly, Ferdinand Marcos used PRRM initially but marginalised the organisation when it threatened his interests, leading to its virtual collapse in 1984.

By 1996, PRRM had reclimbed to great heights. It had become the largest primary NGO in the country, one of the few NGOs with nationwide reach, and one of the most controversial. Critics argued that PRRM was project- and donor-driven; excessively technocratic; largely unsuccessful at community organising; and insensitive to gender issues. Others however pointed to major achievements. According to Cala, PRRM successfully altered power relations in Bataan and North Cotabato; ‘In Bataan, the budget of the PRRM branch is bigger than the budget of the town of Orani . . . politicians in Bataan are wary of PRRM and see it as a patronage machine that they can’t match’.

‘Before’, Cala adds, ‘the NGO was in the margin of the inventories of political forces in the mainstream’, but under Serrano and Morales, PRRM was successfully positioned as ‘a key participant political force’.

As with PRRM in the 1950s, achievements in the late 1980s and early 1990s have been predominantly in the political realm. Political factors, especially the character and quality of relationships with related actors (state agencies, insurgent groups, members, other NGOs/POs, and funders), invariably exert great influence over PRRM’s socio-economic development programmes. Similarly, in its core Sustainable Rural District Development Programme, PRRM has been successful in building organisational and socio-political capacities at local level and less successful in achieving socio-economic impact. As an organisation, PRRM is thus a political manager. Although its socio-economic programmes have not been considered in any depth, this chapter suggests that its main success in the period since 1986 has been, first, to organise and mobilise a grassroots rural constituency and to defend its interests, and second, to link a complex range of actors during the important post-authoritarian transition. Unlike the old PRRM however, the rejuvenated
organisation balanced élite influence with institutional linkages to government agencies, political parties and NGOs and POs, underlining the importance of two key factors in Sanyal’s analysis. PRRM, Soriano argues, ‘is enmeshed in strategic alliances, many that the military support, transforming power relationships rather than just challenging for state power’.109

PRRM’s rejuvenation raises an interesting question however. Having rediscovered success, would its clothes be stolen once again by a Philippine state anxious to develop a ‘critical mass’ of its own? In some respects, the threat has diminished. Since 1986, Philippine Presidents have sought to curb rather than expand the power of the bureaucracy, through privatisation, decentralisation and sub-contracting. NGOs, POs and the private sector are now enmeshed in a complex web of relationships and a significant political upheaval would be needed to cause them to unravel. On the other hand however, government agencies remain weak at community-organising and dependent on NGOs in implementing strategic programmes that confront entrenched élite interests, such as redistributive land reform or reforestation. In ‘Philippines 2000’, the government is committed to an ambitious programme of economic development and frustration at slippage in the attainment of targets, especially in programmes involving NGOs, could lead to tension with NGOs and attempts to displace them by expanding government agencies.

PRRM is more vulnerable in the electoral and local government arenas. Political parties and traditional politicians do not see NGOs as a fundamental threat as of yet, in large part because their impact in electoral campaigns has been marginal to date. Results in the 1992 elections however suggested that their impact is growing. As the PACD followed PRRM success in community organisation and mobilisation, so its success in educating and mobilising voters and in monitoring election count centres may force political parties to establish local organisational bases. Equally, as NGOs and POs consolidate their participation in local government structures, so traditional political forces will become increasingly concerned. After their relative failure in the 1992 elections (see chapter 6) NGOs and POs themselves favour a more explicitly party political project in future election campaigns. Should a political party with a significant local organisational base materialise, however, it would further underline the role of PRRM, and other NGOs, as important triggers of political change within and beyond the Philippine state.
8 Task Force Detainees of the Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Human rights NGOs have a long record of activity in the promotion and protection of international human rights standards. Instrumental in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (Weissbrodt 1984: 429–30), they became important actors in an ‘international human rights regime’ during the 1980s, giving rise to a substantial body of literature.¹ Studies of the intranational roles of human rights NGOs in the developing world are rarer, however, and exist mainly in report or monograph form.² Yet, intranationally, human rights NGOs have not only contributed to the protection and promotion of human rights standards, but have also eroded the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes, mobilised specific constituencies in support of opposition campaigns, and shaped political discourse in post-authoritarian polities. This chapter thus presents a study of Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), the largest human rights NGO in the Philippines, its contribution to the protection of human rights and its role in Philippine politics.

TFDP was established in 1974 by the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines following the declaration of martial law, and in 1993 was the largest human rights NGO both in the Philippines and in the developing world as a whole. The third largest NGO in the Philippines (behind PBSP and the PRRM), TFDP had 288 staff and 82 offices in 69 of the Philippines’ 72 provinces. In many respects, TFDP differs from standard conceptions of a human rights NGO. Wiseberg (1991: 529) for instance defines a human rights NGO as:

a private association which devotes significant resources to the promotion and protection of human rights, which is independent of both governmental
and political groups that seek direct political power and which does not itself seek such power.

TFDP, however, has a long history of support for the NDF, the united front of the CPP, and, despite changes to its mandate following the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship, remains an integral part of a larger social movement, though one which has been significantly weakened since 1994. In contrast to Wiseberg, TFDP Chairperson Sr. Mariani Dimaranan (1990: 59) argues that human rights NGOs are inherently political:

Campaigning against . . . violations of human rights is a subversive activity. It cannot therefore be effectively undertaken either by voluntary organizations which seek to make themselves acceptable to all governments by insisting they are impartial or apolitical or by United Nations Commissions which depend on the cooperation of the government concerned.

As with the previous chapter, this chapter looks at another NGO with a rich political history. Unlike PRRM, a rural development NGO, TFDP, as a human rights organisation, provides an illustration of the political complexity of NGO action that is often omitted from conventional studies of NGOs. This chapter therefore documents TFDP’s history from the 1970s, the development of its mandate in the post-authoritarian period, and its engagement, through participation and protest, with the Philippine state.

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF TFDP

The establishment and consolidation of successful NGOs in the developing world is crucially dependent on forceful and dynamic personalities. This applies especially to leading human rights NGOs, many of which emerged under conditions of severe repression in the 1970s. Personal dynamism and authority in themselves, however, were inadequate, and institutional support was essential in providing human rights NGOs with the legitimacy to confront authoritarian regimes and the moral authority to escape outright censure. The establishment and consolidation of TFDP is attributable in large part to the work of Sr. Mariani Dimaranan, its Chairperson since 1975. More importantly, however, a tri-partite alliance of important segments of the Catholic Church, underground activists of the NDF, and foreign funders led by NOVIB led to TFDP’s emergence as the most influential human rights NGO in the Philippines.
The Catholic Church was the most important catalyst in the establishment of TFDP. When martial law was declared on 21 September 1972, the Church escaped relatively unscathed. Parliament was suspended, leading opposition politicians including Liberal Party leader Benigno Aquino were arrested, political parties were banned, business conglomerates were confiscated, and newspapers were shut down. Within the first few weeks, 30,000 people were imprisoned, mostly in Manila, and over subsequent months an estimated 20,000 political prisoners were detained at Camp Crame, headquarters of the Philippine Constabulary (Diokno J. 1987: 33; Feria 1993: 117). In response, the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP), with the support of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), organised a nationwide survey of conditions under martial law. In a report issued on 26 November 1973 to coincide with the launch of the Church-Military Liaison Committee (CMLC), the AMRSP argued that

There are no accurate estimates on the number of political prisoners, but all regions report that there are some. They are generally accused of subversion. There are frequent reports of physical torture from all regions of the country. The families and relatives of prisoners are kept under surveillance. Extortion money is asked of prisoners for their release in a number of regions.

The survey’s conclusions, especially the need for ‘safeguards in matters of arrest, detention and trial’, became the focal point of discussion at the AMRSP’s annual convention in January 1974. Many religious superiors doubted the Church Military Liaison Committee’s ability to halt the torture of political detainees, and, during the convention, the AMRSP launched two ‘task forces’ concerned specifically with human rights: Task Forces Detainees, to support the estimated 10,000 political detainees still imprisoned in December 1973 (Diokno 1987: 33), and Task Force Data Gathering (TFDG), to monitor prison conditions and to document cases of abuse.

Members of Christians for National Liberation (CNL), the largest constituent organisation in the underground NDF, played a significant role in the birth of TFDP. In late 1973, both the NDF and CNL were largely amorphous. Prominent members including Luis Jalandoni had fled Manila; those remaining were unable to maintain regular contact with comrades because of intense military surveillance and most focused on the campaign against Marcos’ new constitution. Individual members, however, played an important role in the
1973 AMRSP survey and in the establishment of TFDP and TFDG, including CNL founder Fr. Edicio de la Torre, Fr. Carlos ‘Calloy’ Tayag, and Fr. Gerardo Bulatao.11

The first head of TFDP was an American Jesuit, Fr. Mel Brady. In early 1975, however Brady resigned due to overwork, and in April, Sr. Mariani Dimaranan, one of the core group behind the 1973 survey, was elected Chairperson in succession. Born in Occidental Mindoro, Dimaranan studied at Manila’s De La Salle University before moving to Holy Spirit College. With other nuns, she visited prominent leaders of the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (Peoples Liberation Army) in the Muntinlupa State Penitentiary in Manila, including Luis Taruc and Alfredo Saulo. In the late 1960s, Dimaranan was assigned to St. Joseph’s College in Manila, where she became head of the Social Science Department and joined her own students in anti-Marcos and anti-US demonstrations. Using overseas church contacts, Dimaranan developed a ‘solidarity network’ and, accused of being a member of CNL, was arrested on 20 October 1973 (Gonzalez 1986: 27). Released on 6 December 1973, Dimaranan joined TFDP as secretary and adviser to Fr. Mel Brady.

From tiny beginnings, TFDP grew quickly under Dimaranan’s dynamic stewardship and by 1979 had helped 1,300 families and over 3,000 detainees in 60 prison camps. In late 1974, TFDP had almost 200 volunteer nuns, and every Saturday, small groups visited Manila’s detainees (AMRSP 1976: 67). By 1975, however, obstacles were increasingly raised against TFDP, especially through security alerts declared before scheduled visits. Unable to reach prisoners, volunteer nuns gradually left TFDP. To professionalise the organisation and replace lost volunteer nuns, Dimaranan recruited ex-detainees as volunteers and paid staff. The same year, in response to letters and requests from the provinces, Dimaranan travelled to Cebu and Mindanao (including Zamboanga, Cotabato, Davao, and Cagayan de Oro) to set up regional offices. Bishop Antonio Nepomuceno provided an office in Cotabato, and the Redemptorist Fathers provided one in Cebu. In Davao, Dimaranan established ties with the local Maryknoll-run Citizens’ Council for Justice and Peace (CCJP), leading to the establishment of another TFDP office. By late 1975, TFDP had a handful of offices scattered throughout Mindanao and the Visayas.

Through Dimaranan, TFDP also established a pivotal relationship with FLAG and its founder, Jose ‘Pepe’ Diokno. A former Justice Secretary and prominent Marcos critic, Diokno was arrested in the opening days of martial law. Released on 11 September 1974, he founded FLAG with four other lawyers
in October 1974 to provide legal support to detainees, and by 1982 FLAG had almost 100 lawyers nationwide (FLAG 1992: 1). TFDP and FLAG intentionally complemented each other. While imprisoned, Diokno was kept informed of the AMRSP survey and the establishment of TFDP and TFDG and was visited frequently by TFDP volunteer nuns, to whom he explained his plans for a lawyers’ organisation. Throughout the 1970s TFDP aided FLAG financially and in the late 1970s introduced FLAG to NOVIB, as the two organisations became, according to Dimaranan, ‘brother and sister’.

By 1979, TFDP had 42 offices in Mindanao (administered under the umbrella of the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference) and the Visayas, 47 staff and 200 volunteers. In its early years, TFDP focused on the needs of detainees and their families, but from the late 1970s sought first, ‘To support and strengthen the organisation of detainees, families and support groups towards national liberation’, and second, ‘to promote the development of mass movements of concern against violations of human rights and expose and oppose escalating militarization’. In the five years since its birth, TFDP’s political philosophy had evolved considerably. Many staff and volunteers were CNL members, providing the CPP with significant, albeit far from dominant, influence. ‘In the beginning’, de la Torre noted in 1979, ‘TFDP was perfectly open, no secrets. But people’s struggle got more sophisticated. [As] the military . . . got more sophisticated . . . we also became more sophisticated’.

From the late 1970s, when an estimated 2 per cent to 3 per cent of Philippine clergy supported the NDF (Wurfel 1988: 279), TFDP philosophy firmly espoused the national democratic cause. ‘Experience under martial law’, TFDP argued in 1979, ‘has shown conclusively that individual efforts to solve [the] problems . . . of political detainees are not enough. Individual efforts . . . to defend the rights of political detainees, to promote their welfare and secure releases must be combined with group action’. TFDP’s fourth national convention was held under the rubric ‘TFDP, One with the People’s Struggle Towards Total Social Transformation’, NDF-speak for the revolutionary overthrow of the Marcos regime. Amid rising radicalism at the local level and a reaffirmation of the CPP’s ‘Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought’ principles under Rodolfo Salas’s chairmanship, however, TFDP’s National Center grappled to defend its organisational autonomy. ‘TFDP’, Dimaranan lectured the Convention, ‘is an independent organisation. It must remain independent if it is to perform its functions effectively . . . TFDP workers . . . should not take [directives] from any other group or organisation’.

The CPP was not the only threat to TFDP autonomy, however, and by the
early 1980s, foreign funders were exerting significant influence over organisational structures, program focus, and financial management. In its early years, TFDP relied on volunteer labour with few full time staff, and its main source of financial support was a P10,000 grant in 1975 from the Women Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines. In 1976, however, NOVIB approved a grant to TFDP, establishing a lasting relationship that aided TFDP’s development. With extra European funding secured with help from NOVIB, TFDP had income of P3.7 million in 1981, 70 per cent up on 1980. As a result, European agencies formed a consortium to co-ordinate funding to TFDP in 1980, consolidating their influence.

Within the AMRSP, increased NDF influence in TFDP, and its militant opposition to the Marcos regime, estranged conservative superiors. By 1981, TFDP dwarfed the AMRSP in size, and though formally a ‘working arm’ of the AMRSP, now had its own organisational structures, weakening AMRSP oversight. Within the AMRSP, bitter debate waged over TFDP’s status, and throughout 1981, the AMRSP held inconclusive discussions with TFDP and other task forces. For TFDP, working arm status represented a vital ‘moral umbrella’ that protected it from government sanction, and before the AMRSP convention in August, staff launched an intensive lobby of AMRSP members to protect its link. The AMRSP Convention decided to retain its relationship with TFDP and other working arms, but the issue plagued AMRSP conventions for years to come.


In 1975, TFDP was tiny, ‘a small group of . . . [religious women] answering the needs of political detainees and their relatives . . . [visiting] camps, [providing] documentation, organizing detainees’ relatives to [campaign for] releases, publication and education, [even] baby- sitting detainees’ children’. The work however was split between two organisations: TFDP, based in the Religious of the Virgin Mary compound in Cubao with volunteers drawn mainly from the women religious, and TFDG, from an office in Sta. Ana with mainly male volunteers. On 6 September 1974, TFDG launched its first publication, Various Reports, publicising cases of harassment of church figures and the torture and killing of political detainees. Surreptitiously circulated among Catholic and Protestant clergy, Various Reports resulted in pressure from the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines on Marcos through
the Church Military Liaison Committee, forcing a categorical assurance from Marcos that ‘No one, but no one, has been tortured’. Following a warning from the Chairman of the Philippine Council for Print Media (PCPM) to cease publication, the name was changed, first to ICHTHYS (from the Greek ‘fish’) and then to Signs of the Times. In September 1976, however, Amnesty International (AI) issued a damning report, claiming 70 per cent of political detainees it interviewed had been tortured. Under international pressure, the Philippine government responded in October 1976, querying AI’s Philippine contacts and condemning ‘groups that would subvert and overthrow the Philippine government’ (Amnesty International 1977: 69). More dangerous to the government than TFDP because of its documentation work, TFDG’s fate was sealed. On 5 December 1976, in a co-ordinated clampdown on the AMRSP, TFDG’s office was raided and Signs of the Times was closed down. As members of the Association of Men Major Religious Superiors (AMMRS) were arrested, others, including TFDG publications manager Gerardo Bulatao, went underground. In disarray, TFDG was subsumed within TFDP.

TFDP’s support services to detainees and their families provided a natural constituency from which to organise POs and mobilise their members in support of human rights and other anti-government campaigns. Launched in 1974, TFDP’s Self-Reliant Projects (SRP) Program provided loans of P500 to P2000 to families whose main wage earner was imprisoned, before being replaced in 1977 by Family Self Reliance Programs (FSRP). Rehabilitation projects were also launched in Metro Manila prison camps with help from the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), enabling detainees to produce painted T-shirts, pendants carved from cow bones, woven baskets, and printed cards. As socio-economic programmes, SRPs and FSRPs were largely unsuccessful. Loans went unpaid, and TFDP became embroiled in intermittent disputes with foreign funders about financial reporting. Their main success, Dimaranan argued, was to help families ‘gain the courage to face the military’, and in 1978, TFDP launched Kapisanan para sa Pagapalaya at Amnestiya ng mga Detenidong Politikal (KAPATID, Association for the Release and Amnesty of Political Detainees) with volunteers mobilised through the FSRP.

From 1976, TFDP helped to pioneer one of the most successful tactics of the left in harassing the Marcos regime. On 5 January, Fr. Ed de la Torre and seventeen other detainees went on hunger strike, seeking house arrest status for two female detainees. Although not the first, the 76-day hunger strike was the most successful to date, promoting unity among detainees and undermining
government denials about prison conditions. While TFDG spread word through *Signs of the Times* and refuted stories in the Marcos-controlled press, TFDP publicised the strike internationally and mobilised detainees’ families in support. Following negotiations at the Church–Military Liaison Committee meeting of 19 March 1976, the strike was called off, and on 26 March, the two detainees were released under house arrest. Success, however rippled beyond the immediate releases. According to Youngblood, the hunger strike ‘established that torture was indeed inflicted on some detainees, [and as a result] reports of punishment of abusive officers began to appear more frequently’. The strike represented the climax to a wave of fifteen hunger strikes between 1973 and 1976, and further waves followed in 1978 (seven hunger strikes), and between September 1980 and February 1981. From 1981, hunger strikes, invariably successful in bringing releases or improved conditions, became a standard response to sudden spates of arrests (TFDP 1986: 166).

With the lifting of martial law on 17 January 1981, the character of human rights abuses, and consequently of TFDP strategy, changed dramatically. From 1972 to 1981, political arrests, torture, and deaths in detention represented TFDP’s primary concern. From 1981, however, ‘salvagings’ (extra-judicial killings, from the Tagalog *salbahe*, meaning nasty or bad), disappearances, massacres, bombings, ‘hamletting’ (forcible resettlement), and militarisation became increasingly important concerns as battle between the Marcos dictatorship and the armed left intensified, and as government policy towards TFDP hardened. TFDP’s new strategy was reflected in its documentation. Its *Political Detainees* book series, published between 1976 and 1978 in the name of the AMRSP, concentrated meticulously on documenting arrests and ill-treatment and growing church concern (AMRSP 1976, 1977 and 1978). Reflecting its more militant approach, *Pumipiglas* (Struggle or Struggling), a new series of books launched in 1981, documented abuses against peasants, workers, and indigenous groups and the resultant ‘people’s resistance’, accompanied by a wide-ranging political and economic critique of the martial law regime (TFDP 1981). In response, TFDP, along with *KAPATID* and a church solidarity organisation, the EMJP, was branded a ‘communist front’ by the Department of National Defense in July 1981, and in September 1982, TFDP’s Sub-Regional Office in Iloilo was raided.

Scope for political campaigning, however, was still determined by the exigences of the organisation’s other functions. In the early 1980s, campaigning (Indirect Service) was only one of five programmes, and the others (Detainee
Service, Family Service, Documentation and Publication and Administration) frequently operated under considerable pressure. In a wave of arrests between September and November 1982, 1,836 people were detained. Prisoners, both political and criminal, received inadequate food rations (equivalent to P6 a day in 1983), forcing families to supply food or money to relatives in detention. TFDP’s DSP and FSP were swamped with requests for help and, as a result, TFDP launched a Food Assistance Programme in 1983 with help from European funders.

In 1983, the murder of opposition leader Benigno Aquino transformed the Philippine political landscape, creating new opportunities for popular alliances. As abuses rose dramatically in the wake of unrest generated by the murder (see Appendix, table 1), human rights issues dominated the agendas of the Catholic church and moderate opposition, and human rights advocates were suddenly to the fore. With Benigno’s brother, Butz Aquino, Jose Diokno and Lorenzo Tañada, former nationalist Senators and founding lawyers of FLAG, spearheaded Justice for Aquino, Justice for All (JAJA), a coalition uniting the moderate and radical opposition. Tanada also chaired the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy (NAJFD), in which, like JAJA, moderate opposition leaders learned the organisational skills of the national democrats. With its ‘prestige, network of contacts and organizational resources’, TFDP played a major role in launching the NAJFD and in launching regional chapters in Northern and Central Luzon, Bicol, Southern Tagalog, Negros, Panay, Cebu, Leyte, Samar, and Mindanao (Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Cotabato, Ozamis and Butuan). TFDP was also active in the JAJA political prisoners committee and maintained close ties with UNIDO (United Nationalist Democratic Organisation) and PDP–Laban (Philippine Democratic Party–Lakas ng Bayan, Spirit of the Nation), the main opposition parties. As a result, TFDP ensured that political prisoners and militarisation remained prominent in their respective platforms and maintained the momentum of an issue around which opposition parties could unite.

TFDP was already an active member of the Philippine Coalition for Human Rights (PhCHR), formed in 1980 by lawyers from FLAG and MABINI (Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity and Nationalism Inc.). PhCHR was envisaged as a leading coalition of human rights advocates but failed to take off. On 20 April 1983, however, the Supreme Court supported the continued detention of prisoners held under Presidential Commitment Orders (PCOs), effectively legalising warrantless arrests. On 5 May, PhCHR held a special forum, under the banner ‘Scrap the PCO and replace the writ [of Habeas
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Corpus], attended by representatives of 80 Manila-based human rights and other organisations, including TFDP and KAPATID, launching the Movement to Abolish the PCO (MAPCO). TFDP was a member of the organising committee and played a prominent role in subsequent activities.47

Throughout the 1970s, Jose Diokno notes, TFDP ‘helped ... awaken public opinion in the United States to the iniquity and injustice, the hardship and degradation that support by their government help[ed] the martial law regime perpetrate on the Filipino people’. US-Philippine relations, Diokno argued, provided TFDP with ‘an unexpected weapon’ (Diokno 1987: 36). During the early 1980s, TFDP developed the role further through personal visits by Dimaranan and other staff, its regular magazine Quarterly Report, and, later, Philippine Human Rights Update, and assistance to visiting American fact-finding missions (including the International Association of Democratic Lawyers in 1984 and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights in 1983 and 1985) (Silliman 1991: 66–9; Youngblood 1990: 167). Enhancing its credibility, TFDP statistics were used by the State Department in its annual human rights reports to Congress after 1983 (Fisher R. 1989).

