

Aya Fabros, Joel Rocamora, and Djinna Velasco, eds. 2006. *Social Movements: Experiences in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Institute of Popular Democracy. 470 pp.

In a country with a propensity for outbreaks of mass protests resulting in regime change, the editors of *Social Movements: Experiences in the Philippines* have ironically found situating social movements in the Philippines a challenging task. A thorough assessment reveals that the challenge lies in capturing the nuances and shifts in the development of social movements, which are integral to the subject's "situatedness."

The history of the first modern revolution in the Philippines began when the Katipuneros overthrew four hundred years of Spanish colonial rule in 1896. More recently, it took the form of People Power demonstrations in 1986 and 2001, which overthrew corrupt and illegitimate rule. Such epochal shifts are, of course, rare. *Social Movements* seeks instead to understand the more common, and arguably more complex, "pattern of social mobilization" (16) that forces the state to act, rather than overthrow it. Ranging from more "traditional" collective action by peasants and workers, to more "novel" forms of mobilizing based on identity and space such as the women's and human rights movements, the volume has been thoughtfully put together by providing topical and empirically rich narratives on contentious collective action in the Philippines. Rather than start from a theoretical frame to locate such detailed observations, the editors of *Social Movements* elect to document "streams of encounters" (43) in a sphere of public action lacking defined boundaries.

The editors argue that the dynamism of political action undertaken by marginal groups in Philippine society means that deviations from fixed localities and identities, even as they are based on "old" forms of struggles and primordial assertions of power, increasingly characterize social movements. This is illustrated throughout the eight case studies in the book underlying the central themes of meaning, place, governance, mobilization/demobilization, and creeping populism.

The first two chapters on the urban poor in Metro Manila by Karaos and Velasco, respectively, highlight the growing importance of the Philippines' capital city as a critical site for struggle, and the reconfiguration of the urban poor collectively as a political class. Investigating the local politics of the people in Manila who have participated in the EDSA rallies, Karaos and Velasco find a growing populism based on "subsistence

mobilization.” How was former president Joseph “Erap” Estrada able to mobilize such a large number of ostensibly unorganized urban poor in EDSA 3? Karaos suggests an answer in the rise of urban populism in Philippine political culture, showing the indeterminate link between civil society and democracy as other authors have done (e.g., Jenifer C. Franco, “The Philippines: Fractious Civil Society and Competing Visions of Democracy,” in *Civil Society and Political Space in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space*, edited by M. Alagappa, 2004). Based on her study of urban poor mobilizing in a large urban community in the East Side of the National Government Center in Quezon City, Karaos traces the emergence of highly autonomous peoples’ organizations (POs) free of ideological moorings. Led by a cadre of “political entrepreneurs” they link communities to powerholders without real accountability. To avoid being ensnared in local patronage politics, the urban poor employ *diskarte* or being “street smart” (125). Velasco shifts the attention to urban poor living along railway tracks in Metro Manila and finds them engaged in subsistence mobilization, which are “forms of collective action ... not aimed at changing the political culture, but at fulfilling basic, material needs” (17). We are, however, warned by both authors not to see too much into such acts of mobilization