Throughout the early 1980s, TFDP units endured intimidation from criminal gangs, fanatical religious cults and the private armies of landlords, especially in Mindanao, leading to a ‘low profile posture’ in parts of the country for much of 1983. Writing to NOVIB in July 1983, Dimaranan noted

I don’t know what [will] happen to our Mindanao Regional Office in Davao [or] other TFDP offices. Military raids are very much in the air now. ... Though these things might be inevitable sooner or later, we try to keep on working quietly without inviting their attention.48

Two years later, in 1985, two TFDP staff were killed in separate circumstances: Jesus ‘Zaldy’ Maglantay, 24, killed in Kalibo, Panay on 2 August by soldiers of the 313th PC Company after they arrested him at his boarding house, and Eufrocino Inamarga shot dead by a Civilian Home Defence Force (CHDF) member.49 Another TFDP worker, Albert ‘Abet’ Enriquez, ‘disappeared’ after being kidnapped on 29 August and reportedly detained in Lucena City’s Camp Nakar.50 Yet, TFDP suffered not only at the hands of state military and para-military forces, but at the hands of the underground CPP/NDF. In late 1985, the CPP killed over 200 cadres, 130 in Mindanao alone, suspected of being ‘Deep Penetration Agents’ (DPAs) (government spies).51 TFDP helped to exhume bodies, collated information about missing activists and helped their families, and some TFDP workers suffered directly as spouses and relatives were killed.52
Despite the violence and intimidation that its staff endured, however, TFDP’s Indirect Service Programme (ISP) grew substantially during the early 1980s. TFDP became active in alliance work, support group building, and action committees (including ‘Free . . . Committees’ for prominent CPP and NDF leaders Jose Maria Sison, Fidel Agcaoili, Satur Ocampo, Edicio de la Torre, and Horacio Morales). The ISP also organised forums and symposia; assisted and sustained sectoral organisations (POs) that it had helped establish [especially KAPATID, Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensiyon at para sa Amnestiya (SELDÁ, Association of Ex-Detainees against Detention and for Amnesty, established in 1985), and Mothers and Relatives Against Tyranny and Repression (MARTYR)]; organised fact finding missions; maintained international solidarity campaigns; and organised prison visits for middle class organisations.53 Other programmes, especially documentation, had suffered, however,54 and the ISP was effectively operating autonomously from core programmes such as detainee and family support.55

HUMAN RIGHTS AND POST-AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS

TFDP was caught unawares by the events of February 1986. Like other organisations in the national democratic camp, TFDP supported the boycott of the 7 February Presidential election called by the CPP-NDF in the expectation that electoral fraud would enable Marcos to retain the presidency. Consequently, during the ‘People Power’ revolt of 22–25 February when church leaders camped along Manila’s Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, TFDP Chairperson Sr. Mariani Dimaranan was in Europe, mobilising support for a projected new cycle of confrontation with the Marcos regime. Ultimately, however, the pattern of human rights abuse that followed the lifting of martial law in 1981 was sustained after 1986, ensuring a prominent role for TFDP in a significant arena of struggle between NGOs and the state. Beholden to business, technocratic, and military interests, and opposed by the Senate and House of Representatives elected in 1987, Aquino had little autonomy with which to implement her election manifesto. In February 1987, fighting between the government and the New People’s Army resumed, unleashing a new wave of atrocities by regular and irregular government forces, prompting human rights NGOs to engage the state broadside.

The election of President Aquino presented major challenges to TFDP. First, human rights had been a key plank in Aquino’s election manifesto, and
in response, hundreds of local and regional human rights organisations were established nationwide following the collapse of the Marcos regime. TFDP therefore risked marginalisation and the fragmentation of the national democratic-aligned human rights movement that it had built. Second, TFDP had to refine its mandate. TFDP openly supported the NDF from the late 1970s until 1986, but the new regime conditions created pressure on TFDP to distance itself from the NDF and the CPP, and redefine its role as a human rights organisation. Third, with the government committed to the establishment of new institutions and mechanisms to protect human rights, TFDP now had to engage the state in direct relationships, in contrast to the militant opposition to the state which had previously defined its stance.

BUILDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The collapse of the Marcos regime created a dramatic new ‘democratic space’ for human rights NGOs and POs: freedom to organise, liaise openly with other organisations at the local or national level, and actively mobilise new constituencies. Capitalising on this new space, TFDP played the lead role in organising a national congress of human rights NGOs in Manila in May 1986. The Congress led to the establishment of the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), and Sr. Mariani Dimaranan became PAHRA’s first Chairperson (TFDP 1993b: 75). By 1993, PAHRA claimed over 100 member organisations. PAHRA’s establishment, according to Lim (1993: 91), ‘widened the flanks of the [Philippine] human rights movement’:

From its traditional base of church people, lawyers, journalists, students and workers, the movement reached out to other sectors and varied concerns such as scientists, women, [and] children, as well as socio-economic and environmental issues. Relief and rehabilitation work for victims of human rights violations were also systematized; breakthroughs were made in improving psycho-social services for political detainees (especially those who underwent the trauma of torture) and their relatives.

As a result, PAHRA quickly became the most important human rights coalition in the Philippines and an important weapon of the left in berating the Aquino government’s human rights performance: co-ordinating issue-specific campaigns, organising pickets and demonstrations, petitioning United Nations organs, and from 1989, lobbying the Senate and House.
During the late 1980s and early 1990s, PAHRA was widely criticised for doctrinaire adherence to the ‘expose, oppose’ national democrat philosophy of NGO action, i.e., militant and unwavering opposition to the state. Yet, according to Sr. Cres Lucero, PAHRA’s national democrat identity at this time and its role as a ‘political centre’ in projecting human rights as a central issue filled a political vacuum and hence proved a significant source of strength.\textsuperscript{57} Despite criticism, TFDP and PAHRA prominence increased during this period. Between 1987 and 1989, when fighting between the AFP and NPA was at its most intense, moderates eschewed PAHRA, while its national democrat orientation, combined with Aquino’s ostensible liberalism, made organising difficult and led to conflict with the Catholic hierarchy (TFDP 1993b: 78).\textsuperscript{58} Internally, PAHRA was destabilised by the CPP’s ‘Operation Missing Link’ (another bout of purges within the CPP in Mindanao and Southern Tagalog). A PAHRA worker, Pearl Abaya, was abducted by the CPP outside TFDP’s National Centre in November 1988. Amid intensive inquiries in underground circles by PAHRA officials, Abaya was released after six months.\textsuperscript{59} Tense relations between PAHRA and the revolutionary movement were exacerbated as others released directed TFDP and the military to shallow graves in Southern Tagalog.\textsuperscript{60} From 1990, however, as the Aquino government increasingly acknowledged the legitimacy of PAHRA and TFDP grievances, PAHRA’s steadfastness won it increased credibility with Congress, the judiciary and the media.\textsuperscript{61} By 1993, co-ordination among members through PAHRA committees (including campaigns and research and documentation) had improved significantly.\textsuperscript{62} To consolidate its position as individual human rights abuses decreased in the early years of the Ramos administration (See Appendix, table 3), PAHRA increasingly focused on economic and cultural rights, carving a niche for human rights NGOs in monitoring the impact of the government’s ‘Philippines 2000’ economic development plan on peasants, women, children, and indigenous groups (PhilRIGHTS 1994).\textsuperscript{63}

PAHRA effectiveness during the late 1980s and early 1990s stemmed in large part from the specialist skills of individual members and the division of labour that resulted. TFDP was responsible for documentation, EMJP for militarisation and internal refugees, MAG for medical support to fact-finding missions and to former political detainees, and KAPATID, SELDA, FIND (Families of the Victims of Involuntary Disappearances) and MARTYR for organising specific constituencies. The division of labour, according to Dimaranan, made TFDP work more focused and systematic, and made it less vulnerable to repression by the government or censure by the Catholic
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hierarchy or foreign funders. Outside Manila, PAHRA was less effective. PAHRA regional and provincial affiliates in which TFDP was prominent, such as the Human Rights Alliance of Negros (HRAN), the Davao Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (DAHRA), and the Kotabato Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (KAHRA), frequently lapsed into inactivity.

With the onset of the CPP ‘Reaffirm’ vs. ‘Reject’ debate (see chapter 5), TFDP coalition-building became more difficult. Up to 1994, TFDP’s centralised structure ensured sufficient autonomy from the NDF and CPP to preserve its institutional integrity, unlike sectoral organisations such as Kilusang May Uno (KMU, May First Movement) or KMP which split into rival camps. As federations, however, in which regional affiliates had greater autonomy, coalition partners such as KAPATID and EMJP were more vulnerable, threatening PAHRA, and by implication, TFDP. Equally, pressure from the local branches of organisations such as KAPATID or EMJP threatened to engulf TFDP units and regional offices. In late 1993, TFDP workers reported sensitivity about cases they took on, pressure on individuals to take sides, and the need for frequent unit and regional office meetings to contain the pressure. In 1994 however, the CPP internal split finally engulfed PAHRA. Following five months of debate on PAHRA’s draft Philippine Declaration of Human and Peoples Rights, 28 member organisations led by BAYAN walked out from PAHRA’s fifth national Congress on 26 October. BAYAN denounced attempts ‘to transform PAHRA into a politically neutral organisation which reeks of collaboration and compromise with the state on the issue of human rights violations’ while other organisations condemned the PAHRA draft as ‘too universal to guide human rights advocacy in the [Philippines]’. KMU, KMP, GABRIELA (the General Assembly Binding Women for Reform, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action) and SELDA joined BAYAN in leaving PAHRA, and forming a rival coalition, KARAPATAN (Rights) while TFDP, MAG, EMJP, the Association of Concerned Teachers (ACT), and a breakaway faction of KMP, Demokratikong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Democratic Union of Philippine Peasants) remained.

In May 1995, the split engulfed TFDP itself when militant staff and members in the regions meeting in Negros Occidental formed a breakaway TFDP that provided backing to KARAPATAN. Most board members and headquarters staff in the depleted organisation meanwhile, led by Co-Chairpersons Sr Mariani Dimaranin and Bishop Antonio Fortich, remained loyal to PAHRA and the two separate organisations became embroiled in a bitter struggle for the soul of TFDP. As a human rights NGO, TFDP’s legitimacy and integrity
derived from its position as a mission partner of the AMRSP as much as from
its legal status as a Non-Stock Entity registered with the Securities and
Exchange Commission. In June 1995, the AMRSP expressed its support for
the board led by Dimaranin and Fortich, while most foreign donors, led by
NOVIB, also provided support. Despite this support however, TFDP was
badly weakened by the split. Staff in 11 out of 13 regional offices declared
their loyalty to the rival TFDP, and assumed control over equipment and
cash balances worth P6.6 million. By April 1996, TFDP had only 116 staff and
an annual budget for 1996/97 of P18.8 million, less than half its size in 1993.
Inevitably, TFDP’s capacity to gather data nationwide, hitherto the key to its
credibility, was seriously weakened and from early 1996 it was forced to rebuild
a scaled-down network of regional offices and to reanimate weakened human
rights POs such as KAPATID and FIND.

MANDATE REVISION

The split in PAHRA in 1994 and in TFDP in 1995 can be traced back to 1986
and a gradual process that led to the revision of TFDP’s mandate. TFDP
philosophy, enshrined in its January 1986 constitution, commits it to

1. the inviolable dignity of the human person and the inalienable right to
   life, freedom and development;
2. ‘the Gospel’s preferential option for the poor, deprived and oppressed’;
3. ‘active, critical and creative participation in the historical process of
   social transformation’;
4. adherence to international human rights and humanitarian law.

In the first year of the Aquino administration, TFDP came under enormous
pressure from foreign funders, Philippine and international human rights
organisations, and former human rights lawyers in the Aquino government,
to confine its mandate to human rights concerns and to move towards a
position of political impartiality by documenting NPA abuses. In October
1987, a NOVIB report criticised TFDP for demanding the unconditional release
of political prisoners when proper treatment and fair trials were more
appropriate, and for indiscriminate condemnation of military operations
permitted under international humanitarian law (e.g., civilian evacuations and
displacements). More importantly, however, the report called for ‘a human
rights movement or organisation that is clearly separate and distinct in
objective and mandate from political parties or broader political movements’.
In response, TFDP’s May 1988 National Convention agreed that ‘[W]orking for human rights and not political actions is TFDP’s contribution to the attainment of a [just] society’. Resolutions calling for evacuations, displacements, and so forth, to be documented with reference to international humanitarian law norms, and mandating changes to TFDP’s Human Rights Lexicon, were also approved. Behind the scenes however, senior TFDP staff were concerned about this pressure, and the changes, in many respects, represented a damage limitation exercise designed to maintain TFDP’s strategic orientation. In discussions with European funders for instance, TFDP argued that it was open to using international humanitarian law ‘to reflect the reality of armed conflict’, but that such a move risked promoting belligerency status for the NPA under international law, and jeopardised the safety of workers obliged to enter rebel-held or -contested areas. Individual units were given the discretion to document humanitarian law abuses by rebel groups, but documentation was not systemised at the national level, a compromise that contained pressures in particular regions.

In 1989, however, TFDP came under greater pressure to clarify its mandate. On 25 June, the NPA killed 37 people near Digos, Davao del Sur. TFDP participated in a fact-finding mission with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), to which the dead were all attached. TFDP’s National Centre condemned the ‘senseless killings’, adding that ‘TFDP is against all acts of violence against unarmed civilians . . . committed by agents of the state or rebels’. The Digos Massacre, along with Operation Missing Link, strengthened TFDP’s adherence to international humanitarian law. As with the recovery of ‘DPA’ bodies in late 1985, TFDP participated in fact-finding missions and the exhumation of shallow graves, and helped to rehabilitate CPP torture victims, deeply affecting many staff. Although theoretically committed to international humanitarian law since 1987, TFDP now documented and condemned NPA atrocities with greater determination.

From early 1994, however, when the CPP’s internal split began to embroil the NGO community, TFDP came under pressure to reassert its former support for the NDF. In regional offices, militant staff refused to submit reports to offices, including the National Centre, perceived as opposed to the CPP orthodox position, and in September a new Executive Director perceived as more sympathetic to the orthodox position, Sr. Emilina Villegas, was appointed. After the PAHRA split of October 1995 however, the board moved to consolidate TFDP’s position and in November, Villegas resigned with effect from January 1996.
Amid this internecine struggle, TFDP moved to adopt its mandate, as the formal system of electoral democracy consolidated under the Ramos regime and as economic growth resumed. From 1990, as the Appendix illustrates, abuses of individual civil and political rights began to fall. As a result, TFDP began to assert the economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in international law, and in 1993 altered its constitution to include these rights and to strengthen its mandate with respect to government development strategy. Together, TFDP and PAHRA branded human rights abuses increasingly associated with the government’s macro-economic development model as ‘development aggression’. The term provoked disquiet among some of TFDP’s donors who felt it echoed the militancy of the National Democratic Front. In reality however, the term reflected a growing concern within the international human rights NGO community at the instrumentalist use of human rights concerns by governments in the quest for economic growth. In addition, TFDP and PAHRA continued to campaign on behalf of victims of civil and political human rights abuse including the 213 political prisoners detained at the end of 1995, and the 31 people who ‘disappeared’ between August 1992 and December 1995 (See PAHRA 1996: 14, 15).

ENGAGING THE STATE

Despite the internal problems heralded by the CPP split, TFDP played a central role in engaging the Philippine state in an important policy arena in the post-1986 period. As with PRRM, this engagement was based on an elaborate blend of participation and protest and illustrates the richness and complexity of NGO political interventions in the Philippines.

Electoral participation and participation in local government structures have been two important means by which TFDP has engaged the state. Since 1986, TFDP has become increasingly active in electoral campaigns, primarily by monitoring human rights violations. TFDP reorganised the Luzon-based human rights coalition Tanggol-Karapatan Para Sa Kalayaan (Human Rights For Freedom) to monitor violence during the 1987 Congressional elections. In 1988, some TFDP workers resigned their posts to contest the January local elections under new policy that allowed them to resume their positions if defeated. Two TFDP workers died however; Roberto Rivares, 22, murdered on 12 February 1992 after running unsuccessfully in Aurora under the Partido ng Bayan slate, and Robinson Manaya, 47, shot on 5 May after his election to Butuan City Council. Lawyers closely identified with TFDP also contested
the elections, but amid the atmosphere of intense intimidation of candidates associated with cause-oriented groups, achieved success in Negros only.\textsuperscript{95}

As with other NGOs, 1992 was the first year in which TFDP systematically intervened in an election campaign. PAHRA, with TFDP as its principal member, drafted a Human Rights Agenda and sought support from electoral candidates, an initial attempt to establish a ‘human rights vote’. TFDP also organised regional meetings to question candidates on human rights concerns, while TFDP staff appeared in television and radio programmes on the election campaign.\textsuperscript{96} According to TFDP, 72 separate election-related events were organised by units and regional offices.\textsuperscript{97} Few regions tabulated specific results, but the Cagayan Valley regional office claimed that 10 of 28 candidates who adopted the Human Rights Agenda were elected to local positions.\textsuperscript{98} Nationwide, four TFDP staff resigned to run in the 1992 elections, including the Northern Mindanao regional director, but all were defeated and rejoined TFDP.\textsuperscript{99}

Despite TFDP’s national policy of non-partisanship, many regions and units determined their own positions. In Negros, TFDP refrained from joining the Negros Movement for People’s Candidates initiated by the \textit{Hujpong} (United) Nationalist Alliance, the local \textit{BAYAN} chapter and confined its activities to voter education.\textsuperscript{100} In North Cotabato however, TFDP openly supported Rep. Gregorio Andolana’s successful re-election campaign by preparing and distributing campaign material and promoting an NGO/PO ‘People’s Agenda’, as well as monitoring an election count centre.\textsuperscript{101} Though ultimately such partisanship did little to undermine TFDP credibility (most NGOs and POs participated to some extent), it underlined the traditional independence and radicalism of TFDP’s Mindanao staff.

In contrast to PRRM, TFDP radically eschewed participation in local government structures until the early 1990s. Antipathy to TFDP among local politicians, military officers and government officials was intense, and where TFDP did receive invitations, it feared co-option.\textsuperscript{102} By 1992 however, TFDP credibility at the local level had increased significantly, and the 1991 LGC made substantial provisions for wide-scale NGO participation in local government structures. In addition however, Congressional support existed for a specific human rights dimension to local government activities, providing TFDP with a potentially important role.\textsuperscript{103}

In 1992, TFDP became involved in a wide range of local government structures, though policy by late 1993 remained cautious and sceptical. In June 1992, when many TFDP offices were already accredited by local
government units, TFDP allowed staff to become members of *Sangguniang Panglunsod/Panlalawigan* (City/Provincial Councils).104 Second, staff were allowed to join NUC local secretariats, but not as convenors; ‘TFDP’, the board decided, ‘should . . . maintain its critical stance vis-a-vis the whole peace process and maximise opportunities brought by the same’.105 Third, staff were allowed to join Peace and Order Councils (POCs) established by the Department of Interior and Local Government.106 In some provinces however, (notably, Leyte), TFDP eschewed participation because of staff constraints or local intimidation.107

By the end of 1992, units in at least 4 of TFDP’s 13 regions were participating in LGC structures, NUC local secretariats or POCs, helping to increase TFDP credibility, staff reported, in those regions.108 Meaningful participation however was only possible in the small number of areas (Samar, Davao City and the Cordilleras) where government officials were supportive towards, or local allies of, TFDP.109 In Negros, TFDP units did not participate in POCs or LGC structures because of the hostile environment towards national democratic NGOs, although the Bacolod unit participated in NUC consultations.110 In Davao City, the third largest in the Philippines with a population of over 2 million, however, TFDP achieved its greatest influence in local government. After the elections in March 1993 TFDP was represented on the City Development Council, and its subcommittees on social development and education. Staff felt participation was productive, especially in the education subcommittee where TFDP promoted human rights educational initiatives, but participation was time consuming and feasible only because staff from the Davao unit and regional office could alternate.111 Support within the City Council and contacts In Davao City’s bureaucracy was critical in building TFDP influence. The Chairperson of GABRIELLA-Mindanao and Secretary-General of KMU-Mindanao were both elected to the City Council as candidates of *Lakas ng Davao* and the party, which holds the office of mayor, supported NGO participation in Council affairs. In addition, many city employees were expolitical detainees, while TFDP was close to the Provincial Fiscal (a former human rights lawyer), the City Chief of Tourism (a former TFDP worker), the Mayor’s Chief of Staff (an active member of SELDA) and other senior officials. All represented important contacts to whom TFDP could appeal for help.112 Unfortunately, however, the TFDP split of 1995 dramatically weakened its participation in local government. The loss of regional offices and staff, the rift with mass organisations that remained loyal to the CPP/NDF, and the need to rebuild TFDP and allied human rights POs all prevented TFDP from continuing to play an active role.
In addition to elections and local government structures, direct engagement with the central state reveals the elaborate blend of participation and protest that characterises TFDP’s political strategy. Within weeks of the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship on 25 February 1986, TFDP Chairperson Sr. Mariani Dimaranan was appointed to three government bodies: the Judicial Reorganisation Committee (JRC); the Presidential Committee on Political Detainees (PCPD); and the Presidential Committee on Human Rights (PCHR). In the JRC, TFDP actively participated, recommending trusted human rights lawyers to judicial positions through regional JRCs, some of whom were appointed. Through the PCPD’s Special Committee for the Immediate Release of Political Detainees of which it was a member, TFDP sought the release of political prisoners still detained but PCPD’s final report in February 1987 recommended full pardon for 58 detainees, significantly less than TFDP had hoped.

The main structure, however, through which TFDP probed the government’s commitment to human rights was the PCHR. Sr. Mariani Dimaranan became a full member while TFDP’s Anelyn de Luna became Head of Records, reflecting TFDP’s strength in documentation work. As head of the Special Projects Department (SPD), Dimaranan was responsible for PCHR field operations, including fact-finding missions and the establishment of regional PCHR offices. By December 1986, Dimaranan had organised six fact-finding missions and the opening of a PCHR regional office in Davao City, and 691 cases were filed with the PCHR, mostly by TFDP, FLAG, SELDA and FIND. By then, however, release of the PCHR’s P50 million budget was delayed, and Dimaranan’s SPD had only one member of staff.

By February 1987, when Jose Diokno died, the PCHR was effectively emasculated by opposition from Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fidel Ramos. Frustrated, Dimaranan led a KAPATID delegation to a meeting with Aquino, urging prosecution of military personnel. President Aquino, however, was non-committal. ‘Cory didn’t have the political will’, Dimaranan concluded; ‘it was the military running the show and not [her]’. On 17–18 February 1987, Dimaranan led a PCHR fact-finding mission to Lupao, Nueva Ecija, after 17 people were shot dead by government soldiers on 10 February. Supported by the fact-finding mission members (PCHR lawyers, National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) officials, and Medical Action Group doctors), Dimaranan concluded that the dead were innocent civilians, increasing her disillusionment with the Aquino government.
On 5 May 1987, the PCHR was abolished and replaced by a Commission on Human Rights (CHR) prescribed in the February 1987 Constitution. Aquino invited Dimaranan to join the new Commission, but Dimaranan refused. The CHR did not have the prosecutorial powers that TFDP argued were essential if it was to be effective. In addition, the CHR’s mandate permitted investigations into NPA abuses. TFDP, however, pointed out that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights bound state, and not non-state, actors, and that the CHR mandate therefore breached international norms. Within months, TFDP was embroiled in conflict with CHR Chairperson Mary Concepcion Bautista. Frustrated by the government’s refusal to act on cases filed with the PCHR, TFDP ignored CHR appeals for help with documentation. In response, Bautista accused TFDP and other human rights NGOs of conducting ‘a ruthless propaganda campaign’ and of ‘violat[ing] the rights of millions’ by refusing to co-ordinate.

Throughout 1988, tension between TFDP and the CHR deepened, exacerbated by international reports which criticised the government’s human rights performance (Amnesty International 1988; LCHR 1988; AHRC 1988). As government moderates called on TFDP to back down, newspaper columnist Belinda Olivares Cunnan warned TFDP that its ‘undisguised bias for . . . leftists’ would inevitably ‘isolate [it] from popular support’. In reality, however, continuing human rights abuses, especially the increase in disappearances compared to 1986 and 1987 (See Appendix, table 2), Bautista’s antipathy to human rights NGOs, and its own steadfastness won TFDP significant national and international support. Acknowledging the impasse between the CHR and human rights NGO community, Aquino met with representatives of FIND, a member of PAHRA, in December 1988 and announced the establishment of a new Presidential Human Rights Committee (PHRC).

According to Aquino, the PHRC was established after ‘non-governmental organizations, many of them critical of my governments efforts in human rights protection and promotion . . . helped government appreciate the gravity of our human rights situation’. Headed by the Justice Secretary, and under the control of the Office of the President, the PHRC included representatives from the Department of Justice (DOJ), CHR, and the Senate and House human rights committees. Two seats were allocated to PAHRA and FLAG, with the PAHRA seat filled by TFDP legal counsel Rene Sarmiento. TFDP, however, was allowed to participate in most PHRC meetings. NGOs were perplexed and taken by surprise by the PHRC’s establishment but within a year had
established an effective rapport. FIND lobbied Aquino for action on behalf of the disappeared in their December 1988 meeting. In response, the PCHR ‘facilitated searches in camps and military stockades and [brought] cases of . . . disappearances to authorities through members of the committee’.

In 1991, when three TFDP workers in Bicol were accused of membership of a communist front organisation, in charges filed by the military, the PHRC passed a resolution declaring TFDP ‘a legal and legitimate human rights organisation’. In 1992, among other measures, the PHRC investigated military counter-insurgency operations in Northern Luzon and, in response to TFDP demands, facilitated the release of political detainees on humanitarian grounds, reviewed the cases of detainees charged with criminal offenses, approved the clustering of political detainees at Manila’s Muntinlupa state penitentiary, and established a P20 million witness protection programme.

By facilitating direct relationships between human rights NGOs and officials from the AFP, the DOJ and the NBI, the PHRC avoided the bureaucracy and inertia of the CHR, leading to speedy investigations, direct hearings with human rights victims, and more vigorous prosecutions.

Since May 1992, when Fidel Ramos became President, the PHRC has been largely inactive. Constructive, albeit still tentative, relations with human rights NGOs have been maintained, however. In October 1992, the Fact-Finding Committee on Involuntary Missing Persons was established to trace 1,128 people who disappeared during the Marcos and Aquino regimes. The Committee was managed by the DOJ but included representatives from TFDP, FLAG, PAHRA, FIND, and the Commission on Human Rights. On 3 December 1992, during a meeting with TFDP and FIND, Ramos announced a P4 million compensation fund for relatives of the disappeared. TFDP representatives were unhappy with the meeting, but in a speech on 10 December, Ramos acknowledged the legitimacy of human rights NGOs:

Tension . . . between the government and . . . human rights [NGOs] is a necessary element in the democracy we are trying to build. We in government must learn to realise that they are not the enemy . . . I [want] to see both government and NGOs . . . work closely together . . . [with] more openness between us [and] more empathy with one another’s situation.

The tension to which the President alluded was exacerbated, however, by the murder of TFDP worker Chris Batan in February 1993.

In 1993, political prisoners became a central political issue amid attempts
by the Ramos government to initiate peace talks with the CPP-NDF-NPA. In June, TFDP attacked Ramos for continued arrests, the slow release of political prisoners and the use of criminal charges against political detainees. Ramos asked the CHR to clarify TFDP’s claims, but on 20 June his Press Secretary cited the CHR assertion’s that ‘there have been no new cases of political detention since July 1992 or the assumption into office of Mr. Ramos’. Detainees cited by TFDP, the statement continued, were guilty of common crimes and could apply for early release under the amnesty guidelines of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Political Prisoners. Days later, the CHR repudiated the statement from Malacanang (the Presidential Palace) and confirmed the TFDP statistics as correct. On 29 June, Defence Under-Secretary, Fernando Campos entered the fray, refuting TFDP’s allegations. Challenged by Justice Secretary Franklin Drilon to support its claims, TFDP held a press conference in Muntinlupa state penitentiary, naming 151 convicted political prisoners and presenting details of 356 political detainees held in 77 detention centres nationwide. TFDP had the last word in an unprecedented dispute with the President, his Press Secretary, the CHR, and the Departments of Justice and National Defence. The exchange testified to TFDP’s ability, unrivalled among Philippine NGOs, to confront the government broadside and emerge with its credibility enhanced.

Amid the internal difficulties of the 1994–1996 period, TFDP, in alliance with PAHRA, continued to campaign on behalf of victims of civil and political human rights abuse and on behalf of the human rights and other NGO workers who continued to be harassed, detained and killed (See PAHRA 1996). But equally, at a time when the government was proclaiming its commitment to human rights and to working with NGOs, TFDP and PAHRA noted a new character of human rights abuse linked to government’s MTPDP, the eviction of urban slum dwellers in Manila. From 0 per cent of human rights abuses in Manila in 1993, TFDP and PAHRA claimed that human rights abuses stemming from ‘development aggression’ in the city, largely demolitions and evictions, rose to 4 per cent in 1994 and to 8 per cent in 1995 (Ibid.: 33). In the first six months of 1995, they claimed, 7,082 homes in Manila were destroyed to make way for new roads or for commercial property development (Ibid.: 19). During a period in which thousands of families were being evicted from land in new government designated industrial corridors, TFDP had found a significant new role in engaging the Philippine state.
CONCLUSION

What does TFDP’s ‘story’ tell us about NGOs and Philippine politics? First, TFDP’s story underlines the important impact of human rights NGOs on the Philippine state. More than any other single NGO, TFDP undermined the Marcos dictatorship: by crystallising church concern for human rights; articulating a central cause around which the fragmented opposition could unite after 1983, and around which moderate opposition groups could work with the NDF; mobilising international opposition to the Marcos regime; and building a nationwide human rights movement through new organisations such as *KAPATID* and *SELDA*. The Philippines lacks a strong judicial tradition, and, as former Supreme Court Justice Abraham Sarmiento notes, the pressure politics of TFDP and other human rights NGOs proved a more effective guarantor of justice under the Marcos regime than the subordinated judiciary (Sarmiento 1992: 33). Influence established during the Marcos dictatorship has been consolidated under the Aquino and Ramos governments. In alliance with PAHRA and FLAG, TFDP played or plays a central role in government structures designed to protect and promote human rights, establishing human rights as a key issue area in which NGOs have achieved significant influence over government policy. In so doing, TFDP has played a central role in establishing the legitimacy of militant campaigning on behalf of the victims of human rights violations. Similarly, although the Aquino government was undermined by its poor human rights record domestically and abroad, and by the attacks of human rights organisations, it desperately attempted to consolidate its democratic legitimacy and improve its international image by seeking NGO co-operation. In the period from 1989 in particular, partnership with human rights NGOs helped to shore up the government’s rapidly eroding legitimacy.145

Second, TFDP illustrates an important nexus between the underground left and a large section of the NGO community labelled as ‘national democrat’ (i.e., supportive of the political platform of the National Democratic Front). The nationwide human rights movement TFDP built from the 1970s, crystallised in the formation of PAHRA in 1986, represented a tangible expression of the united front that the CPP and NDF could never build, and illustrated important tensions in united front politics. In 1993, TFDP remained committed to the national democratic quest for a structural transformation of Philippine society, but as a broad vision rather than a concrete goal. Following the PAHRA and TFDP splits of 1994 and 1995 both organisations continued
to distance themselves from the CPP and its united front. TFDP also illustrates the role of church NGOs as a base from which to challenge the Catholic hierarchy. An official organ of the Catholic Church, TFDP pioneered the Church’s ‘preferential option for the poor’ and remains a significant critic of the CBCP.

Third, TFDP’s history illustrate the inherently political character of Philippine human rights NGOs. High levels and systematic patterns of human rights abuse under the Marcos and Aquino governments polarised national political debate. Given the weaknesses of Philippine political parties in articulating, and mobilising on the basis of, ideologically consistent platforms on issues such as human rights, NGOs such as TFDP were forced to engage in partisan politics, either individually or in issue-based coalitions. The PAHRA and TFDP splits, however, suggest that as the human rights situation improves (See Appendix, table 3), the partisan character of human rights NGO action may be weakening, heralding further divergence between human rights NGOs and the national democratic movement and further fragmentation of the national human rights movement. Unless the human rights situation continues to improve, however, to the extent that conflicting perceptions of it cease to be a significant political cleavage, or political parties improve their ability to represent and articulate issues, by expanding membership and strengthening their ideological platforms, the work of TFDP and other human rights NGOs will retain its partisan character.

**Table 1** Human rights violations under Marcos, 1977–1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrests</th>
<th>Salvagings</th>
<th>Disappearances</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1,351</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1,620</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1,961</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>218</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1,377</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,911</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>2,088</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>4,168</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>5,967</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986 (Jan–Feb)</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>21,883</td>
<td>2,491</td>
<td>709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monthly Average</strong></td>
<td>198.94</td>
<td>22.65</td>
<td>6.45</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Source: Silliman 1994a: 107.*

**Table 2** Human rights violations under Aquino, 1986–1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrests</th>
<th>Salvagings</th>
<th>Disappearances</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986 (Mar–Dec)</td>
<td>1,234</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>8,367</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2,882</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>141</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2,312</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>83</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>3,953</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992 (Jan–June)</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>20,322</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monthly Average</strong></td>
<td>267.39</td>
<td>13.89</td>
<td>5.80</td>
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**Table 3** Human rights violations under Ramos, 1992–1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrests</th>
<th>Salvagings</th>
<th>Disappearances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992–1993</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993–1994</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994–1995</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July–Dec 1995</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monthly Average</strong></td>
<td>58.86</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: PAHRA 1996: 16.*
9 Conclusion

INTRODUCTION: THE ‘GRAND MODERN FACT’ OF PHILIPPINE POLITICS

In 1828, the young Whig historian Thomas Macaulay noticed a fundamental realignment in British politics. Edmund Burke’s three ‘estates’, the monarchy, parliament, and the established church, had to contend with another, Macaulay argued, for ‘The gallery in which the reporters sit has become a fourth estate of the realm’ (Clive 1973: 124). With this argument, his biographer noted, ‘Macaulay penetrated beneath the formal structure of politics to put his finger on [a] great new force’, a nascent national media (Ibid.: 125). Macaulay was supported by his sometimes critic Thomas Carlyle who argued in 1848 that ‘the existence of an Unfettered Press’ represented a ‘grand modern fact’: ‘Is not The Times newspaper an open Forum, open as never Forum was before . . . One grand branch of the parliaments trade is obviously dead forever’ (Carlyle 1983: 277–8).

This book is concerned with a ‘grand modern fact’ of Philippine and South-East Asian politics, the emergence of NGOs and POs as an important political force, echoing the emergence of a ‘sixth estate’ in the politics of developed and developing countries alike.1 In the Philippines, the number of registered NGOs and POs grew by 194 per cent in the 12 years between January 1984 and December 1995, compared to 95 per cent growth in the private sector over the same period.2 In Indonesia and Thailand, as chapter 2 illustrated, NGOs proliferated at an even faster rate than in the Philippines during the late 1980s and early 1990s. During the same period, NGOs also emerged as a relatively new political phenomenon in Cambodia and Vietnam. Thus, South-East Asia as a region, and the Philippines in particular, vividly illustrates the significance
of the current ‘associational revolution’, the ‘striking upsurge in organised voluntary activity and the creation of private, non-profit or non-governmental organisations’ throughout the developed and developing worlds (Salamon 1994: 10).

A number of factors account for the rapid proliferation and growing political prominence of Philippine NGOs and POs. First, the restoration of democratic rights in 1986, including the right to organise, to free assembly, to participate in elections and to a free press, created a ‘democratic space’ in which NGOs and POs could proliferate. Second, ODA flows to the Philippines increased dramatically after 1986 as donors rushed to prop up the Aquino government. Illustrating increasing concerns with governance and participation, bilateral and multilateral ODA donors insisted on NGO participation in socio-economic programmes while World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans required cutbacks in government spending, forcing government departments to seek NGO partners. Third, to ensure stable relationships with Congress, the executive under Presidents Aquino and Ramos was forced to consolidate patronage programmes that provided vast financial resources to elected politicians. Much of this money was channelled through new and existing NGOs and POs established by politicians or entrepreneurs, new means to the old ends of ‘pork barrel’ politics.

Significantly, however, the brief moment of this ‘associational revolution’ may well have passed. In the Philippines, the number of registered NGOs and POs grew significantly throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, with the rate of increase at its highest between 1989 and 1993 (see chapter 4). Since 1993, however, the annual rate of increase has been falling steadily and by 1995 was down to 5.35 per cent, the lowest since 1984. A number of factors help to explain this decline (see further in chapter 4). Development assistance to the Philippines from bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental donors alike fell from a height of 3.3 per cent of GNP in 1989–90 to 1.6 per cent in 1991–92 and has fallen further since then, reducing the financial support that underpinned rapid proliferation in the previous decade. Economic growth in the early to mid-1990s also led to a fall in poverty, from 39.9 per cent in 1991 to 35.7 per cent at the end of 1994, eroding the socio-economic vacuum in which development NGOs work while democratic consolidation has eroded the rationale for an infrastructure of socio-economic and socio-political capacity independent of the state. Finally, the post-1992 ‘Reaffirm’ versus ‘Reject’ debate within the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has weakened the left wing opposition in the Philippines, previously an important force in
supporting the NGO movement. Equally, the rate of NGO proliferation may also be falling throughout South-East Asia. In Cambodia, the number of NGOs supported by foreign development assistance had reached saturation point by late 1996 and will fall as aid is cut back. It is also possible that the purge of Prince Norodom Ranariddh as First Prime Minister by Hun Sen in July 1997 will lead to restrictions on NGO activities, stemming proliferation. Similarly in Thailand, the fall in overseas aid by non-governmental donors to Thai counterparts is undermining the financial viability of third and fourth generation NGOs, stemming their further proliferation.

Despite the fall in the rate of NGO proliferation, the Philippines has the third largest NGO/PO community in the developing world behind Brazil and India. In per capita terms however, the Philippines has the largest, and represents a remarkable case study of the political factors promoting the proliferation of NGOs in the developing world. Philippine NGOs, through their antecedents, civic and political organisations, date to the late nineteenth century and despite political upheavals and regime changes since then, the Philippine voluntary sector has developed steadily, evolving through the four generations conceived by David Korten (see chapter 1). In the Philippines, American colonial policy encouraged the early development of civic associations, providing an impetus to the proliferation of NGOs in the 1950s and again from the late 1970s. In Indonesia, by contrast, a bitter independence struggle waged by a cohesive and militarily-efficient nationalist movement led to the emergence of a powerful state in the post-war period with a significant ability to control civil society and thus limit the proliferation of NGOs. In Malaysia, the colonial legacy of an efficient federal bureaucratic machine similarly led to the emergence of a strong state, while ethnic tensions led to restrictions on political organisations including NGOs. In Thailand, the historical power of the Thai bureaucracy and the central role of the military in post-war politics led to a similar dichotomy between a strong state counterpoised against a retarded civil society.

Contrasts between the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand illustrate the importance of religion in sustaining a culture in which NGOs can proliferate. First, in the Philippines, the Catholic Church has long opposed, or protected interests distinct from, the state, thus promoting a political culture that tolerated and encouraged political organisation independent of the state. Second, as a result of American colonial rule (1898–1947), Protestant Churches became active in the Philippines and many voluntary organisations were established by Protestant civic activists. Third, as a result of schisms in the Catholic
Church, centred on the Vatican II reforms and the development of liberation theology in the 1960s, NGOs assumed importance as institutional vehicles used to advance opposing philosophies.

In Indonesia, Islam has played a significant role in encouraging the proliferation of voluntary organisations by providing a moral umbrella that voluntary organisations can use to challenge the state’s effective monopoly over interpretations of *Panca Sila*. At the same time, however, state monopolisation of interpretations of Islam forced many voluntary organisations to eschew the term ‘non-governmental organisation’ in the late 1980s and early 1990s because of its oppositional connotations (see chapter 2) stemming the proliferation of explicitly ‘non-governmental’ organisations. Similarly, in Thailand, Buddhist and Christian mutual aid organisations, antecedents of modern Thai NGOs, were established in the early decades of the twentieth century. After World War II however, state-directed Buddhism, mobilised to counter the threat of communism, was used to curb the continued proliferation of civic organisations.

Equally, the Philippines points to other factors that have promoted the proliferation of NGOs throughout South-East Asia. As argued in chapter 3, the Marcos dictatorship (1972–1986) played a decisive role in stimulating the proliferation of NGOs, and shaping the political character of the NGO community. NGOs funded by international, largely European, donors became an important base for activists committed to opposing the dictatorship and working with socio-economic groups adversely affected by its economic policies. In Thailand and Indonesia, foreign donors also supported NGOs throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s in an attempt to strengthen forces in civil society opposed to the authoritarian state. In the early 1990s, donor support to new-born NGO communities in Cambodia and to a lesser extent in Vietnam, was also motivated by a concern to build a civil society that could promote or defend democratic reforms.

In addition to the authoritarian state, economic crisis has also helped to propel NGOs to political prominence in the Philippines and in South-East Asia. In the late 1970s, the Philippine government was forced to involve NGOs in the implementation of development programmes, pressured by bilateral and multilateral donors, economic crises in the wake of the 1974 and 1979 oil slumps, and weaknesses in state programmes designed to organise and mobilise local communities. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, NGOs also proliferated in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia in response to economic pressure, especially the weakened ability of the state to support local-level
development programmes that organised and mobilised grassroots support. Thus, throughout South-East Asia, varying degrees of authoritarian rule and economic growth triggered complex processes of social change that pressured governments to loosen political controls and allow NGOs to proliferate.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICS

A central proposition of this book is that the activities of NGOs are inextricably political and that the work of NGOs is significant mainly for its political impact and character. Chapter 1 defined politics in terms of two key characteristics and suggested that NGOs could be regarded as political actors to the extent that they, first, participated in processes designed to create social meaning and attempted to cohere as a group or groups around that social meaning and second, that they participated, on the basis of this shared social meaning, in the distribution of resources and in struggles to influence that distribution. Korten’s four ‘generations’ of NGO strategy, outlined in chapter 1, are all political in the sense that they can be closely related to these two essential characteristics of politics. First generation strategy, centred on relief and welfare, is ostensibly apolitical since it is often based on a putative political neutrality, but inevitably the effect is to provide legitimacy, direct or indirect, to a prevailing regime or orthodoxy. In other cases, first generation strategies serve to protect the status quo and to defend the interests of those economic, social or political élites who gain by it. The early history of the Philippine NGO community, where élite philanthropic interests used NGOs to legitimate or advance their social position, illustrates this point. Second generation strategies, small-scale self-reliant local development initiatives, can also be used in an attempt to prevent macro-economic or political change. In the Philippines, for instance, as chapters 3 and 7 illustrate, the emergence of second generation NGO strategies in the 1950s and again in the 1970s correlates closely with attempts to undermine armed insurgency and to prevent more far-reaching change. Equally however, second generation strategies are often directed at the organisation and mobilisation of local communities as participant political forces in local, regional or national politics.

Third and fourth generation activities are ostensibly the most political since they seek proactively to create social meaning and to create coherence around it, as well as to influence the distribution of resources. Yet, this putative political character exists because such NGOs challenge, rather than subscribe
Politics of NGOs in South-East Asia

to, prevalent regimes and orthodoxies. Certainly, much of the political potency and significance of NGO proliferation in the Philippines and in South-East Asia derives from this challenge, and the political changes that have resulted but intrinsically, third and fourth generation NGOs are no less or more political than their first and second generation NGOs. Indeed, much of the political significance of NGO action stems from the blend of competing generational strategies that characterises the NGO community in countries such as the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia.

A range of other factors however make NGOs significant political actors and relevant subjects of research by political scientists. One significant factor for instance is the political milieu in which NGOs operate. NGOs in the Philippines and in South-East Asia, this book suggests, face a complex political environment that, at best, exerts a significant influence over strategy and, at worst, restricts the range of available options. In polities such as the Philippines, characterised by intense social polarisation, scope for manoeuvre is restricted in particular ways. Chapter 4 noted that NGO relationships with the state are undermined by the enduring legacy of the Marcos regime, the continuing threat of co-option, the difficulty of interpreting executive-level policy (when the government is composed of competing interests and when individual departments exhibit conflicting attitudes towards NGOs) and the danger of becoming enmeshed in patronial politics. Chapter 5 analysed institutional forces stimulating the proliferation of NGOs (élite philanthropists, the Church, overseas donors and the underground left) and argued that each exerts significant influence over NGO strategy. In PRRM for instance, strategy must not only reconcile the sometimes conflicting interests and perspectives of overseas donors and élite philanthropists, but must also avoid estranging other NGOs/POs and the underground left. Chapter 6 meanwhile analysed a range of mechanisms through which Philippine NGOs engage in politics, including coalition-building, participation in contemporary social movements, electoral intervention; and participation in local government structures and how NGO perspectives on each are influenced by competing institutional interests, an issue tackled in greater detail in the case studies. In the case of TFDP, not only did foreign donors, the Catholic Church and the underground left exert an influence that constrained TFDP strategy, but in particular cases, a coalition between normally antagonistic interests (e.g., European donors and the underground left) was required to undertake major initiatives.

This book also suggests that NGOs in South-East Asia play an important role directly or indirectly in supporting political parties. In Indonesia, for
instance, NGOs provided active support to the *Partai Demokrasai Indonesia* (PDI, Indonesian Democratic Party) until Megawati Sukarnoputri was ousted as leader in 1996 and continue to support the opposition movement led by her. In the Philippines, NGOs not only support political projects and political parties but in many cases play a critical and central role in mobilising broad issue-based social movements and providing political parties and individual candidates with organisational support during elections. The results of 1992 elections, for instance, convinced Philippine NGO leaders and academics of the continuing role of NGO coalitions in electoral campaigns (see chapter 5). Equally, leaders argued that increasing integration into the campaigns of political parties was essential if the ‘progressive’ political projects articulated by NGOs were to achieve greater success.

Another relevant issue in the study of NGOs and politics in the developing world concerns the source of their legitimacy. In the Philippines, the weak process of institutionalisation, which sustains a weak party-political system and trade union movement, has strengthened the legitimacy and credibility of NGOs in the eyes of the national media, government agencies, and sections of Congress. Equally, since the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship, many of the Philippines’ larger NGOs, including TFDP and PRRM, enhanced their accountability and transparency in the late 1980s and early 1990s by reorganising internally and developing or expanding membership bases. Pressure from donors played a significant role but the rhetoric of ‘People Power’ which dominated political discourse in the early years of the Aquino government was equally important. The fate of President Aquino and reformers in her administration besieged by the military, conservative technocrats and local élites underlined the need for NGOs to institutionalise and consolidate their power as a political force.

Edwards and Hulme (1994: 18) argue that NGO accountability is complex, abstract, and poorly analysed in the NGO literature. Casestudies of PRRM and TFDP underline this point, since the ramifications of membership go beyond immediate questions of accountability or transparency. In PRRM, membership increases the accountability of the board but also enhances PRRM’s local influence and supports a broader political project. In TFDP, membership in the early 1990s was directed to similar objectives yet, as the events of 1995 (see chapter 8) illustrate, it ultimately weakened TFDP’s political focus, curbed its autonomy from the NDF, and engulfed it in internecine intra-left debate. Appeals from Edwards and Hulme for openness and accountability therefore underestimate the competing political pressures NGOs face in a
relatively fractious political culture, such as the Philippines’, where the absence of strong mediating institutions promotes a polarisation of political debate. In the absence of consensus, NGOs are inevitably forced into partisan positions that undermine openness and transparency, although as the TFDP case study suggests, the consolidation of democratic reforms in the Philippines since 1986 is promoting greater accountability among formerly militant NGOs.

A fourth issue concerns the institutional and individual character of NGOs. Farrington and Bebbington (1993: 56) argue that ‘The strategies that [NGOs] pursue and the ways in which they position themselves in civil society and in relationship to the state are an effect (not always linear) of a complex of individual strategies’. Ultimately, they suggest, ‘institutional reproduction is a net effect of individual actions’ (Ibid.). In highlighting the crucial role of dynamic and forceful individuals in launching and sustaining prominent NGOs and the importance of personal ties in developing state–NGO relationships, the dissertation supports this view. NGOs however are more than the sum of the individuals who work with them and, like other institutions, develop a momentum of their own. In the Philippines, for instance, NGOs provided a vital institutional platform from which disillusioned former NDF activists could develop a power-base independent of, and in opposition to, the CPP, increasing their autonomy and strength as individuals.

Developing their argument further, Farrington and Bebbington (Ibid.: 17) argue that ‘Decision-makers in NGOs . . . have room for manoeuvre . . . [their] choices are not entirely free but nor, so our analysis has gone, are they entirely determined’. Here, however, they underestimate the importance of institutional concerns and tensions in influencing NGO strategy and restrictions on individual autonomy of action within NGOs. The case-study of TFDP, for instance, illustrates competing ideological and institutional pressures on senior managers in the late 1980s and early 1990s. From above, foreign donors, the government, the Church and political parties in Congress urged moderation while below, pro-CPP human rights POs and cause-oriented groups pressured TFDP to maintain its militancy. As a result of these competing pressures, TFDP split into two opposing organisations in 1995. At a more general level, one important consequence of these competing institutional pressures as noted in chapter 6, is that Philippine NGO coalitions and broad social movements, riddled with personal, professional, ideological and regional tensions, tend to be reactive and short lived.

Another relevant issue concerns the role of NGOs in polities where patron-clientelism lubricates the political process. Lehmann (1990: 174) for instance
concedes that NGOs and social movements risk being sucked into clientelistic politics and correctly differentiates this risk from the separate threat of co-option, yet he also argues that they undermine patron-clientelism by avoiding it as a means of organisation. This book, however, illustrates the significant role of patron-clientelism in NGO organising activities. Fragmentation within the Philippine NGO community and tension within NGO coalitions is to a significant extent underpinned by personal cleavages and many NGOs entail a small, subordinate staff ranged around a single, dominant, individual. Equally, relationships between NGOs and state agencies are characterised by significant patron-client ties, with government ministers appointed from the NGO community often showing clear favouritism towards their respective organisations.

Yet another issue concerns the impact of institutionalisation on the efficacy of NGOs and the coalitions in which they participate. In contrast to the concern with ‘scaling-up’ in the NGO literature, Gunder-Frank and Fuentes (1990: 176) argue that ‘institutionalization weakens social movements . . . . [T]hey require flexible, adaptive and autonomous nonauthoritarian organisation to direct social power in pursuit of social goods which can be pursued only through random spontaneity’. PRRM experience supports this point. Early success, built on the dynamism and zeal of its volunteer Rural Reconstruction Workers dissipated in the late 1960s and 1970s as the organisation became increasingly bureaucratic. In the period since 1986 however, PRRM’s bureaucratic character, with its hierarchy of authority, specialisation of function, and operation on the basis of rules and set procedures, has proved a significant ingredient in its success. Similarly, TFDP’s dynamism and stature increased as it evolved from an essentially volunteer organisation in the mid 1970s to a professional NGO with centralised management structures. This book also suggests that NGOs characterised by a strong process of institutional development play a critical role in sustaining social movements in polities characterised by a weak process of institutionalisation within civil society. Again highlighting the importance of institutional pressures on NGOs, TFDP played a crucial role in sustaining the Philippine human rights movement up to late 1994, despite lacking full autonomy from the CPP, a party noted for its centralising and authoritarian instincts.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND DEMOCRATISATION

Considerable support exists within the NGO literature for the view that NGOs
strengthen democratisation, although little concrete evidence has been advanced. Edwards and Hulme (1994: 4), for instance, point out that:

donor support for NGOs is predicated at least as much on their supposed role in democratizing the political process as on their role in the provision of welfare services [yet] rarely in the literature is it made clear exactly how NGOs and GROs [Grassroots Organisations, or POs] (and especially the former) are supposed to contribute to ‘democratization’ and the formal political process.

Chapter 2 pointed to ways in which Thai and Cambodian NGOs have promoted democratic reforms in each country. In Cambodia, NGOs promoted popular debate and discussion of the 1993 constitution, helped to build a civil society with autonomy from the state as an important facet of democratic reform from 1991 and articulated issues and interests independently of the state. In Thailand, NGOs have worked closely with reform-oriented ministries and worked to undermine the National Peace-Keeping Council which came to power in 1991. Since then, they have played an important role in representing the interests of social groups marginalised from the policy-making process, for instance the rural poor of North-East Thailand, and have worked closely with POs to represent their interests. As of mid-1997, NGO representatives sit on the convention charged with drafting Thailand’s 16th constitution since 1932, a constitution that is expected to make new provisions for the popular participation sought by a large section of the NGO community.

Of all the countries in South-East Asia however, the Philippines provides the clearest evidence of a relationship between NGO proliferation and democratisation. This book suggests five ways in which NGOs and POs have aided the process of democratisation or democratic consolidation in the Philippines, echoing facets of Chilean politics noted by Hojman (see chapter 1). First, through participation in issue-based social movements, NGOs played a significant role in the two and a half years of unrest from August 1983 that led to the ‘People Power’ revolt of February 1986, a tangible expression of what was otherwise a largely ephemeral phenomenon. NGOs participated in, while NGO leaders helped to broker, issue-based or cause-oriented coalitions that united moderates and radicals, traditional political parties and cause-oriented groups and Manila-based and regional campaigns, and provided leaders and secretarial support to sustain them. As a result, their role in national life was enshrined in the 1987 constitution. Second, in a polity where cabinet
ministers with autonomy from entrenched socio-economic élites help to insulate the government from significant pressures, NGOs have represented an important source of political leaders for cabinet and other government positions since 1986, and personnel from the NGO/PO community have been recruited to the upper tiers of the bureaucracy. Third, government departments have devolved or subcontracted key tasks to NGOs and POs including programme design, implementation and appraisal, and by 1990, every government department had an NGO liaison desk. NGOs have thus helped the government to concentrate its limited resources and capability more effectively. Fourth, NGOs and POs now participate actively in election campaigns, especially at the municipal and provincial level, and the 1991 Local Government Code provides for NGO/PO representation in most local elected bodies. As a result, NGOs have helped to strengthen the legitimacy and efficacy of local elective bodies. Fifth, NGOs play an important role in contemporary social movements that push issue-based political agendas in a polity dominated by patronage-based political debate. In a polity where political parties have weak membership bases and only attempt to mobilise at election-time, NGOs therefore fill an important institutional vacuum and, through their links to membership-based POs, link large sections of the population to the formal processes of electoral democracy.

But what kind of democracy have NGOs helped to build in the Philippines? Chapter 1 suggested that ‘associative democracy’ might be a useful concept in analysing the new institutional arrangements prevalent in developing countries such as India, Chile and Brazil in which NGOs play an active role in national politics. The chapters that follow however suggest that the concept can be usefully applied to the Philippines also. Since 1986, Philippine governments have actively sought the support of NGOs and POs in a broad social coalition. In 1989, for instance, the Aquino government sought NGO support to consolidate its position vis-à-vis the armed forces and a Congress dominated by socio-economic, predominantly agrarian, élites. In response it established Kabisig, described by the government as a non-partisan people’s movement, to mobilise NGOs and POs to generate support for the government’s legislative agenda, especially the Local Government Code finally passed in 1991. Ultimately, the government failed to secure wide-ranging NGO support but since 1992, the Ramos administration has also sought to secure NGO participation in a ‘social coalition’ that underpins ‘Philippines 2000’, the government’s push for Newly Industrialising Country (NIC) status by 2000. A range of initiatives have been launched for this purpose, including the Social
Reform Agenda, and Philippine Agenda 21 (PA21), concerned with environmental policy. As chapters 4 and 6 noted, these and other mechanisms have provided NGOs and POs with broad scope to participate in national political life.

The emergence of third and fourth generation NGOs, to use Korten’s terms, also suggests the emergence of an institutional arrangement compatible with associative democracy. This book has not examined the international advocacy activities of leading Philippine NGOs such as TFDP or PRRM, or their involvement in international coalitions, important aspects of fourth generation strategy, but their involvement in increasingly complex coalitions and NGO-government structures and their role in promoting institutional and structural reform is central to such strategy. This suggests that the idea of a fourth generation strategy has crystallised, at least for those large long-established NGOs which enjoy a prominent position among those NGOs with political leverage.

One problem with the ‘associative democracy’ concept in a Philippine setting is that Philippine NGOs and POs have yet to achieve the important role in the economy played by the voluntary sectors in many developed states. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the total income of 171,434 registered charities accounted for 3.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 1990 while the sector employed 482,000 people, or 2.2 per cent of the total labour force (CAF 1992: 6, 9). In the Philippines, no government agency compiles statistics on the economic role of NGOs. An estimate, however, would put NGO/PO income as a share of GNP in 1992/1993 at less than 1.5 per cent and total employment at less than 200,000, or less than 1 per cent of the total labour force. As multilateral funding has fallen, these figures had probably declined by 1996, although the number of registered NGOs had increased. This suggests that ‘associative democracy’, to the extent that it exists, is not as ‘thick’ or as ‘socially embedded’ in the Philippines as in the UK. In contrast to the UK voluntary sector however, the Philippine NGO community plays a more strategic role. Third and fourth generation NGOs, the focus of this book, do not seek to advance the sectional interests of narrow constituencies but rather the broad interests of a large segment of the population traditionally marginalised from economic and political participation. Similarly, while interest groups and non-profit organisations in the UK contend with institutional arrangements that are deeply entrenched (cf. Richardson 1993: 3–4), those faced by NGOs in the Philippines and in other developing countries are not only varied but are extremely fluid. Indeed, many NGOs seek
not only to *transform* the institutional arrangements of particular developing countries, but as Sethi (1993b) notes, ‘see formal democracy, where it exists, as a necessary but insufficient condition in the long haul to social transformation’. Second, while interest group theory, or rather the dominant pluralist framework, assumes that interests in liberal democracies, especially in the United States, are relatively organised (Richardson 1993: 11), organising the disorganised represents the very *raison d’être* of many NGOs in countries such as the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia.

The great appeal of the concept of ‘associative democracy’ in the Philippine context however is that it recognises the common impact of particular forces in the politics of developed and developing countries alike. One such force is the weakening of class-based interest-articulation and political contestation and its replacement by fragmented struggles in a variety of policy arenas. Collective, mass organisations such as political parties and trade unions are being eclipsed by issue-based interest groups and NGOs. In turn, this stems from a process of class differentiation heralded by the relative decline of industry and the corresponding rise of the polydactyl tertiary or service sector. Another is the impact of globalisation and the twin consequences of the emergence of supra-national decision making structures and the rise of the transnational media. The impact has been on the one hand the emergence of what can almost be described as an international civil society centred on the agencies of the United Nations and on the other to homogenise political debate about alternatives to the free market and the socialist or communist command economy, framing national struggles or political contests in an international setting. Beyond these supra-national or international phenomenon however, it is necessary to look in more detail at NGO relationships with the state and with civil society in the Philippines to further explore the relevance of ‘associative democracy’ in a Philippine setting.

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE**

The proliferation of NGOs and POs and their increasing role in political life has led to wide-ranging speculation among Philippine politicians, activists and commentators from both left and right. In 1972, Edicio de la Torre founded the underground CNL, the largest constituent organisation in the NDF. Released from prison in 1986, de la Torre abandoned armed struggle and the democratic centralism of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) to
focus on building NGOs and POs. De la Torre helped establish the IPD, and later established the Education for Life Foundation (ELF). By 1994, he viewed NGOs and POs as critical new institutions in advancing the interests of millions traditionally estranged from political power and economic opportunity: ‘the government-NGO-PO trinity’, de la Torre wrote (1994: ii), ‘structures our dreams of empowerment’.

De la Torre’s optimism echoes a vibrant discourse about the possibilities and limitations of NGO action among activists based in NGOs, POs and ‘cause-oriented groups’. Mainstream political actors however have become increasingly aware of the discourse, its implications and the need to control it. In a speech in Guam in 1993 for instance, Senate President Edgardo Angara, a prominent leader, at that time, of the opposition which Ramos’s ‘strategic alliance’ is designed to circumvent, argued that ‘the transformation of NGOs into a potent political force underscores the purposeful and strong national effort to turn the Philippines into Asia’s next economic dragon . . . NGOs [have become] a formidable movement for people empowerment, helping the government strengthen grass-roots linkages so vital to faster and more equitable growth and development’. The apparent consensus between the moderate left and right, between politicians and social activists traditionally opposed to each other, indicates a slow drift to the centre in Philippine politics, a post-authoritarian process of normalisation. Equally however, it raises fundamental questions about the nature of NGO action and its impact on Philippine politics, the state and civil society. Does a vibrant NGO community strengthen civil society? Can it transform relations between the state and civil society? Can it help to empower the millions traditionally marginalised from political participation? Does it suggest a new institutional arrangement that can be loosely described as ‘associative democracy’?

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

In a seminal work of political science theory, Samuel Huntington argued in 1968 that ‘praetorianism’, political disorder that inevitably and necessarily led to military intervention and authoritarian rule, resulted in developing polities when political institutionalisation failed to aggregate ever-increasing rates of political participation stimulated by economic growth and social change (Huntington 1968). To resolve the conundrum, Huntington recommended restricting political participation to a level that did not overburden existing
institutions, allowing participation to expand only as institutionalisation gathered momentum. Widely dismissed for its authoritarian bent and thinly-disguised preoccupation with American national security concerns, Huntington nevertheless highlighted a critical problem in developing countries: political institutionalisation inevitably fails to keep pace with the exponential growth in political demands from previous marginalised social strata, triggered by rapid economic growth and/or social change. The Philippines epitomises the dilemma. The collapse of the Marcos regime in February 1986 led to an outpouring of political demands suppressed by almost 14 years of authoritarian rule. Political institutions had also been repressed however and could not recover at a rate sufficient to aggregate competing political demands. The result was growing polarisation and the renewal of fighting between the armed forces and the New People’s Army in February 1987.

But how do NGOs help to resolve the Huntington conundrum? Huntington himself foresaw no role for them, yet in arguing that political modernisation involves the rationalisation of authority, the differentiation of structures and the expansion of political participation (Ibid.: 93), he provides a clue, for NGOs have strengthened each of these processes in the Philippines. NGOs have contributed to a rationalisation of authority in a number of ways. First, they have promoted issue-based political debate in a polity dominated by patronage-based political debate and filled a crucial gap left by political parties. In the Philippines, the weak membership base and formal local networks of political parties (with the possible exception of the Communist Party of the Philippines) allows NGOs and POs to organise and mobilise in a relative institutional vacuum. Because of their professional staff (often prominent activists), well-developed administrative systems, regular funding, and research, documentation and publication programmes, NGOs provide leaders and secretarial support needed to launch issue-specific political campaigns. As a result, NGOs and NGO leaders play an important brokering role in broad social movement-based coalitions such as PAHRA, CPAR and the FDC that have helped to undermine patronage-based debate. Second, NGOs promote legal forms of political struggle. In the Philippines in particular, they absorbed both the rank-and-file and the senior cadre of the Communist Party, especially following the releases of 1986, and exerted a moderating influence on the CPP (e.g., TFDP) or undermined it through breakaways (e.g., the popular democrats in PRRM). As both case-studies illustrate, NGOs provide critics of the CPP with an institutional base from which to challenge its quest for hegemony over the left-wing opposition. Third, because NGOs use their direct programme
experience as a platform from which to project political campaigns, NGO advocacy tends to be less rhetorical, more focused, well-argued and better documented than the campaigns of cause-oriented groups, again exerting a moderating influence on broad social movements.

NGOs have also contributed to a differentiation of structures. NGOs complement and supplement the institutions which have traditionally fostered political debate in the Philippines, including trade unions, peasant associations, political parties and the Churches. As the cases of PRRM and TFDP illustrate, leading Philippine NGOs have overcome significant pressures in maintaining or expanding their autonomy from other actors including government, the underground left, the Catholic Church and business interests. Although the NGO community as a whole is highly fragmented, Philippine NGOs unite around particular ideological positions, (e.g., national democrat, popular democrat, socialist, social democratic etc.) providing ideologically-coherent choices to partner POs. NGOs have also developed targeted programmes, often in alliance with other institutions, leading to the specialisation of function inherent to a differentiation of structures.

The expansion of political participation represents the main political achievement of Philippines NGOs. Traditional mass-membership institutions such as political parties, trade unions and peasant associations lack the effective ability to mobilise and aggregate political demands. The party political system remains debilitated by weak membership bases, weak internal party discipline, and weak ideological cohesion. *Lakas ng Demokratikong Pilipino* (Fight for Philippine Democracy), ostensibly the largest political party in Congress, but in reality a disparate coalition of personalist cliques, had an estimated national membership of little more than 1,500 in 1994.10 Even the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the only mass-membership political party in the Philippines and legalised in 1993, had only 3,000 members in the late 1980s (CPP 1992a: 33). Thus, on its own the Philippine party system cannot facilitate political participation to the extent that it anchors effective functioning democratic institutions. Trade unions are equally problematic. In 1991 for instance, registered trade unions had a total membership of 3,114,000, equivalent to only 13 per cent of the total labour force (NEDA 1992: 217),11 and the particular character of Philippine industry, with little heavy manufacturing or geographically concentrated industrial activity (with the exception of Manila), undermines the power of trade unions in expanding participation. Statistics on the number and membership of peasant associations are difficult to secure since many do not register with government. As with trade unions
However, particular obstacles exist to using them to expand political participation. While relatively spontaneous and short-lived political campaigns often develop in response to specific agrarian crises, few peasant associations can financially support the mass leaders and administrative capacity needed to become durable and proactive political actors. In addition, while trade unions are limited to workers and peasant associations to particular types of farmers, NGOs make wide ranging appeals to a variety of identities and in response to disparate concerns. NGOs therefore represent a vital supplement to political parties, trade unions and peasant associations in expanding political participation.

Underlining this argument, Robin Broad reported in 1993 that NGOs and POs had an organised constituency of 5 million to 6 million, or almost 10 per cent of the population (Broad 1994: 135). Broad offers no details of her calculations but almost certainly they include the membership of trade unions, peasant associations, rural co-operatives, and Basic Christian Communities. Broad’s estimate exaggerates the organised constituency of NGOs and POs, especially in the aftermath of the internal post-1992 CPP split, but it points to two important characteristics of the NGO/PO community; first, that a disparate range of institutions such as trade unions, peasant associations and co-operatives are now viewed generically in the Philippines as ‘peoples’ organisations’ in keeping with a significant new popular discourse; and second, that NGOs play an important intermediary role in coalescing these institutions in issue-based contemporary social movements. NGOs have a significant ability to liaise between a disparate range of institutions including POs (trade unions, peasant associations, rural co-operatives and issue-specific ‘cause-oriented groups’), the Churches, business concerns, political parties, and government departments. This ‘intermediary’ or ‘meso’ position makes NGOs a distinctive and additional ‘layer’ of civil society, between local mass-memberships institutions such as peasant associations, rural co-operatives, credit unions, and Basic Christian Communities on the one hand and national institutions such as political parties, the national media and government on the other. In this sense, NGOs have contributed to a strengthening of civil society.

These factors are also reflected in other South-East Asian countries. As a general proposition, this book suggests that political parties, especially in Thailand, have failed to keep pace with the changing character of interest articulation as social structures become more heterogeneous as a result of economic change and as political interests become more diverse. The result
has been an institutional vacuum in which NGOs and POs have thrived. In Thailand and Indonesia, political parties across the political spectrum have been unable to formulate effective positions on new issues such as human rights, environmental conservation, [de]militarisation and minority rights, as political discourse has evolved. This institutional vacuum is exacerbated by the ideological crisis unleashed by the collapse of the former Soviet Union, drastically weakening left-wing movements and their ability to represent the traditionally class-based interests of groups relatively marginalised from the benefits of the region’s rapid growth. The proliferation of NGOs in Thailand, and the Philippines, accompanied and proceeded the marginalisation of the CPT and the CPP. In this sense, NGOs were indirect beneficiaries of state repression of left wing movements, but the eclipse of the CPT and CPP was due in no small part to internal doctrinal struggles. In turn, a number of factors enabled NGOs to fill or partly fill this vacuum, including access to foreign funding, effective co-ordination through loose coalitions, good links to communities through POs or community-based organisations, issue-based specialisation and corresponding ideological flexibility, government openness to NGO proliferation, and support from sections of the media and academia. More generally, the global ideological emphasis on state retrenchment, and to a lesser extent, democracy, has created a political space in which NGOs have flourished.

NGOs also fulfil a strategic role during ‘democratic moments’, the periods immediately preceding and proceeding the collapse of an authoritarian or military-dominated regime. As the case of the Philippines in 1986 and Thailand in 1992 suggests, ‘democratic moments’ are characterised by severe institutional flux, leading to significant but rapidly changing institutional vacuums as power structures collapse. NGOs and partner POs committed to ‘high’ politics respond to these conditions deftly and play a key role as meso or intermediary institutions in aggregating a wide variety of social forces. In so doing, they help to introduce an often imperceptible yet nevertheless significant degree of stability, strengthening the chances of a successful democratic transition.

A number of factors however suggest that NGOs simultaneously weaken civil society or replicate existing weaknesses. First, the proliferation of NGOs since the mid-1980s resulted in significant part from the weakening of other political forces, especially the armed and underground left. The case-study of PRRM for instance illustrates that NGOs often mobilise sectors already organised and politically active, by competing with other well established
NGOs and luring away POs, often from the clutches of the CPP. The CPP itself estimates that membership shrank by 300 per cent by the late 1980s (due to strategic blunders and the government counter-insurgency operations (CPP 1992a: 33)) and its mass base shrank to a similar extent amid intense organising by NGOs. According to Boudreau (1993: 20), other socialist parties were also affected by a general pattern of demobilisation during the Aquino years. A process of demobilisation has continued through the early years of the Ramos administration as the combined effects of government reforms and the CPP’s internal split has weakened grassroots movements. This book suggests that the proliferation of NGOs and POs changed the character of popular political participation after 1986. By concentrating on the upward linkages that NGOs form, especially with government actors, the book offers little evidence on the character of downward relationships (between NGOs and beneficiaries). Thus, while the TFDP case study illustrated the organisation of victims of human rights and their relatives as a participant political force (through POs such as FIND, KAPATID and SELDA) it did not make clear whether such activity increased participation or simply attracted support away from other organisations or institutions. Despite this lacunae however, this book suggests that NGO proliferation intensified competition among intermediary institutions for the support of POs and mass memberships. In the Philippine context, historically, such competition weakens civil society by fragmenting mass movements and making them vulnerable to co-option by the state. Another problem is that it is difficult to compare the incremental policy changes wrought by NGO action and the social polarisation and consequent structural change wrought by more militant political action, and hence that NGOs increased the efficacy of political participation. If NGOs do not improve the efficacy of political participation, they can hardly be said to have strengthened civil society.

A second major problem is the distinctive regulatory environment found in the Philippines. As chapter 4 noted, the weak regulatory framework enforced at the national level in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and a resultant environment which gave considerable scope to local officials to shape the political character of the NGO community, allowed a penetration of the NGO community by social forces opposed to structural change. As a result, the NGO community became an arena within which battles from society at large were internalised, and multiplied, or as chapter 1 notes, Gramscian ‘trenches’ or ‘permanent fortifications’ in a ‘war of position’ waged between dominant and subordinate classes. This complicates the attempts of leading NGOs to
crystallise fourth generation strategies around complex coalitions since a large section of the NGO community is used to defend the patronage-based character of the political system, and the particular interests of entrenched socio-economic élites. In the sense that Philippine politics has for hundreds of years been characterised by a weak state in perennial conflict with strong, disparate, social forces, NGOs simply replicate existing tensions within civil society and between society and the state.

A third problem is that NGOs, like other political institutions, are an integral part of society, and reflect its dominant values and ethos. While NGOs have a certain capacity to alter political culture, e.g., animating issue-based political debate in a polity dominated by patronage-based debate, the logical consequence is that they remain open to influence from other institutions. As chapters 5 to 8 illustrated, Philippine NGOs are characterised by regional, ideological, professional and personality cleavages, undermining their ability to strengthen civil society. Yet in a polarised political culture like the Philippines’, institutions that aggregate competing political demands take on a strategic character and NGOs have made significant progress in reducing tension within the NGO community and between NGOs and the state through coalition initiatives, illustrating political acumen that distinguishes them from political parties, trade unions and peasant associations.

These problems are echoed in other South-East Asian countries. The ability of NGOs to become embroiled in political struggles depends in large part on the regulatory environment governing NGO activity enforced by the state. In South-East Asia, a wide variety of frameworks governing NGO activities are in place (see Appendix) and in each country, with the partial exception of Burma/Myanmar, the state can manage, regulate and control the NGO community since NGOs are by definition legal entities that are subject to the rule of the state. Thus, as chapter 1 suggested to the extent that civil society expands as the state makes social forces increasingly subject to rules that are primarily of its design, NGO proliferation strengthens the state and the social forces that primarily benefit from its rule. Equally to the extent that NGO proliferation correlates with the decline of militant social movements, for example, in Thailand and the Philippines, NGOs contribute to the demobilisation of anti-state pressure, again strengthening the state.

Fundamentally, South-East Asia’s NGO communities or voluntary sectors are characterised by significant ideological, regional, personality, programmatic or funding-based cleavages. As the definitions of NGOs and POs in the introduction imply, the voluntary sector in most South-East Asian countries
is organisationally diverse. The sheer number of voluntary organisations in Thailand and the Philippines, and to a lesser extent in Indonesia and Malaysia, fragments interest articulation into a disparate range of issue-based demands that can be easily co-opted by the state on a selective basis.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND THE STATE

The work of Anek Laothamatas (1992) and Andrew MacIntyre (1990) on business associations in Thailand and Indonesia respectively marked a new and influential vein in the study of South-East Asian politics from the early 1990s. Despite the prevalence of authoritarian patterns of rule in the region in recent decades, fissures in state cohesion, triggered by complex processes of economic and social change, are being increasingly exploited, providing a new degree of autonomy to important political actors and social forces. In turn, this new autonomy is changing the nature both of state-society relations and of ‘development’ in South-East Asia. In its analysis of the NGO community and its impact on, and beyond, the Philippine state, this book aims to reinforce this new vein in the study of South-East Asian politics.

The Philippine state is simultaneously both strong and weak. It has sufficient strength to extract ‘rents’ through the selective application of government regulations, to support the economic interests of its key supporters, and to permeate civil society (through government influenced trade unions, NGOs etc.). Similarly, it controls a military and para-military apparatus that successfully represses threats to the status quo. On the other hand however, the state is unable to isolate its administrative machinery from the pervasive influence of powerful social forces and is unable, at least consistently and on a systematic basis, to implement reform-oriented programmes or attract broadly-based institutional support.15

Many NGO leaders in the Philippines and elsewhere in South-East Asia are ambiguous about the issue of state ‘strength’ or ‘capacity’, often viewing it in undifferentiated terms, and are often reluctant to acknowledge that their activities contribute to a strengthening of the state. A good example is a PRRM annual report which claims that ‘PRRMs activities are always intended to reinforce the role of civil society in shaping a more secure and liveable future’ (PRRM 1995: 4). Yet, a central conclusion of this book is that NGO activities in the Philippines, and by implication in other countries of South-East Asia such as Thailand and Cambodia, serve to strengthen the state.
Through participation, they help to build pockets of efficiency within government agencies, provide strategic partners for reform-oriented ministries, fill voids in the government’s social service delivery role, and help the executive to circumvent Congress to forge direct ties with the population. Similarly, through protest, NGOs strengthen the state: by aggregating and moderating political demands and by providing channels distinct from Congress through which disputes can be negotiated and dissipated. ‘[F]reedom of association in political matters’, Alexis de Tocqueville argued in 1840, ‘is not so dangerous to public tranquillity as is supposed; and . . . possibly after having agitated society for some time, it may strengthen the State in the end’ (de Tocqueville 1900: 126). This book suggests that NGOs did indeed agitate Philippine society for some time but that they are now strengthening the state in ways noted above.

State–NGO links however are by no means critical or central to government attempts to increase its capacity and autonomy. President Ramos has publicly committed his government to attracting wide-ranging NGO/PO participation in a ‘strategic alliance’ that engenders social cohesion and underpins economic growth. In the Philippines, the Ramos government is committed to developing relationships with business, organised labour, and NGOs/POs, in that order of priority, and state–NGO relationships can therefore be seen almost as neo-corporatist. The strategy has clear historical roots. In the 1950s, as argued in chapters 3 and 7, President Ramon Magsaysay used NGOs such as PRRM to undermine the Huk insurgency and to expand his autonomy from Congress. Simultaneously, Magsaysay continued to enforce the demobilisation of militant labour achieved in the early 1950s through the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus,16 and the 1953 Industrial Peace Act. The Act instituted collective-bargaining with the newly-established and government controlled Philippines Trade Union Congress and allowed the Magsaysay government to promote US-style economic trade unionism and to suppress its political equivalent. Ramos government strategy is remarkably similar. During the Aquino years, the militant trade union movement Kilusang Mayo Uno (May First Movement) was weakened by the murder of its leaders and the repression of its grassroots constituent members. During the early years of the Ramos administration, the internal CPP ‘Reaffirm’ vs. ‘Reject’ debate led to a split and KMU fragmented, its threat to the government radically diminished.17 At the same time, the government has maintained loose collective bargaining mechanisms through the Labour Advisory and Consultative Council (LACC) with the support of the moderate Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
(TUCP), which have proved successful in controlling militant labour activity. Similarly, Ramos has made significant overtures to the Chinese-Filipino business community (previously estranged by Aquino government links to the Filipino businessmen of European origin but now consolidating its position as the dynamo of the private sector), to attract its support in circumventing Congress, and hence increase productive investment.

The government’s commitment to collaboration with NGOs is, in part, tactical. Much of the collaboration in the post-1986 period is attributable to the Philippines’ traditional Presidential system of government revived in the 1987 constitution which institutionalises an adversarial relationship between the President and Congress and forces the President to seek cabinet members outside the House and Senate. Both Presidents Aquino and Ramos turned to NGO leaders for cabinet appointees who in turn recruited NGO workers into the bureaucracy and involved NGOs in departmental planning and programme implementation. Throughout the 1993–1996 period, however, the Ramos government unsuccessfully explored the possibility of abolishing the Presidential system and replacing it with a parliamentary system of government. If successful, the plan would have denied NGOs access to cabinet positions, undermined collaboration with government departments and forced government and opposition political parties alike to challenge NGOs in organising and mobilising specific local interests.

The significant influence that NGOs have acquired over government policy in areas such as agricultural, fisheries and forestry development, land reform, health, environmental protection, and human rights, highlights the general lack of autonomy the Philippine state enjoys from societal interests and its inability to enforce existing laws and regulations. A strengthening of government autonomy from élite societal interests, and its ability to implement the reform-oriented social change needed to consolidate progress in these specific areas, will inevitably necessitate a firmer stance towards the ‘popular sector’. This will inevitably curb the political power of NGOs through the enforcement of existing regulations and the introduction of new ones. Many Philippine NGOs and NGO leaders however are reluctant to acknowledge this point or to confront the implications, worried that they will be branded as ‘reformist’. Yet the reality of ‘associative democracy’ is a strong and vibrant civil society that fully represents economic, social political and cultural interests in all their diversity, but counterpoised against a strong state that ultimately controls and regulates civil society on the basis of the rule of law. Many Philippine NGOs and NGO leaders view the state as a series of policy arenas in which they can intervene and in which they can forge alliances with pro-
reform agencies and officials but in addition to this character the Philippine state remains a distinct and often coherent actor with its own institutional prerogatives, such as law and order, a liberal market economy and stable relations with other nations.

Nevertheless, despite the strength of the Philippine state and the economic recovery and democratic consolidation that has occurred in the last ten years, institutional paralysis (notably the gridlock between the Senate and executive and the sluggish performance of government ministries) continues to undermine the post-authoritarian process of democratic consolidation. Within this context, the proliferation of NGOs since 1986 and their increasing participation in politics ensures their continuing political importance. A number of factors suggest the number of registered NGOs in 1995 will continue to increase, albeit at a far slower rate than the heyday of the ‘associational revolution’ in the Philippines in the decade from 1986 to 1995. In many parts of the country, NGO numbers are still insufficient to fill available places on local government bodies or to meet the demand for NGO partners for ‘pork barrel’ programmes such as the Countryside Development Fund or Congressional Allocation Initiative. Competing political forces will inevitably respond by establishing new organisations. As implementation of the 1991 LGC continues, government resources dispersed at the local level have increased dramatically, while Congressional pork barrel funding to NGOs through programmes designed to counteract the patronage power of central government have also increased (see chapter 4). These developments suggest that NGOs will become increasingly important as weapons in conflicts between the government and entrenched socio-economic élites, forcing progressive NGOs, including those ostensibly concerned with socio-economic development, to maintain their involvement in political processes. At the same time, the current fragmentation of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its mass base, echoing the fragmentation of Huk organisations in the 1950s and 1960s, may well lead to further demobilisation and falling political participation. NGOs and the POs with which they work closely will therefore face the challenge of sustaining existing levels of organisation and mobilisation among affected communities. Almost certainly, the continuing weak process of institutionalisation in the Philippines will prevent NGOs from focusing on the socio-economic roles envisaged by the ‘third sector’ advocates. Political scientists will therefore continue to find important clues to the evolving character of Philippine politics in the praxis of Philippine NGOs and further justification for attempts to explore the general political science of NGO organisation and activity.
### APPENDIX  LEGISLATION AND POLICY GUIDELINES GOVERNING NGO ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Legislation or Policy Guidelines Governing NGO Activities</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burma/Myanmar</td>
<td>No primary legislation governing NGO activities.</td>
<td>No official registration procedure yet. An NGO secures tacit recognition by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with one or more ministries. NGOs recognised in this manner can avail of tax privileges. Few indigenous NGOs, however, have been allowed to sign MOUs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Civil and Commercial Code 1925, as amended; National Cultural Act 1942.</td>
<td>NGOs register as Associations or as Foundations under the Civil and Commercial Code. Code was revised in 1992 to simplify NGO registration and tax regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 26/NQ-TW, 30 March 1991 on ‘Science and Technology in the Renovation’ and Instruction No. 35 of the Council of Ministers, 28 January 1991, Articles 1–4.</td>
<td>Res. 26/NQ-TW states that ‘Researchers and businessmen have equal rights to develop the capacities of the individual or the office . . . with the only condition that activities should be based on the party line.’ This effectively legalises NGOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Draft law exists but by mid-1997 had not been approved by the National Assembly</td>
<td>Disputes between ministries keen to secure the responsibility and the failure of the National Assembly to meet for most of 1996 and 1997 have delayed the introduction to date of legislation governing NGO registration and regulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Secretariat for Rural Development (SRD) Programme Framework (1993).</td>
<td>NGOs must ‘provide all relevant information to the [SRD] regarding their programme plans, new projects proposed, as well as professional staff coming to Cambodia.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Legislation or Policy Guidelines Governing NGO Activities</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Societies Act of 1966 and Amendments to the Societies Act of 1981.</td>
<td>NGOs that seek to influence public opinion are classified as 'political societies'. Registrar of Societies empowered to vet foreign connections including funding, to remove office holders from non-political societies, and to decide if an NGO has breached clauses of the national constitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Charities Act, 1982.</td>
<td>NGOs confined to charitable activities. NGOs must spend 80% of their income on charitable activities in Singapore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1985 Laws on Social Organisations (<em>Undang Organisasi Kemasyarakatan</em>) (popularly known as ORMAS).</td>
<td>State permit needed to establish an NGO. Restricts foreign funding of indigenous NGOs. Came into effect in June 1987, but has not been applied systematically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>1980 Corporation Code of the Philippines.</td>
<td>NGOs must register with the Securities and Exchange Commission as Non-Stock Entities if they wish to avail of tax privileges and to employ staff. Otherwise, few legal constraints exist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board Resolution No. 2 (Series of 1989).</td>
<td>Outlines guidelines for cooperation between NGOs and government agencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Table excludes Laos and Negara Brunei Darussalam.
Notes

1 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

3. Bebbington and Thiele (eds.) (1993); Farrington and Bebbington (eds.) (1993); Farrington and Lewis (eds.) (1993); and Wellard and Copestake (eds.) (1993).
4. For example, Black (1992); Lovell (1992) and Rose (1993).
5. Figures only apply to the 18 members of the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC): Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States of America.
6. Salamon and Anheier suggest that the last two of the seven criteria are particular to their own research and that the remaining five capture the key features of NGOs more generally.
7. Article 71 reads ‘The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organisations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organisations and, where appropriate, with national organisations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned.’
8. The remaining 45% were distributed among 12 other groups.
10. da Silva finished second to right-wing candidate Fernando Collor de Mello who won 35 million votes.
11. Normally attributed to Nielsen (1979), the term ‘third sector’ however tends to
underplay the important intermediate positions between the state and private sector occupied by organised religions, trade unions, and professional/representative associations.


13. In a similar vein, Macdonald (1997) outlines 3 different positions, or ideological views of the impact of NGOs on civil society: Neo-Conservative, Liberal-Pluralist and Post-Marxist.

14. Gramsci, for instance, notes the activities of Rotary Clubs and the Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA). Although he notes the arrival of the YMCA in Italy, he adds little beyond mention of its American roots (Hoare and Nowell-Smith 1971: 286).

15. Concurring, Bratton (1989: 92–3) argues that African NGOs are constrained by internal social conflicts caused by non-kinship-based groups, desperate shortages of trained NGO workers, and a highly politicised institutional environment.

16. Migdal (1988: 251) notes that ‘[t]he Triangle of Accommodation forged by rich peasants, the state’s regional politicians and implementors and the Congress party personnel . . . resulted not only in hefty voter turnouts for Nehru’s Congress but also in rules of the game at the local level that mocked the intent of the state’s co-operative agricultural policy and reinforced the strongmen inimical to Nehru’s purposes’.

17. NGOs based in academe played a central role in this respect (See Hojman 1993a: 44–8).

18. Lehmann (1990: 179) however cites another study which estimates that 200,000 people in Santiago benefit from the work of organizaciones de sobrevivencia (survival organisations).

19. Under the Give as You Earn Scheme (GAYE), tax payers authorise their employers to deduct a sum from their regular pay packet and to pay it to a NPO via the Charities Aid Foundation. This sum is deducted before tax is calculated. Such tax free donations mean, for instance, that for a high-earning individual paying tax at 40%, the state gives £1 for every £1.5 donated.

2 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

1. Interview with Carole Garrison, 21 October 1996. CCC (1996a) lists 231 local or national NGOs while CCC (1996b) lists 101 international NGOs working in Cambodia.

2. 1988 figure from Cheung (1992: 458) refers to registered charities. 1994 figure from Chueen (1995: 221) refers to registered societies. Allowing for differences between the two terms, it still seems evident that a proliferation of societies of various types is occurring.

3. Fifty-six international NGOs listed in CCC (1996b) spent a total of US$54.2 million in the previous year. Many prominent INGOs however are excluded. In CCC (1996a), 71 indigenous NGOs that provide relevant figures received a total
of US$4.79 million from foreign donors in the previous year. This suggests that Cambodia’s 400 indigenous NGOs receive over US$10 million per annum.

4. In NGORC (1995), 86 international NGOs that provide relevant figures spent a total of US$66 million in the previous year. Total Vietnamese government expenditure in 1994 was 46,155 billion dong (US$4.2 billion), of which 29.5% (US$1.24 billion) was spent on social services (ADB 1996: Appendix, Table 4).

5. It can be argued however that gotong royong, especially in Malaysia, has been sustained artificially by government structures organised around traditional practices.

6. Sulak Sivaraksa, one of Thailand’s most prominent intellectuals, has played a central role in establishing a number of prominent NGOs since the 1970s, including the Komol Keemthing Foundation, the Thai-Interreligious Commission on Development (TICD), and the Asian Cultural Forum on Development. (Wipawee Otaganonta, ‘At War with the Status Quo’, Bangkok Post, 26 October 1995; SPDI 1993.)

7. Of 352 NGOs which list their date of foundation in SRI (1990), 4% were founded before 1950, 4.8% during the 1950s and 10% during the 1960s.

8. Of the 352 NGOs for which date of foundation is listed in SRI (1990), 15% were established during this period.

9. These included the Buddhism Association of Cambodia and the Khmer Writer’s Association. Although no NGO leaders interviewed for this book knew of civic organisations established before the 1970s, one NGO leader suggested that the Khmer Women’s Association may have been established in the early 1960s (Interview with Kien Serey Phal, 21 October 1996).

10. INGOs operations, however, attracted criticism. Thion argues that INGOs were accomplices of the UN in disgracefully run border camps, profiting in terms of prestige, growth and money from the misery of the camps (Thion 1993: xxi). Martin (1994: 277, 310), meanwhile, claims that INGOs acceded to the dictat of local officials and supported the Hun Sen regime.

11. A 13% swing against the PAP reduced its share of the vote to 63%.

12. The establishment of AWARE led to the revival of the PAP women’s wing.


15. There were 101 international NGOs working in Cambodia in 1996 (CCC 1996b), compared to 50 in 1991 (Martin 1994: 276).

16. The opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) won over 80% of the 485 seats in the Pyithu Hluttaw (National Assembly), but the Tatamadaw refused to hand over power, and instead established the SLORC.

17. The five mass organisations are: the Federation of Trade Unions; the Ho Chi Minh Youth Union; the National Peasants Union (formerly the Collective Peasants’ Union); the Women’s Association; and the Fatherland Front. Duicker (1995: 117), for instance, notes that after 1987, ‘the role of non-governmental mass organisations under the umbrella of the Fatherland Front was strengthened to permit them to play a more active role in the political process.’
18. Rural mobilisation has been facilitated through a range of non-party but
government-controlled organisations, such as Latihan dan Lawatan (Training
and Visiting Organisations), Projek Ladang Berkelompok (Group Farming
Projects) and Lembaga Pertubohan Peladang (the Farmer Organisation Authority)
(a cooperative movement) (Rogers 1989). In addition, Rotating Savings and
Credit Associations (ROSCAs), a primary form of PO in Thailand, Indonesia
and the Philippines are formally banned (though, in practice, exist in large numbers)
(Shanmugan 1989: 360). A minimal institutional vacuum however allows a small
number of NGOs to operate in rural areas, for instance, Projek Amanah Ikhtiar,
(a rural credit-based NGO operating in Peninsular Malaysia), or Sahabat Alam
Malaysia, an environmental NGO working with minority groups in Eastern
Malaysia opposed to federal land use and forestry management policies (Bhatt

19. On the lack of rural development NGOs in Malaysia, and the predominantly
middle-class character of the NGO community, see (Harding 1990). In contrast
to other countries where rural development NGOs represent a large section of
the NGO community as a whole, Harding argues that Malaysian NGOs cover
seven main sectors as follows: consumer rights; environment; religious rights;
social reform; women; culture and education; and human rights.

National Security’, for instance, contains, in Appendix F, a photograph of two
timed Malaysian NGO activists labelled ‘photographs showing involvement of
Marxist individuals from Malaysia in demonstration [sic] in the Philippines’.

21. Traditionally Indonesia’s major export earner, oil revenues accounted for 80% of
export earnings in 1981.

22. One illustration of this ambivalence is the Indonesian government’s continued
reluctance to introduce tax concessions for private institutions including NGOs

23. Hence the common acronym ORMAS applied to the laws.
24. Government agencies use the term Organisasi Tanpa Bentuk (OTB, Organisations
without form) to categorise non-registered NGOs of which they do not approve.

25. GOLKAR dominated the May 1997 parliamentary elections with 74% of the
vote, its largest ever.

26. Although the New Order regime has had to contend with insurgency in Northern
Sumatra and Irian Jaya, an independence movement in East Timor and frequent
clashes with student groups.

27. Funding from international NGOs alone between 1977 and 1983 was worth

28. In 1994, the government launched plans to cut civil service personnel from
170,000 to 90,000.

29. By mid-1997, the law had still not been passed.
30. Interview with Dr Pung Chhiv Kek Galabru, 23 October 1996.
31. Interview with Taweekiat Prasertcharoensuk, 18 October 1996.
32. NGOs and POs, led by the CPD (see below) secured the support of five political
parties for proposals for a revised constitution. Of the demonstrations, the
largest was held in Bangkok on 19 November 1991, attended by an estimated 70,000 people.

33. According to Neher (1994: 33), ‘Although vote-buying occurred throughout the kingdom, poll watchers found few cases of outright fraud such as ballot box stuffing’.

34. Following the parliamentary elections of September 1992, a civilian administration led by Democrat Party leader Chuan Leekpai ruled Thailand until the parliamentary elections of June 1995. Another coalition government headed by businessman and Chart Thai (Thai Nation) leader Banharn Silpa-archa took office following the elections, the first stable democratic transition in Thailand. In November 1996, former army commander and Defence Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh became Prime Minister after parliamentary elections called by Banharn after he lost his parliamentary majority.

35. Or, as in the case in Cambodia, to side with particular factions in the ruling coalition.

36. In Indonesia, NGOs have refrained from forming large national level coalitions since these structures would make the NGO community vulnerable to state control and cooption (Eldridge 1995: 193).

37. Fundamental in this respect is the invariable conflict found within government concerning NGO regulation, between ministries concerned with development and those concerned with national security. In Cambodia, for instance, no primary legislation governing NGO activity currently exists and three ministries, Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Finance & Economics, have prepared competing draft laws. While the deadlock was far from resolved by late 1996, observers feel the Ministry of Interior is likely to prevail. (Carole Garrison, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia, Phnom Penh. Email communication with author).

38. According to Hirsch (1990: 163), ‘Indeed, much of the statist rhetoric on development and klum is borrowed from NGO discourse [although] the NGO concept of klum as a power instrument in the hands of villagers differs fundamentally from state . . . notions of klum as an instrument of administration and dissemination of official policy’.

3 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICS IN THE PHILIPPINES: FROM SPANISH RULE TO THE FALL OF MARCOS

1. ‘Blessed the vice that produced such excellent results!’, Rizal adds wryly in response.

2. See for instance Clymer 1986: 160, citing a YMCA official on the negative socio-economic consequences of colonial role. The YMCA however refrained from openly challenging the colonial administration.

3. The amount may be unrepresentative however, since allocations to charities were not made on a regular annual basis.

4. See for instance, Malcolm 1936: 302. Malcolm was the Senior Justice of the Supreme Court.
5. Total insular expenditure in 1921 for example was $6.8 million, while revenue from taxation was $22.7 million, and total revenue, $55 million (Forbes Vol. II:244).
7. Writing in 1934, for instance, a Filipino political scientist noted in a college textbook, ‘The Filipinos, like many other peoples of the modern world believe that progress and advancement can not be attained by the work of government alone. These must be supplanted by the direct assistance of the people, either individually or through civic organisations’ (Alip 1934: 409).
8. Filipinos were initially banned from membership of some established American civic organisations, including the YMCA, where they only became members after 1910.
9. According to the World Bank however, FACOMAs failed because ‘Management was weak and sometimes dishonest, government supervision was inadequate, delinquencies on loans rose . . . and four-fifths of co-operatives lost money’ (World Bank 1976: 121).
10. In 1954, an adviser warned Magsaysay that ‘people in the barrios are now confused with so many organizations ostensibly for their good. They are asked to organize themselves into “barrio councils” by the Bureau of Agricultural Extension, and before their second meeting they are asked again to organize a “rural council” according to the administrative code. [Then] they are herded by school teachers into a purok (neighbourhood self-help association) . . . [and] their wives . . . [are herded] into “Rural Improvement Clubs” by the Bureau of Agricultural Extension. The children do not escape; they are herded into 4-H clubs. After this, the PRRM [Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement], the PRUCIS [Philippine Rural Improvement Society], the NAMFREL [National Movement for Freedom of Elections] and other organizations join the melee with their own barrio teams. Net result – confusion, duplication, waste and jealousies’ (Abueva 1971: 359).
11. Civic organisations were to be actively involved in the PACD strategy. A 1957 report noted that the PACD would play ‘A subordinate role in which it provides certain essential services to peoples organisations (communities) necessary for the achievement of goals and objectives which they have set themselves’ (Binamira 1957: 1). The PACD worked with the Jaycees, Rotary, the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation and a number of other voluntary organisations in its community development work (NEC-OFAC 1966: 91) but co-operation was confined to groups that supported the Magsaysay government. PACD tight control estranged many civic organisations. Thus, while a 1959 PACD report notes that private organisations such as PRRM and the PRUCIS were being ‘rallied and their efforts coordinated’, (PACD 1989: 38) collaboration with the PACD was a relatively minor aspect of their work and a 1960s report acknowledged ‘ten years of silent misunderstanding’ between PRRM and the PACD (NEC-OFAC: 91).
12. Doronila 1972: 143 notes that ‘during the 1960s and 1970s, 70–75% of tax revenues were derived from indirect taxation. In addition, the tax base during the
1960s was eroded by a series of legislation granting tax concessions intended to promote industrial growth.’
13. The Americans felt that the incumbent and Liberal Party candidate Quirino lacked the resolve to fight the Huks and that corruption within his administration provided an important rallying point for the Huks.
14. Magsaysay attracted support from business-inspired civic organisations such as the Jaycees, Lions and Elks (Cullather 1994: 111, 151) but more popular-based institutional support proved elusive.
15. Funding to civic organisations dispersed through the CIA reputedly ended in the late 1960s.
16. The program notes ‘an extensive community development program . . . is expected to reach about two thousand barrios a year over a period of four years. Community development activities will range from the utilization of out-of-school youth to the construction of self-help projects such as school buildings and communal irrigation systems. These activities will be undertaken in co-ordination with government and private volunteer organisations engaged in related services’ (GoP 1966: 30). Chapter 6 deals with the Civic Action Program of the AFP, and among other things calls for Philippine Army and Philippine Constabulary participation with the PACD and the National Land Reform Agency in promoting community self-help projects (Ibid: 71).
17. See chapter 4 for further details of NSEs.
18. A telex from the World Council of Churches in Geneva to affiliated European funding agencies, dated 8 November 1972, notes that the declaration of martial law had significantly restricted the operation of church development programmes in the Philippines, necessitating a reassessment of programme activities (Christian Aid archives, SOAS, University of London).
19. The annual average of ODA receipts between 1967 and 1971, for instance, was equivalent to only 1% of GNP (OECD 1973: 245).
20. Marcos reportedly owned over 30,000 hectares in Cagayan, Isabela and Negros (Kerkvliet 1979: 121).
21. Would-be farmer-beneficiaries were supposed to pay a membership fee of P25 and annual dues of P100 (Kerkvliet 1990: 187).
22. Although only 138,300 farmers had or were about to become landowners by 1986, the beneficiaries were highly concentrated, especially in Nueva Ecija (Kerkvliet 1990: 31–2). As a result, Marcos enjoyed the support of the peasantry of Nueva Ecija, even in the 1986 Presidential elections (Kerkvliet 1991: 226–31).
23. These included the National Congress of Farmers Organisations (NCFO) and other ‘company unions’ which ‘lent legitimacy to the regime . . . [helped] divide organised peasants, and participated in the military’s persecution of militant peasant leaders’ (cf. Lara and Morales 1990: 147–8), as well as the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association (ARBA), organised and controlled by the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (cf. UPLB 1986: 570).
24. According to World Bank figures, Philippine GDP grew by 5.9% per annum between 1965 and 1980 but a mere 0.7% per annum between 1980 and 1989 (World Bank 1991: 206). Yet, as Boyce notes, this growth was accompanied by significant impoverishment. Between 1961 and 1985, he estimates, real incomes
of the poorest 30% fell by 23%, while the number of families living below the poverty line rose from 41% in 1965 to 59% in 1985 (Boyce 1993: 43, 47).

25. ODA absorption rates between 1973 and 1983, for instance, varied widely between government departments and agencies, from a low of 19.5% to a high of 92% (Reyes 1985: 215). Overall, reasons for low absorption rates in the period to 1985 included a) the inadequacy of medium-term financial plans; b) the lack of co-ordination among ministries dealing with ODA donors; and c) an inability to raise necessary counter-part funding.

26. The NIA programme achieved mixed results. In some cases, organisations were successfully established. In others, irrigation associations fell under the control of local politicians, alienating small farmers.

27. For details of PROCESS, see ADB 1989a Vol. 1: 335–8.

28. In chapter 12, Social Services and Community Development (SSCD), the Plan calls for ‘Closer interagency coordination among SSCD (public and private) bodies to expand clientele outreach and maximise the efficient use of resources’ (GoP 1977: 234).

29. Within six months of the launch of KKK, Imelda ordered the release of P10,000 paid to barangay captains in Metro Manila, P100,000 to each mayor in the country and P500,000 to each governor (cf. Wurfel 1988: 257).


1. According to the SEC, ‘SEC registration of non-stock corporations . . . does not automatically confer [on] these registered companies the status of Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). They partake an NGO personality only upon accreditation with the appropriate Government Agency/Institution. The Commission has no record of duly accredited NGOs’. (Letter from the SEC Chairman to the Chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, 28 September 1993).

2. Letter from the Director of the Investments and Research Department, Securities and Exchange Commission, to an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, 10 February 1993. This rough estimate includes POs, civic organisations, clubs, and foundations (hence defining the NGO community very broadly) but excludes religious, medical and educational establishments and business associations. SEC documentation seems to bear out this estimate. The SEC Monthly Paid Up Equity Investment Reports for January and December 1994 distinguish between civic and charitable organisations, educational institutions, and business associations. In January 1994, 599 new NSEs registered; 353 (59%) civic or charitable organisations, 47 (7%) business associations, 25 (4%) educational institutes and 174 (30%) others. In December 1994, 597 new NSEs registered, 469 (79%) civic and charitable organisations, 37 (6%) educational institutes and 91 (15%) business associations and other.

3. NGOs generally do not pay corporation or property taxes. Donations can also
be made to NGOs on a tax-free basis which means that NGOs can be used as a device to own property without paying tax (SALAG n.d.: 27–41).

4. Interview with Teresita Saplala, 14 October 1993.

5. Mindanao Interfaith Peoples Conference (MIPC), Davao, 1992. The MIPC survey estimated that of more than 50,000 NGOs registered with the SEC in May 1992, only 3,000, or about 6–10% are ‘genuine development NGOs’. (‘NGOing: The Latest Scam’, INFO-Davao e-mail bulletin, 23 March 1993)

6. Interview with Thelma Cruz, 19 October 1993.

7. ISDS (1993) notes that in many provinces only a small minority of NGOs sought accreditation. The 16,834 NGOs nationwide counted by the DILG (see above) is therefore a significant underestimate of the total number of NGOs in the Philippines, and makes the SEC figures more credible.

8. Which translates roughly as The Health Movement for Fellow Filipinos. De Tavera also served previously as Chairperson of GABRIELA (the General Assembly Binding Women for Reform, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action), the leading women’s cause-oriented group or PO in the Philippines.

9. These included NGO leaders Ponciano Bennagen, Ed Garcia, Jose Luis Gascon, Minda Luz Quesada, Rene Sariemento, and Sr. Christine Tan, as well as PO leaders Jaime Tadeo and Jose Suarez.

10. The appointment of Dr. Mita Pardo de Tavera, for instance, followed lobbying on her behalf by Concerned Women of the Philippines (CWP). (Paredes 1993: 349).

11. Paredes (1993: 350) notes that Pardo de Tavera’s niece was married to Aquino’s brother, a distant relationship in other countries, but in the Philippines, the type of familial relationship around which political partnerships have traditionally cemented. Aquino was also a close friend of Jose Diokno, a relationship that dated to 1972 when her husband Benigno Jr. and Diokno where detained in adjoining cells (Interview with Maria Socorro Diokno, 29 March 1993).

12. Jaime Tadeo interpreted his appointment as a traditional act of patronage from Aquino, a debt which she expected to be repaid in the form of support for her government. He attributes his imprisonment in 1990 in part to Aquino’s anger at the affront to her patronage when he led the demonstration preceding the ‘Mendiola Massacre’ (see further below) (Interview with Jaime Tadeo, 11 March 1994).

13. Article II Section 23 reads ‘The state shall encourage non-governmental, community-based or sectoral organisations that promote the welfare of the nation.’

14. Article X Section 14 reads ‘The President shall provide for regional development councils or other similar bodies composed of local government officials, regional heads of departments and other government offices, and representatives from non-governmental organizations within the regions for the purposes of administrative decentralization to strengthen the autonomy of the units therein and to accelerate the economic and social growth and development of the units in the region.’

15. The new constitution was overwhelming ratified by the electorate. 87% of registered voters turned out to vote, and 76.4% voted in favour.

16. ‘Prospects for Government-NGO Collaboration,’ Brief from the Cabinet
Secretary, Jose P. De Jesus, to the 22nd Cabinet Meeting, 25 October 1989, Malacanang. The original context to the discussion was a concern to identify government-approved NGOs to which DM25 million of existing German ODA channelled to Philippine NGOs could be directed.

17. Abad, a prominent leader of the NGO/PO coalition Kilusang Laban sa Kudeta (KILOS, Coalition Against Coups d’etat) resigned three months later, after the Congressional Committee on Appointments, in a long-delayed vote, vetoed his appointment.

18. On Pancasila, see chapter 2. As perceived by prominent Kabisig supporters such as Governor of Bulacan Roberto Pagdanganan, Panca Sila promoted national self-reliance, a rhetorical objective of the Kabisig programme (Clarke 1994: 42).

19. On the establishment and collapse of Kabisig, see Clarke (1994).


21. Factoran, who had also been active in the Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity and Nationalism (MABINI), Justice for Aquino-Justice for All (JAJA), and KAAKBAY, joined the cabinet in March 1987 and served as Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources until 1992. Salvador Enriquez joined the cabinet in February 1992 and served as Secretary for Budget and Management.

22. In which the Indian government planned to channel Rs2 billion (US$150 million) through NGOs (Echeverri-Gent 1993: 187).

23. The Plan noted that ‘The private sector shall not only serve as the initiator but also as the prime mover of development. Specifically, the business sector, non-government organisations (NGOs) and private voluntary organisations shall take the lead in undertaking and sustaining programs and projects aimed at improving the socioeconomic situation’ (GoP 1986: 39).

24. Expenditure by the state sector in 1991 was equivalent to 8.1% of Gross National Product, compared to 9.8% in Indonesia, 9.9% in Thailand, 10.9% in Singapore and 14.7% in Malaysia (ADB 1992: 23).

25. Though not from the 50% who, Ramos suggested, lived below the poverty line before Philippines 2000 was launched. Government figures suggest that the percentage of the population living below the poverty line in 1991 was 39.9% (GoP 1995: 6).


27. For his birthday on 18 March 1993, for instance, Ramos paid a high-profile visit to Basco, Batanes. The busy day was taken up largely with meeting local NGO/POs.

28. By January 1993, five NGOs had received contracts worth P8 million in total from the PCCD to assist the PCCD devise strategy, financed by USAID through the Coordinating Council for the Philippine Assistance Program and the Development Bank of the Philippines (PCCD 1994).

29. ‘Ramos vows Kabisig will be above politics’, The Philippine Daily Inquirer, 10 July 1993.


31. Interview with Dan Songco, 5 November 1996.
32. The CDF evolved out of the Mindanao Development Fund, established by Congress in 1988.

33. *The Appropriations Act for the Fiscal Year 1993*, (Republic Act 7645), Section XXXVIII.

34. Of the 199 Congressmen/women elected in May 1992, 132 had interests in land and agriculture, 17 in logging and 14 in mining. 145 were members of traditional political families or clans, compared to 164 in the 8th Congress (1987–1992) (Guitierrez 1994: 4–5).


36. Interview with Bonifacio Gillego, 28 April 1993.


38. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 31 July 1996, 1, 6. Within the House of Representatives, a proposed compromise allocated P300 million to the Speaker, P150 million to each of the three Deputy Speakers and to the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, P100 million to each of the six vice chairs of the appropriations committee, P70 million each to the 70 members of the appropriations committee, P70 million, and P50 million to each member of the house.


40. Figures for pork barrel expenditure by each Senator show that those who voted for Maceda count among the biggest spenders. Maceda himself topped the list while others included Sens. Nikki Coseteng, Vicente Sotto III, Blas Ople, Ramon Revilla, Francisco Tatad and Orlando Mercado (Ibid).

41. The military estimated NPA strength in early 1989 at 24,000 regular guerillas with 10,000 high-powered rifles, with control or influence over 8,000 of the country’s 41,000 barangays (Jones 1989: 8). In probability however, these figures were slightly higher in mid-to-late 1988.

42. CAFGUs replaced the hated Civilian Home Defence Forces (CHDFs).


44. For example; Armando Angueles killed on 11 December 1987 in Negros Occidental. Angueles, a member of Tanggol Karapatan Concerned Citizens for Justice and Peace, was shot by vigilantes of the anti-communist Alsa Masa (Masses Arise) while campaigning for the Liberal Party (*The Manila Chronicle* 7 January 1988). On 30 January 1988, human rights advocate and freelance journalist, Andres Rio, was tortured and killed in Leyte, reportedly by elements of the 43rd Infantry Battalion, while campaigning on behalf of a local PDP-Laban candidate (TFDP Press Release, 8 February 1988).

45. Ramon Cura, killed in Angeles City on 18 June; Alfonso Surigao of FLAG and the Protestant Lawyers League of the Philippines (PLLP), killed in Cebu, 24 June; Emmanuel Mendoza, killed in Manila on 2 July. FLAG and PLLP lawyers were targeted over a three year period (1987–1989) and others killed within that period were David Bueno, chairperson of the Ilocos Norte-Laoag City Human Rights Organisation and a member of the PLLP, shot dead on 22 October 1987,
Vicente Mirabueno, a FLAG lawyer, shot dead in General Santos City on 6 February 1988, and Oscar Tonog, also a FLAG lawyer, killed 21 March 1989. A former FLAG lawyer and government prosecutor, Gil Getes, was shot dead on 14 March 1990 in Agusan del Sur (LCHR 1991).

46. Susan Aniban of TFDP and Garry Lim of the Northern Luzon Human Rights Organisation were arrested on 28 November 1988 while visiting political detainees at Baguio City Jail, and released on 30 November. Aniban was blindfolded during her torture and moved between different locations. On 29 November, two TFDP workers, Wilbert Umalco and Eva Faculo who went to the jail to look for Aniban and Lim were themselves arrested, along with lawyer Joseph Humiding who accompanied them, to be released later the same day (TFDP Press Release, 1 December 1988).

47. TFDP statistics, for instance, record 90 involuntary disappearances (‘salvagings’) between January and September 1988. Of these, 19 are listed as NGO workers or members of student or farmer organisations. This figure probably underestimates the number with affiliations to cause-oriented groups due to omissions in reports from TFDP’s unit and regional offices. (‘List of Involuntary Disappearances 1 January to 30 September 1988’, TFDP archives).

48. The three, Wilfrido Villaruz, Ernesto Biasong and Ladislao Pillones, worked on IIRR’s Family Food Production programme, funded by the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and were abducted on 11 August 1990 by six members of the Greenan fanatic cult. All three were active in a Basic Christian Community (the assumed reason for their abduction) and Villaruz was chairman of the Sipalay branch of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN, New Patriotic Alliance).

49. The Department of Interior and Local Government wanted the agreement approved by local Peace and Order Councils, but CODE-NGO wanted a national-level agreement. The impasse was never resolved (Interview with Annie Calma, 8 November 1993).


51. The Appropriations Act for the Fiscal Year 1993, (Republic Act 7645), Section XLVI.


53. In 1987, for instance, the Rebel Returnee Livelihood Assistance Program was worth P30 million (NEDA 1988:55).

54. The Hanns Seidel Foundation, for instance, has paid for senior AFP officers to study co-operative building (The Manila Bulletin, 13 August 1993.)


56. The former Philippine Constabulary which in 1992 separated from the AFP.

57. Florencio Abad might have forged even greater ties between the DAR and NGOs, given time, but served three months in office before his appointment was vetoed by Congress.
59. Interview with Dan Songco, 5 November 1996.
60. The DENR estimated that corruption ate up 15% (P390 million, or US$14 million) of the funds spent on the reforestation programme while the Commission on Audit estimated that between 1989 and 1990, 90 contractors who received initial fees of P26 million (US$1 million) failed to reforest a single hectare (Vitug 1993: 60–1). The national co-ordinator of the DENR’s Community Forestry Program acknowledged that many of the NGOs involved as contractors ‘are hiding behind the cloak of community development when their main target is forest products extraction’ (*Ibid.*: 159–60).
61. For instance, the DENR’s 1993 ‘Operation Jericho’ aimed at reducing illegal logging in Cagayan Valley, one of the provinces most affected was a ‘total flop’ because many of the officials involved in its implementation were in cahoots with the loggers (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 30 October 1993).
63. Between 1977 and 1989, those living in absolute poverty constituted 63% of the population in rural areas, compared to 48% in urban areas (UNDP 1993b: 170).
64. Of ten countries in South-East Asia, the Philippines has the third highest level after Thailand and Malaysia.
66. In 1988, the Philippines had a Gini co-efficient of 0.445 for wealth inequality (Baliscan 1996: 436), compared to a Gini co-efficient for land inequality of 0.647 (Putzel 1992: 30).
67. A concrete example was the Congressional Committee on Appointments’ delayed veto of the appointment of Florencio Abad as Secretary for Agrarian Reform in 1990. During his brief three month tenure, Abad attempted to mobilise NGOs as a pro-agrarian reform lobby and co-ordinated an informal cluster of cabinet members and government officials concerned with agrarian reform and rural development that met regularly with NGOs and farmer representatives (see Tolosa 1992).
76. Interview with Ramon Consing, 1 November 1993.
77. AO No. 5, issued by Aquino in 1990, obliged the local and national offices of all government departments to co-ordinate with NGOs and POs.
78. Interview with Ramon Consing, 1 November 1993.
80. In April 1993, for instance, President Ramos ordered an investigation by the DAR and Department of Interior and Local Government, after attempts to force 600 families from land near Trece Martires City, Cavite, were brought to light by a local NGO, Cavite Mission. The owner had wanted to convert an estimated 900 hectares spread over two sites into industrial estates (‘Ramos: Probe Cavite Mess’, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 19 April 1993).
81. Anonymous interviews.
85. Indonesia has only one doctor for every 9,410 people. For nurses, Indonesia is second to the Philippines, but with one for every 1,260 people, more than double the rate in the Philippines.
87. Interview with Adelaida Guillardo, 8 November 1996.
88. Includes POs. See Table 4.1. Figures are for January 1986 and December 1995 respectively.

5 BEYOND THE STATE: THE ORGANISATION OF THE NGO COMMUNITY

1. An acronym derived from a common term in the Philippines for poor street children, originating from an American film where the main character came from a similar background (Karina Constantino-David, interview, 29 April 1993).
2. Based on an estimate of around 20,000 NGOs in the Philippines in 1991.
3. The research identified 9 NGOs capable of participating in ADB-funded government projects, including PBSP and PRRM. The remaining seven are listed in Table 5.2. Supporting ADB’s data, analysis of 1988 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) data on 159 NGOs Wegner (1993a: 182) reveals that 66% had less than 20 staff while 69% have annual income of less than P2 million.
4. In a similar vein, Hirsch argues that the ideology of Thai NGOs is distinctly non-statist. ‘Foremost in the NGO discourse’, Hirsch (1990:15) writes, ‘are concepts of dignity, self-reliance, decision-making power, bargaining power and others reflecting an alternative conceptualization of rural development.’ In reality however, a large section of the Thai NGO community, dominated by philanthropic NGOs, adheres to more conservative values (See Amara and Nitaya 1994).
7. SMC Chairman Andres Soriano III was PBSP Chairman in 1992.
10. Eighty-one member organisations were established before 1986, the first in 1926.
11. Hofilena, op cit.
12. To stem the collapse in corporate donations, PBSP launched a Center for Corporate Citizenship in July 1993.
13. On the latter point, PBSP’s former Executive Director, and from 1992, Agrarian Reform Secretary argued (Garilao 1987:116) that Philippines NGOs were ‘creating a new service sector – the social development industry.’
14. In May 1993 for instance, GRF received P5.75 million to fund a credit window for NGOs and small businesses under USAID’s Food for Peace and Voluntary Cooperation programme (The Manila Bulletin, 10 June 1993).
16. Interview with Ramon Consing, 1 November 1993. Consing is a former PBSP employee.
21. NGOs are increasingly responsible for mobilising and allocating zakat (legal alms) and sadaqqa (vontary alms), religious contributions traditionally managed by mosques. Usually these contributions fund madrasah (educational institutions) that do not receive state funding, but increasingly they are used to fund community development activities (see Abubakar 1991).
22. Catholic church organisations such as the Institute of Social Order and the Knights of Columbus played an important role in establishing the Federation of Free Workers in 1950 and the Federation of Free Farmers in 1953, dominant (and state-approved) trade union and peasant association respectively through the 1950s and 1960s.
24. A survey by Philippine Priests Inc. (PPI) of 250 priests in 1980 discovered that religious women were seen by their male counterparts as being actively involved in social action (Fernandez 1980: 125).
25. Bishop Julio Labayen, a leading proponent of liberation theology within the Catholic church, served as Director of NASSA from 1967 to 1981. On the tenets with which he infused the work of NASSA, see (Labayen 1986).

26. The bishops were particularly influenced by policy guidelines adopted at NASSA’s 1981 National Convention which stated that ‘burning issues of violence and revolution’ could not be ignored and which called on the bishops to support popular struggle (Kinne 1990: 153).

27. Dr. Fely Carino of the NCCP and Fr. Frank Vargas of the AMRSP for instance played a prominent role in launching the Multi-Sectoral Peace Advocates, an informal but influential lobby that promoted peace talks between the Philippine government and the CPP-NPA-NDF (Hontiveros-Baraquel 1994).

28. Analysis of UNDP 1993: 47–57 Table B suggests that $82 million was channelled to NGOs and POs in 1991 (excluding QUANGOs, private educational establishments and commercial enterprises). $20 million has been added to compensate for an error in Table A.3, *Ibid.*: 33, (see note 31). In 1990–1991, ODA was equivalent to 3.0% of GNP (*Development Cooperation*, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, 1992: A-27).


30. Of Ford Foundation’s 1993 Philippines’ programme, worth $3 million, roughly 50% was channelled to NGOs. Asia Foundation’s programme was worth a little less (Interview with Terrence George, 12 July 1993). Both programmes, however, are strongly policy-oriented and support research institutions concerned with NGO issues. Both programmes also seek to support pluralism and NGOs concerned with public-advocacy (Ford Foundation 1993: 20 and Asia Foundation 1991: 32). Thus, most NGOs supported are social democratic in political orientation. Before the February 1986 elections, USAID channelled $369,000 to Asia Foundation for election-related projects. Asia Foundation in turn made a grant to the Federation of Catholic Broadcasters to fund the election activities of 19 radio stations (Burton 1989: 344–5).

31. According to UNDP 1993: 33 Table A.3, Section 3, NGOs channelled $20 million to the Philippines in 1991, the main donors being CARE, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ford Foundation and Asia Foundation. The table however omits details of European funding agencies. In 1991, Christian Aid channelled £0.75 million ($1 million) (Christian Aid, letter to author, 25.5.1994), while at least 10 agencies gave as much or more. At a conservative estimate, therefore, these agencies channelled an additional $20 million to Philippine NGOs in 1991.

32. USAID’s Enterprise in Community Development (ECD) programme, for instance, promotes corporate social development activities. Under the ECD, 22 NGOs associated with some of the Philippines’ largest corporations received grants totalling $11.4 million between 1986 and 1990 (USAID n.d. and USAID 1992b).

33. In 1991, 35% of CIDA’s US$17.6 million programme was channelled directly
through NGOs. Other funding was channelled indirectly through Philippine
government departments (Goertzen 1991a: 20).

34. These projects aim respectively to promote unification efforts among co-
operatives and links with NGOs and government organisations; to empower
women through the Development for Women and Transformative Action
Foundation Inc. (DIWATA); and to strengthen NGO/PO capacity in training,
advocacy, development education, networking and coalition building.

35. Interview with Ramon Consing, 1 November 1993. See also Goertzen 1991b: 24.

36. On these and other innovative NGO-donor relationships, see CODE-NGO and

37. Emphasising his antipathy towards the national bourgeoisie, Sison, using a nom
de plume, wrote in 1970 that ‘The correct policy is to unite with it only to the
extent that it supports the revolution at a given time and at the same time to
criticize it appropriately for its vacillations or tendency to betray the revolution’
(Guerrero 1979: 161). On the NDF’s ephemeral character see also Jones (1989:

38. Interview with Edicio de la Torre, 17 August 1993.

39. Interview with Mila Aguilar, 14 November 1993. See also Pimentel Jr. (1989:
152–6).

40. Interview with Mila Aguilar, 14 November 1993.

41. The paper acknowledged however that CO ‘has produced some tangible results
and expressions’; eg. ‘CO experts and organisers have to a certain extent helped
people to transcend the so-called ‘culture of silence’ and ‘climate of fear’ spawned
by martial law.’

42. Those rumours were confirmed some years later. During the ‘AHOS Campaign’
of July-December 1985, ‘close to a thousand’ party members (CPP 1992b: 33)
were arrested, tortured, tried, and in unknown numbers, killed, in a search for
government agents. Many of the victims worked for legal organisations in ‘white’
areas (ie urban, government-controlled, areas) and NGO activists numbered
prominently among those killed (anonymous interviews). See also Abinales (1996).

43. The document provides a revealing analysis of acknowledged strategic blunders,
especially the concepts of ‘strategic-counter offensive’ and ‘three strategic
 coordinations’ originating from 1981 which in 1985 led, the document claims, to
premature ‘urban insurrectionism’ and ‘regularization’ of the NPA’s forces.

44. Interview with Mila Aguilar, 14 November 1993.

45. Interview with Satur Ocampo, 19 November 1993.

46. Interview with Mila Aguilar, 14 November 1993.

47. Pamela Balcena, ‘De Villa says some NGOs give aid to rebs’, Daily Globe, 6
October 1989. NDF Spokesman Luis Jalandoni reportedly replied ‘Of course we
are getting various forms of support from these NGOs that are sympathetic to
our cause but it is not what [the military] would like to think that we are getting’
(See Noli Cabantug, ‘NGOs are rebels’ major source of overseas funding’, The
Manila Chronicle, 18 September 1989). Jalandoni’s comments echo broader
acknowledgment of CPP influence over NGOs and POs. In 1986, Urbana Cruz,
reputedly a member of CPP Visayas Commission, claimed the CPP was involved
in the drafting of the new constitution through legal front groups represented on
the Constitutional Commission (Agence France Press report in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 24 June 1986). In 1987, the NDF’s own publication acknowledged that foreign-funded health projects and organisations helped it increase its reach in rural areas (See *Liberation*, October–November 1987).

48. Clad (1988: 12–14), citing captured CPP documents. The other sources listed were: donations from abroad 7%; and monies gained by CPP’s Military Commission and Mindanao Commission 11%.

49. In 1988, the CPP claimed a strong presence in 3,000 barangays and had infiltrated 4,800, giving it influence in 19% of the country’s 41,000 barangays (Clad 1988). As of 1993, NGOs of all orientations routinely secured permission from local CPP commanders and paid levies to operate in CPP-influenced territory, a fact widely acknowledged in NGO circles, albeit anonymously.

50. For an analysis of the split, see Rocamora (1994) or Kerkvliet (1996). A more detailed analysis from an orthodox party perspective is set out by CPP (1992b).


52. Interview with Satur Ocampo, 19 November 1993.


6 ARENAS OF INTERVENTION

1. 145 of 199 members of the House of Representatives elected in May 1992 are members of families associated with the Philippines’ traditional rural-based oligarchy, compared to 164 in the House elected in 1987 (Gutierrez 1994: 4).

2. See Guiterrez (1994) for details of the enduring power of rural-based élites in Congress.

3. A common label for the leaders of the main political parties is ‘trapo’, an acronym for ‘traditional politician’ meaning ‘dirty rag’ in Tagalog. Ramon Mitra, leader of the *Lakas ng Demokratikong Pilipino* (LDP), the largest ‘party’ (in reality, a coalition of smaller *cliques*) was the popular epitome of the trapo, partly explaining his unexpectedly poor showing in the May 1992 Presidential elections.

4. PANDAYAN, for instance, a political formation associated with *Demokratikong Sosyalista Koalisyon* (DSK, Democratic Socialist Coalition) was reputedly 50% dependent financially on trade union support and 50% on NGOs and POs in 1993 (anonymous interviews).


10. Interview with Marie Laisaso, 8 November 1993.
11. Only a few are covered here. For a broader overview, see Constantino-David (1991) and Aldaba (1992 and 1994).
13. On the ideological underpinnings of, and tensions between, these groups, see Goodno (1991: chapters 13–15).
15. Including the Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao’s (AFRIM) Basic Industrial Development Strategy (BIDS) 2010 plan, discussed in De la Rosa (1994).
16. 200 congressional seats, 73 for governors, 73 for vice-governors, 650 provincial board members, 60 city mayors, 60 city vice-mayors, 1,542 municipal mayors, 1,542 municipal vice-mayors, and 12,386 municipal councillors.
17. Interviews with anonymous Congressional sources.
18. One reason why House members resent appointed sectoral representatives who have not had to finance expensive election campaigns.
19. Interview with Clark Soriano, 13 July 1993.
20. Abad’s optimism was also tempered with a caution that reflected broader sentiment: ‘The size and limited resources of NGOs makes them unlikely challengers of economic and political systems sustained by prevailing big government and oligarchic interests’ (cf. McBeth, 1991b: 22).
22. Ibid.
23. Guapo is an acronym for genuine alternative politician and derives from the Tagalog for ‘handsome’.
24. Interview with Gerry Bulatao, 13 August 1993. Bulatao served as one of Abad’s main election campaign strategists.
25. For an alternative, albeit rather vague, account of AKBAYAN’s poor performance, see Tornquist (1993).
26. Abad spent only P1.8 million on his campaign, 1 peso for very vote received (Interview with Gerry Bulatao, 13 August 1993). Salonga’s campaign cost an estimated P65 million, the bulk of which came from business sources (anonymous interview).
27. Interview with Karina Constantino-David, 29 April 1993.
28. According to PnB, ‘The conduct of the organised forces during the election period showed that organised forces (people’s organisations and NGOs) were disunited among themselves, and marginalized against the mainstream political forces. More contemptuously, PnB argued ‘When the day of reckoning came, the ‘thousands upon thousands of NGOs’ expected to deliver the Salonga votes were nowhere to be seen . . . . The ‘broadly-based NGO electoral movement’ AKBAYAN counted on failed to deliver.’ Of a total of 17,260 positions contested, PnB claimed a contribution in the winning (‘actively supported rather than directly fielded’) of 622, 3.6% of the total. See PnB (1993: 36, 42–3, 52).
31. The URSEC contract contained many provisions in de la Serna’s own planned Community Development Outreach Program, in areas such as medical facilities, livelihood projects and co-operatives development.
32. Thomas Osmeña’s successful campaign to become Mayor of Cebu in January 1988 demonstrated the increasing importance of NGO/PO support and their increasing use by traditional élites in election campaigns. On Osmeña’s use of NGOs/POs before and after his election, see Mojares (1993: 342, 346 n.32). Osmeña was re-elected Mayor in May 1992.
33. By mid-1993, the Farmers Development Education Center (FARDEC), an URSEC member, had held a number of meetings with De la Serna and was happy with his adherence to the contract, particularly his commitment to the implementation of agrarian reform (Interview with Gigi Labrodores, 16 May 1993).
34. Interview with Gerry Bulatao, 13 August 1993.
35. Interview with Popoy Tañedo, 6 November 1996.
36. Local School Boards must include an elected representative of the local Teachers, and Parent-Teachers organisations, (Section 98). Local Health Boards must have one representative from the private sector or from an NGO concerned with health (Section 103). Local Peace and Order Councils must have NGO representation as provided for in Executive Order No. 309 (Section 116).
37. Sections 446, 457 and 467 respectively.
38. Sections 26 and 27.
40. National democrat organisations reputedly controled 66% of the NGO/PO seats in 1993 (anonymous interviews).
41. USAID’s US$50 million programme of support for the LGC, the Local Development Assistance Program (LDAP) (Cariño L. 1992: 12), provided, the article noted, US$2.5 million in grants towards PBSP’s own LDAP which supports projects connected with the code. See Jo Calderon, ‘GO-NGO partnership: Growing Together?’, Today, 7 February 1994.
42. Interview with Ramon Consing, 1 November 1993.

7 THE PHILIPPINE RURAL RECONSTRUCTION MOVEMENT

1. See chapter 1, note 2.
2. Developed by Chen Chu-san, Head of the MEM’s Department of Citizen Training, and Kan Nai-kwang, Vice-Minister of Interior, the self-government thrust only evolved from 1932 (cf. Buck 1945: 60–3).
3. Earlier, Yen helped establish a Board for mass education and social reconstruction in Cuba (Buck 1945: 15).
4. The incorporators were: Cecilio Putong (Education Secretary); Juan Salcedo Jr.
(Health Secretary); Senator Estaban Abada; Congressman Eulogio Rodriguez Jr.; Roland Rene (Philippine Director of the US Foreign Operations Administration); Jose Cojuangco; Conrado Benitez; Albino Sycip; Oscar Arellano (President, Philippine Jaycees); and Jose S. Camus (Agriculture and Natural Resources Under-Secretary) (PRRM 1977: 6).

5. The P13,700 included 6 donations of P1,000 each from: Araneta Gregorio Inc.; China Banking Corporation; Vicente Go Chien; Philippine Bank of Communications; Philippine Manufacturing Company; Yutivo Sons Hardware.

6. Aquino’s account of Taruc’s surrender differs from Manahan’s on several points (See Joaquin 1988: 238–47).


8. See also Morales (1990: 144).

9. Interview with Horacio Morales, 2 August 1993, in which Morales recalled discussions with Labez before the latter’s death.

10. The law echoed Chiang Kai-shek’s decision in 1939 to adopt the MEM’s Ting Hsien model of village government in all hsien (counties) (cf. Buck 1945: 79).

11. In 1960, President Carlos Garcia presented a ‘Presidential Award of Merit’ to PRRM for its ‘silent but glorious revolution’. The citation noted that PRRM’s work in Nueva Ecija, Rizal and Pampanga had led to the enactment of RA1245, amended in RA2370 (PRRM 1965).

12. Senator Emmanuel Palaez, a confidant of Yen’s and PRRM supporter, played a key role in evincing Magsaysay’s change of mind. Palaez also played a key role in the passage of the 1958 Barrio Charter Law.

13. Soriano-controlled companies donated 101,550 pesos between 1 January 1968 and 30 November 1970 while trustees, or companies controlled by trustees donated a total of P346,771 (PRRM archives). PRRM income for the three years 1968–1970 is not available. Using income for the year to 31 December 1971 of P934,800 however, calculations assume total income of P2.7 million for the three-year period, i.e. P346,771 = 12.8% of P2.7 million.


15. By Aquino’s own admission, PRRM’s work on Hacienda Luisita was a ‘palliative’ (See Joaquin 1988: 275).

16. In 1965, for instance, the Council of Governors’ 39 members included the Vice-President, 6 cabinet members, 14 Senators, 7 members of the House of Representatives and 3 provincial governors (PRRM 1965).

17. To reform government, you had to work with it: ‘Unless you enter the tiger’s den, you cannot get the cubs’, Yen quoted a Chinese saying and MEM officials worked in provincial government including Yen, as an assistant to Hunan’s Governor and Dr. C.C. Chen who became Szechuan’s Commissioner of Public Health (Buck 1945: 63, 77, 79–80).

18. PRRM records, though incomplete, contain files on five such courses of one to three months held between 1965 and 1969.

21. PRRM commissioned a young agriculturalist, Dr. Orlando Sacay, to develop a pre-co-operative organisation (co-operatives, by law, required minimum capitalisation of P5,000, beyond the resources of most barrios) and by 1970, PRRM had established Buyers Clubs in 67 barrios in 9 provinces. In 1972, Sacay became Under-Secretary for Co-operatives in the newly-established Department of Local Government and Community Development. Using the Buyers Clubs model developed with PRRM, Sacay devised the Samahang Nayon (SN, Pre-Cooperative Association) programme, which allowed SNs to develop into fully-fledged co-operatives (PRRM 1977: 43–4 and 1971: 13).

23. In 1969, PRRM was active in 47 barrios, and in 18 of 31 municipalities, in Nueva Ecija, the ‘hotbed of Huk dissidence’. Nationwide, it worked in 124 barrios in 24 provinces (PRRM 1969: 1).
24. In contrast to China where Yen used traditional respect for education and tu-shu (reading books) to secure the empathy of peasants and boost MEM authority vis-à-vis local élites, PRRM was unable to turn the conservatism of its approach to positive effect.
25. Willem Wolters, private correspondence with author.
26. Ibid.
28. Many PRRM Trustees felt the symbiotic ‘two lungs, one body’ IIRR-PRRM relationship undermined their own powers and were unhappy when Yen hired, without consulting the PRRM board, a small group of staff in 1967 to interchange between PRRM and IIRR (Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting, 25 August 1967).
29. On the last three problems, see Feliciano (1967: 38–41). Much later, an internal document noted PRRM’s heyday from 1952 to the mid-1960s; ‘The spiralling descent . . . during the next 15 years really began with the sudden removal of the senior staff, financial subsidy cut-off, Dr. Yen gave up his moral control and the big people suddenly lost interest’ (Presidents Report, 25 July 1984).
31. PRRM’s records (though not complete) contain files on 15 training courses held between 1972 and 1981, involving 697 AFP personnel. Another document records that 37 Civilian Home Defence Force (CHDF) personnel were trained in ‘community-type projects’ (‘Report on Activities undertaken July–August 1981’, n.d.). In a letter to AFP Deputy Chief of Staff for Home Defence Brig. Gen. Guillermo Pecache, dated 2 April 1974, PRRM Chairman Manuel Manahan writes ‘Please let me know in advance when AFP men will leave for Jolo so that we can alert our man to leave with them’, suggesting that PRRM staff accompanied AFP teams.
32. PRRM worked with the MA on the 1977–1982 Cooperatives Development Program for Cagayan Valley (CDPCV), its biggest government project since San Luis (PRRM 1977: 10), with the MSSD on the Self-Employment Assistance
Project for Rural Women in Nueva Ecija (‘Report for Year Sept. 1980 to Sept. 1981’, n.d.) and with the Ministry of Human Settlements in establishing the Pamantasan ng Bagong Lipunan ((PBL) New Society University, later the University of Life, a pet project of Imelda Marcos) (‘Memorandum of Understanding between [PRRM] and [PBL]’, n.d. [circa 1981]). Interestingly, Imelda’s key project, the Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran, (KKK, Movement for Livelihood and Progress) (see chapter 3), was eerily similar to PRRM’s programme in the 1950s and 1960s, even deploying RRW-like cadres. KKK ostensibly aimed to transform barrios (renamed barangays) into self-reliant, productive, communities through Samahang Kabuhayan (Progress Associations), federated at the municipal and provincial level. There is no record of PRRM involvement in KKK’s establishment.

33. ‘Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: A Draft Report on the PRRM Seminar-Workshop May 31–June 1 1979’, September 1979. Funders included USAID, the US Peace Corps, Asia Foundation, the Canadian government, the International Development Research Council, as well as the IIRR.


36. Ibid., and ‘An Evaluation of . . .’.


38. Interview with Horacio Morales, 2 August 1993.

39. Morales also helped establish the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE), the Responsible Parenthood Council (RPC) and the Federation of Electric Cooperatives of the Philippines (FECOP), serving in senior positions with each.

40. Annual awards sponsored by the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation. Still in existence, the TOYM awards are now sponsored by the Gerry Roxas Foundation.

41. A statement noted: ‘Many of my colleagues and I sought to undertake reforms within the government, such as in education, agrarian relations, rural industrialization, cooperatives and programs to broaden the people’s participation in the management of their affairs. All our well-meaning efforts were in vain’ (cf. Friends of Boy Morales 1987).

42. Morales acted as spokesperson for the NDF in a British television documentary broadcast in July 1981.

43. Anonymous interviews. According to Jones (1989: 146–7), Morales was ‘assigned to united front work under the guise of the NDF’ in 1981 and acted as ‘the NDF’s de facto chairman’ until his arrest in 1982.

44. A talented technocrat admired by Marcos, Morales worked with Dr. Orlando Sacay in designing the Samahang Nayon programme and served as Executive Director of the Presidential Task Force on Human Settlements which preceded the Ministry of Human Settlements. In addition to his personal betrayal of Marcos, Morales was also tortured because of his appearance in a British television documentary which embarrassed the regime internationally.

45. Where his job as head of the CPP Peasant Section conflicted with his role as a community organiser. Serrano for instance, helped write the 1977 party document which condemned Community Organising (CPP 1977)(see chapter 5).

46. Anonymous interviews.
Popular democracy, the ‘political project of the left and the middle [during] the transition’ called for: ‘new structures of direct democracy, like people’s councils, and new modes of political intervention like recall, initiative and referendum’; and a ‘pluralist and multi-party political order’, characterised by the ‘skilful exercise of coalition politics’ (De la Torre 1986: 9).

Anonymous interviews.

Speaking in 1993, Cala argues that PRRM provided institutional stability, both organisationally and financially, to the popular democratic camp, e.g., through staff interchanges between PRRM and other ‘popular democrat’ institutions such as IPD and CFPI. IPD knows, Cala argued, that if it folds, it can blend into PRRM, giving it the security to be creative and to take risks (Interview with Cesar Cala, 30 October 1993).

Before martial law for instance and during his time with the Presidential Economics Staff, Morales worked closely with Senator Helena Benitez, a PRRM board member. After hearing of Morales’s nomination in 1986, Benitez explains, ‘I thought, ‘Oh, Boy was trying to run away from a personal problem, so he went to the mountains’ . . . and then I said I had no objections . . .’ (Interview with Helena Benitez, 24 July 1994). Benitez, daughter of Dean Conrado Benitez, became PRRM Chairperson in 1990.

The most prominent were Jesus P. de Jesus, Secretary for Public Works and Highways from January 1991 (serving in both the Aquino and Ramos administrations), and Carlos Fernandez, Under-Secretary (under Aquino) and Secretary (under Ramos) for Agriculture. According to Morales ‘there [was] a dozen, maybe more, who were associated with me in the DAP who we tried to mobilise during the Aquino [administration]’ (interview, 2 August 1993).

Among those removed from the board were Raul Concepcion, President of Concepcion Industries, Andres Siochi, and Antonio Ledesma. Those elected or re-elected included Vicente Jayme, Finance Secretary in the Aquino government and a friend of Morales; Luis Garcia, President of Wrigley Philippines, Juan Flavier, President of IIRR, and Sixto K. Roxas.

A decision approved at the Board of Trustees meeting of 25 January 1989.

‘Senior figures’ in PRRM reputedly negotiated directly with CPP Visayas Commission head Arturo Tabara to secure CPP support for the Negros programme (anonymous interviews).

Some board members, notably Antonio Ledesma, were concerned about the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) being the main project partner in the Negros Food Aid Project (Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, 15 September 1987).


The AFP confiscated PRRM food supplied in Sorsogon and branded PRRM’s Ifugao branch as an NDF front (Minutes of the PRRM Board of Trustees Meeting, 25 January 1989). The minutes note that PRRM complained to the AFP about the harassment and that Morales was scheduled to meet the Chief of the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) to discuss the matter. Minutes of the PRRM Board of Trustees Meeting of 17 August 1988 record that
board member Dr. Edgardo Agno was warned by the military to ‘keep [his] distance’ from PRRM.

59. Implementation of PRRMs Food and Nutrition Programme in Negros, for instance, had to be delayed to take account of objections from partner POs, and the project redesigned (Ibid.).

60. Interview with Isagani Serrano, 23 November 1993.
64. Interview with Isagani Serrano, 23 November 1993.
65. The Philippines, according to PRRM (1992: 2), has four ecosystems: 1. upland forests; 2. mid-level foothills; 3. interior lowlands; 4. coastal plains. An SRD straddles at least 2 ecosystems.
66. According to Korten (1990: 121), ‘Third generation strategies focus on creating a policy and institutional setting that facilitates . . . sustainable and inclusive local development action.’
67. Interview with Cesar Cala, 30 October 1993.
68. Morales toured European funding agencies in 1988 to secure financial support for CPAR, accompanied by Rep. Bonifacio Gillego, Oscar Castillo of PAKISAMA and Ed Mariano of KMP. Serrano was reputedly instrumental in securing national democrat support when CPAR almost collapsed during the Agrarian Reform Express of 1987 (anonymous interviews). Serrano himself plays down his role. The CPP/NDF played an active role from the outset in establishing CPAR, he says, and didn’t need much convincing to stay (Interview with Isagani Serrano, 23 November 1993).
70. Interview with Rose Nierras, 18 October 1993.
71. Minutes of the PRRM Board of Trustees meeting 17 February 1993.
72. Interview with Clark Soriano, 13 July 1993.
73. Interview with Amee Coronel, 16 August 1993.
74. Interview with Satur Ocampo, 19 November 1993. With the emergence of the July 1992 CPP (1992a) document, ‘Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors’ (see chapter 5), Ocampo noted, ‘the line of division became much more pronounced’.
75. Interview with Felimon Tañedo, 6 November 1996.
76. In 1989 for instance, when PRRM established a branch in North Cotabato, it upset an effective modus vivendi between BATUNA and the ANI Foundation whereby Cotabato’s main highway roughly delineated their respective territories. Both organisations feared PRRM’s greater financial resources would entice local POs away from the smaller NGOs and differences with PRRM were only resolved
in 1991, partly PRRM concedes because it didn’t ‘have in place the systems to ensure dialogue’ (Interview with Marivic Raquiza, 10 October 1993).

77. Interview with Cesar Cala, 30 October 1993.
78. Ibid.
79. Interview with Felimon Tañedo, 6 November 1996.
80. Interview with Lisa Dacanay, 29 April 1993.
81. Interview with Clark Soriano, 13 July 1993.
82. Anonymous interviews.
83. Interview with Horacio Morales, 23 November 1993.
84. Interview with Marivic Raquiza, 10 October 1993.
85. Interview with Rizal Barandino, 6 November 1993.
86. PRRM believed the programme was marred by disjointed planning and was ineffective in winning fishermen away from unsustainable fishing methods.
88. Interview with Horacio Morales, 2 August 1993.
89. Ramos was unable to reappoint outgoing Health Secretary Alan Bengzon because of a prohibition on appointing defeated Congressional candidates within one year of elections. Bengzon came 25th in the race for the Senate’s 24 seats.
90. Bengzon and his 2 departmental Under-Secretaries had bitterly opposed decentralisation and DoH staff were seething with resentment at the government’s plans.
91. Interview with Rose Nierras, 8 October 1993.
92. Ibid.
93. Interview with Cesar Cala, 30 October 1993.
94. Interview with Horacio Morales, 23 November 1993.
95. Interview with Rose Nierras, 8 October 1993.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. The support is provided through Green Alert and Negros Caucus, two NGO coalitions established to co-ordinate work with local government agencies (Dacanay 1996: 81–2).
99. Interview with Rizal Barandino, 6 November 1993.
100. In November 1995, for instance, rice in Nueva Ecija sold for 1,000 to 1,200 pesos per cavan, compared to 600–700 a year earlier (authors own observations).
101. Interview with Cesar Cala, 30 October 1993.
102. Rafael Salas (who later served as United Nations Under-Secretary) visiting PRRM in 1968 described it as ‘an organisation largely run by Protestants in a country which is 80% Catholic’ (Salas 1985: 79). These included Dr. Y.C. James Yen; Cornelia Balmaceda, the only Protestant to serve in the Quirino cabinet; Dr. Albino Sycip, until 1987, PRRM’s key financial adviser; Dr. Juan Flavier, PRRM and later IIRR President; and Trustees Derek Holdsworth, George Potts and J.J. Wolahan (Interview with Helena Benitez, 24 July 1993).
103. In the late 1980s, according to one source, ‘Boy [Morales] would come back from Europe and tell staff that this or that funding agency was interested in funding a particular type of project and tell them to have a funding proposal ready to send off in 48 hours . . . staff felt this was the way policy was being
made’. Speaking in mid-1993, the source claimed that the problem had lessened in the previous two years (anonymous interview).

104. According to one source, for instance, PRRM tends to overelaborate and overconceptualise its plans without waiting for actual experience to contribute (anonymous interview).

105. In 1992/93, PRRM, again according to anonymous sources, sought advice from other ex-national democrat NGO leaders about reinvigorating its organising efforts, admitting that they have not met with the expected success. According to PRRM’s own figures, however, (see further above) its organising ability has improved.

106. According to one former PRRM worker, sexual harassment of women staff has been a problem and on one occasion female staff erected placards in PRRM’s head office to complain. Members also complain of PRRM’s attitude to Women in Development, a problem acknowledged by Morales in his address at PRRM’s 41st anniversary celebrations in Nueva Ecija, 23 July 1993.

107. Interview with Cesar Cala, 30 October 1993.

108. PRRM has developed four indices to monitor the impact of its SRDDP: an Organisational Capability Index (OCI); a Socio-Economic Empowerment Index (SEEI); a Socio-Political Empowerment Index (SPEI); and a Natural Resources Management Index (NRMI). These are combined to produce a Composite Empowerment Index. By the end of 1994, programmes scored highest on the OCI, though this indicator was the most developed of the four (Dacanay 1996: chapter 1).

109. Interview with Clark Soriano, 13 July 1993.

8 TASK FORCE DETAINEES OF THE PHILIPPINES


6. Others set up at the same AMSRP convention included Task Force Urban Conscientisation (TFUC) and Task Force Rural Conscientisation (TFRC). two additional task forces were established in later years: Task Force Tribal Filipinos (TFTF) and Education Forum.

7. Although CNL held a convention in July 1972, before the declaration of martial law, it was unable to hold another until 1981.

8. A former priest and reputedly one of the first chairmen of the NDF Preparatory Commission, Jalandoni was arrested and imprisoned in the late 1970s. Released
in 1986, he moved to Utrecht in the Netherlands, where he became head of the NDF International Office.


10. Tayag, who ‘disappeared’ in August 1976, played a central role in launching CNL in 1972, after converting de la Torre to the national democratic cause (anonymous interview).


12. A canon law instructor at Our Lady of the Angel seminary in Novaliches, Metro Manila, while part-time head of TFDP, Brady spent much of 1974 in prolonged and ultimately fruitless negotiations with the military on behalf of the Major Religious Superiors. Aware of the need for a full-time TFDP Chairperson, Brady resigned to focus on teaching commitments.


15. Ibid.

16. Under plans prepared by the Catholic Church’s National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA), diocesan CCJP’s would fill local CMLC panels. Local CMLCs however were only established in a small number of dioceses, and Davao (along with Cebu) was one of the few places where a CCJP was actually established (Youngblood 1990: 84; AMRSP 1977: 66).


18. Ibid.

19. Until 1979, when it established its own organisational structures separate from the AMRSP and MSPC, TFDP relied on the MSPC to house its Mindanao Regional Office in Davao, to provide political direction, and to mobilise church support. In parts of Mindanao (especially Muslim areas) where TFDP had no offices, it relied on MSPC members based in diocesan social action centres to highlight abuses by contacting bishops and mobilising church support groups.

20. 32 units, 6 sub-regional offices, and 4 regional offices. The National Center in Manila looked after Luzon (Minutes of the Second National Administrative Board Meeting, 13–15 December 1979).

21. Of the 47 staff, 17 were full time and 30 part time. (General letter from NOVIB to other European funders on behalf of TFDP, n.d. [circa April/May 1979].)


27. Letter from Sjef Theunis to Sr. Mariani Dimaranan, 20 July 1981; ‘NOVIB’s Comments on the Task Force Detainees 1983–1984 Programme,’ n.d. [circa 1982]. Sensitive to the political implications, the Dutch Foreign Ministry expressed concern in 1979 at NOVIB being TFDP’s main European funder (Letter from Sjef Theunis to Sr. Mariani Dimaranan, 8 February 1979) (Oxfam, Christian Aid and CAFOD, however, provided small amounts). NOVIB lobbied European funding agencies to broaden TFDP’s funding base, and, by 1981, Oxfam, Christian Aid, and the Swiss Lenten Campaign were important funders.


30. The arrest of Fr. Edward Gerlock, a social action director in Davao del Norte, in October 1973 and the death in custody of church lay worker Santiago Arce in September 1974 were among the first cases documented by VR (AMRSP 1977: 72–4).

31. In a nationwide radio and television address, 1 December 1974 (TFDP 1978: 2).

32. Under the terms of Presidential Decree 576, publications had to be licensed by the PCPM. See Youngblood (1990: 119).

33. Interview with Edicio De la Torre, 17 August 1993.


35. Ibid.


37. Youngblood, Ibid., 164.

38. Between September 1972 and January 1981, almost 70,000 people were arrested and detained. By the end of 1981, 947 political detainees remained in prison (Pumipiglas . . . , 19). With the end of martial law, military trials of detainees resumed, and civil courts began to recommend bail for newly-arrested detainees (‘Proceeding . . . Fourth National Annual Convention . . . ’, 5)

39. In a front-page story carried by The Sunday Express, 2 August 1981.

40. As part of a general clampdown on church institutions suspected of anti-government activity in late 1982 (See Youngblood 1990: 122).


43. Ibid., 16.

44. PhCHR, rather than PCHR as its full name was abbreviated, is used here to distinguish it from the Presidential Committee on Human Rights established in 1986.

45. MABINI, composed mainly of FLAG lawyers, was established in part because Jose Diokno was reluctant to allow FLAG to become engaged in overt campaigning. The organisation was named after Apolinario Mabini, a prominent leader of the 1898 revolution.
PCO’s dated formally to the enactment of Letter of Instruction 1125-A in May 1981. LOI 1125-A had since been amended by LOI 1211, abolishing the requirement for a warrant of arrest.

‘TFDP Semi-Annual Report (January–June 1983).’ MAPCO also campaigned against Presidential Decree 1834, which converted national security crimes into capital offenses and PD1835, which codified anti-subversion laws and imposed capital punishment for subversion.

Letter from Sr. Mariani Dimaranan to Peter de Haan, 21 July 1983.

Feature article on TFDP in Malaya, 10 December 1986.

The Philippine Tribune, 3 May 1986. The suspected killers later fled to Canada. Attempts by Philippine authorities to have them extradited to stand trial proved unsuccessful.


The Manila Times, 13 May 1986; anonymous interview.


According to a NOVIB report, information was often irretrievable and TFDP’s concept of documentation (effectively ‘everything to do with paper’) too broad (See Thoolen, ‘Report on a mission to the Philippines on Behalf of NOVIB (TFDP),’ 8). Interviewed on 21 July 1993, Dimaranan acknowledged problems with TFDP documentation before 1986, including faulty tabulations and double counting (e.g., detainees listed under their own, plus their ‘underground,’ name).

Francisco, 1984, 22.

Interview with Anelyn de Luna, 28 October 1993.

Interview with Sr. Cres Lucero, 15 November 1993.

After Cardinal Sin, an ardent supporter of the Aquino government, attacked TFDP’s documentation as flawed and politically-motivated, TFDP responded defiantly: ‘TFDP condemns the statement of Cardinal Sin . . . as sweeping and irresponsible . . . TFDP reminds the Cardinal that . . . reports . . . are thoroughly backed up by affidavits [from] victims and witnesses, postmortem [reports], and pictures [where] possible’ (TFDP Press Statement, 5 February 1988). As human rights violations escalated further in 1988, the credibility of TFDP’s position grew and in August more than 100 Bishops issued a pastoral letter calling on the government to respect human rights standards, the first such appeal since Aquino came to power (The Manila Chronicle, 8 August 1988).

According to anonymous sources, Abaya’s release followed direct representations by PAHRA to exiled CPP leader Jose Maria Sison in December 1988.

Anonymous interviews. PAHRA called for a presidential inquiry after 30 bodies were discovered in 13 shallow graves in Laguna and Quezon (of an estimated 270 missing, according to relatives) in May 1989 (See The Manila Chronicle, 17 May 1989).

Former Supreme Court Justice Abraham F. Sarmiento became PAHRA Co-Chairman in 1991.

Interview with Sr. Cres Lucero, 18 October 1993.

PhilRights is a programme of PAHRA. On ‘Philippines 2000’, see chapter 4.

Interview with Sr. Mariani Dimaranan, 21 July 1993. In contrast to the Vicaria de
la Solidaridad in Chile, which closed in November 1992 after losing church support amid declining human rights abuses. The Vicaria documented human rights abuses, provided lawyers, and managed socio-economic projects. Its closure dealt a significant blow to the human rights movement in Chile, a lesson, Dimaranan argues, from which TFDP was determined to learn.

65. HRAN, for instance, was established by TFDP and the Bacolod Social Action Secretariat (SAC) in 1988 but lost momentum in 1990 when SAC staff numbers were reduced following the appointment of a conservative Bishop (Interviews with Lorenda Jagurin, 31 October 1993 and with Victoria Torre-Campo, 2 November 1993). Both DAHRA and KAHRA collapsed in 1987–88, although a new alliance, the Southern Mindanao Alliance of Human Rights Advocates, was launched in August 1993 (Interview with Danilo Caspe, 4 November 1993).

66. In August 1993, according to Lucero, TFDP’s Management Committee decided to ‘assert [TFDP’s] integrity as a legal organisation’ (Interview with Sr. Cres Lucero, 18 October 1993).


68. Anonymous interviews.


70. The events leading up to the split are summarised in a typescript document ‘So You May Know . . . An Attempt to Destroy TFDP’, TFDP, n.d. [May/June 1995].


72. Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting, 18 May 1995.

73. Minutes of the National Management Committee meeting 15–17 November 1995.

74. Minutes of the National Management Committee meeting, 22–25 April 1996.


77. Ibid., 34.


79. Ibid. The new lexicon was published in the March–April and April–May 1988 issues of Philippine Human Rights Update, both published after the Convention.

80. According to Dimaranan, for instance, the creation of a Board of Trustees enabled TFDP to circumvent many of the report’s recommendations (Interview with Sr. Mariani Dimaranan, 19 November 1993).

81. The NDF claimed to adhere to international humanitarian law norms and used this adherence in demanding that foreign governments and international organisations recognise it as a belligerent force under international law. TFDP documentation on NPA abuses could have supported the NDF claim: If the NDF and the NPA were being forced to accept the obligations of humanitarian law, then surely they were entitled to the privilege of belligerency status.


84. TFDP National Centre Press release, 4 July 1989.
85. Victims, according to Sr. Lucero, included NGO workers and some of her own former students from St. Joseph’s College, Manila (Interview with Sr. Cres Lucero, Manila, 13 August 1993).
86. Notably, an encounter with NPA guerillas in Surigao del Sur on 15 February 1992 in which 38 government soldiers died. ‘[W]ounded soldiers,’ said TFDP, quoting survivors, were ‘systematically executed,’ ‘focus[ing] attention anew on whether the NDF itself was faithfully adhering to internationally accepted norms’ (TFDP 1993b: 64).
87. Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting, 15 September 1994.
88. Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting, 17 November 1994.
90. Defined by TFDP as ‘the pursuit by the government of a particular model of development deemed to result to the disadvantage of certain sectors of society . . . [and] that involves the allocation of scant resources and . . . [an] abuse of government power in its implementation’ (Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting, 16 March 1994).
91. See for instance Daniels (1996) who uses the term ‘trading rights for market access’ to capture this phenomenon.
93. Secretary-General of BAYAN’s Aurora chapter before joining TFDP, Rivares’ death was attributed to participation in the election campaign (See The Manila Chronicle, 13 February 1988).
94. Manaya was reputedly killed by members of an anti-communist vigilante gang, BACODA (Bayanihan Council of Datus) (Malaya, 20 May 1988).
96. TFDP officials twice appeared on Channel 7’s weekly ‘Probe Team’ (‘Mid Year Report, January-June 1992’, p. 8).
97. Ibid., p. 6.
98. Ibid., p. 7.
100. Interview with Victoria Torre-Campo, 2 November 1993.
101. Interviews with Herminia Palua-Gumano and Rebecca Mayola-Dano, 5 November 1993; and with Joel Virador, 6 November 1993.
102. In 1988 for instance, TFDP turned down an invitation from Quezon Province’s Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Provincial Council) to join the Quezon Human Rights Council ‘to maintain its independence’ (Minutes of National Board meeting, 26–28 October 1988).
104. Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 6 June 1992.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.

107. Staff in many units were too busy to attend regular local government meetings. In other provinces staff lacked the confidence and competence to face landlords and military officers noted for human rights abuses in local government structures (Interview with Sr Cres Lucero, 18 October 1993).


110. Interview with Victoria Torre-Campo, 2 November 1993.

111. Interviews with Danilo Caspe, Buenaventura Dawal and Anna Liza Belarca, 4 November 1993.

112. Caspe interview.

113. Dimaranan nominated lawyer Johannes Ignacio to represent her on the JRC and the PCPD.


118. Ponce-Enrile and Ramos opposed prosecution of military personnel accused of human rights abuses under the Marcos regimes and wanted the PCHR to investigate NPA abuses, a move opposed by Diokno.

119. Interview with Sr Mariani Dimaranan, 21 July 1993.

120. Interview with Sr Mariani Dimaranan, 19 November 1993.

121. Ibid.; Human Rights Newsletter.

122. Letter from President Corazon Aquino to Sr. Mariani Dimaranan, 1 July 1987; letter from Dimaranan to Aquino, 9 July 1987.

123. Article 13, Section 18 of the 1987 constitution mandated the CHR to ‘Investigate, on its own or on complaint by any party, all forms of human rights violations involving civil and political rights.’


125. See The Manila Chronicle, 5 July 1988, regarding appeal by CHR Commissioner Paulynn Sicam to human rights NGOs to rethink their strategy, and Malaya, 5 August 1988, regarding appeal from Justice Secretary Sedfrey Ordonez to PAHRA to investigate rebel abuses.


128. The Manila Chronicle, 10 December 1988; Administrative Order No. 101, 13 December 1988; Malaya, 14 December 1988. Aquino’s announcement followed a July meeting with Cardinal Ricardo Vidal and AMRSP officials where the creation of ‘composite investigation panel’ to assist the CHR was discussed.
(Philippine Daily Inquirer, 8 July 1988), and a report from the Presidential Task Force on the Improvement of the Administration of Justice which noted human rights NGO antipathy to the CHR (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 6 December 1988).


131. Minutes of Board of Trustees meeting, 2 July 1991.


133. Philippine Daily Inquirer, 17 October 1992. FIND later claimed that 821 activists disappeared during the Aquino regime, compared to its original estimate of 367, and 752 under Marcos (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5 December 1991). The Fact-Finding Committee was formally established by Memorandum Order No. 88, 8 February 1993.

134. Amid NGO concern at CHR control, a Memorandum of Agreement dated 14 May 1993 allocated a share of the fund to FIND (Interview with Antonio Villasor, 18 May 1993). By October 1993, compensation of P10,000 each had been paid to the relatives of 14 of the disappeared and P100,00 allocated to a relatives’ cooperative fund (Interview with Sr. Cres Lucero, 18 October 1993).

135. Interview with Rene Sarmiento, 6 August 1993; Interview with Sr. Cres Lucero, 13 August 1993. Both felt the meeting, covered by the media at Malacanang’s request, was manipulated by Ramos to portray NGO support for his administration.


137. Batan, 26, was shot dead by CAFGU (Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Units) personnel in Mountain Province on 23 February. Although active in other organisations, his TFDP work was, according to Amnesty International, ‘the immediate motive for the killing’ (Amnesty International, Urgent Action, UA 49/93, 26 February 1993), leading to further acrimony about the continued existence of government-sponsored paramilitary groups (See PAHRA 1993).

138. Philippine Daily Inquirer, 14 June 1993. Of 222 releases since July 1992, TFDP claimed, only 72 resulted from executive action, implying, TFDP suggested, that the government was less than fully committed to the peace process. TFDP also denounced as ‘propaganda’ the repeal of the anti-subversion law, Republic Act 1700, legalising the CPP, since political prisoners were now charged under criminal legislation. A few days later, TFDP claimed 131 political detainees in total had been arrested after June 1992 (and another 506 released) (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 23 June 1993).


141. Letter to the Editor from CHR Commissioner Paulynn Sicam, in The Manila Chronicle, 22 June 1993. Sicam noted, however, that the exact status of the detainees had yet to be resolved. CHR Chairman Sedfrey Ordonez refuted Sicam’s statement and TFDP’s claims after returning from overseas and said no political
detainees currently held had been arrested since July 1992 (*The Manila Bulletin*, 3 July 1993).

142. Letter to the Editor, *The Manila Chronicle*, 29 June 1993. Campos’s letter followed columnist Ricardo Malay’s assertion in *The Manila Chronicle*, 16 June 1993, that ‘All the president’s confidence building moves will amount to nought if the charges of TFDP are proven true.’

143. TFDP press conference kit, 2 July 1993; *The Manila Chronicle*, 3 July 1993. TFDP’s assertions were supported by PAHRA and FLAG.

144. In ‘updated figures’ released some weeks later, Justice Secretary Drilon claimed Ramos had approved the release of 149 detainees since July 1992, in addition to 248 released on repeal of RA1700. Drilon, however, did not refute TFDP’s claims of 356 political prisoners still in detention (Letter to the Editor, *The Manila Chronicle*, 27 July 1993).

145. See Bello (1992), which praises co-operation between human rights NGOs and the government. Bello served as Justice Secretary in the Aquino government.

146. As a working arm of the AMRSP.

9 CONCLUSION

1. Trade unions representing the fifth estate (cf. Taylor 1980).

2. Measured by the increase in the number of registrations with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The number of for-profit corporations (stock entities) registered with the SEC grew from 128,100 in January 1984 to 250,349 in December 1995 while the number of NGOs and POs (equivalent to 75% of registered non-stock entities) (see chapter 4) grew from 23,800 to 70,200 in the same period (*Monthly Paid-Up Equity Investment Report* series, Securities and Exchange Commission, Manila).

3. In 1583, under pressure from the Church, Philip II of Spain abolished *encomienda* (the ceding of rights over land and people), to *conquistadores* (adventurers) in the Philippines. As a result, Spaniards, except friars and tax collectors, were barred from native villages, enabling the main religious orders to acquire substantial tracts of land. Thus, from the late 16th century, the Catholic Church had economic interests distinct from the state which it then protected assiduously.

4. As chapter 1 notes, it has increased further since then.

5. In 1994, according to one estimate, the UK had an additional 170,000 unregistered voluntary organisations (David Brindle, ‘Power to the People’, *The Guardian*, 21 September 1994), bringing the voluntary sectors estimated share of GDP closer to 5%.

6. Assuming that: a, the $102 million (equivalent to 0.22% of GNP) channelled to Philippine NGOs and POs from abroad (see chapter 4) was quadrupled by Philippine government funding to NGOs, multilateral funding to the Philippine government channelled to NGOs, and funding raised by NGOs and POs within the Philippines; and b, the 58,000 NGOs and POs registered in June 1993

7. Angara later joined the reconstituted, pro-Ramos, Lakas-Laban coalition.
9. Huntington (1968: 75) felt that the political stalemate between state and an agrarian or rural-based civil society could only be broken through four mechanisms: a nationalist movement; a competitive party system; a military coup; and revolution.
11. Thompson (1991b: 418) notes that in 1985, trade unions claimed a labour force unionisation rate of 20% but that a mere 262,000 workers (2.6% of the labour force) were covered by collective bargaining agreements. He claims that trade union membership is closer to the latter than to the former figure.
12. Broad (1994) notes that the figure includes 1 million trade union members and 1 million members of peasant associations.
14. Although the research does provide tentative support for Gregorio-Medal’s conclusion (1992: 140) that Philippine NGO employees are largely middle-class and university-educated and that Philippine NGOs are consequently middle-class oriented. Chapter 7, for instance, noted resentment on the part of local NGOs and POs at the higher salaries paid by PRRM and consequent poaching of staff.
15. In this regard, Migdal (1988: 8) refers to ‘the duality of state strength’.
16. Suspension of the writ of habeas corpus between 1950 and 1952, the resultant arrest of labour leaders, and the murder of labour leaders by privately-armed anti-communist vigilante gangs led to collapse of urban trade union organisations such as the Manila-based Congress of Labour Organisations and the Cebu-based Federacion Obrero de Filipinas (Federation of Filipino Workers).
17. Member organisations opposed to KMU’s support for the orthodox Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tse Tung Thought philosophy of the CPP, left to form Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP, Alliance of Filipino Workers)(BMP was previously the main left-wing labour movement before being banned in 1980) in 1993, seriously eroding KMU’s ranks.


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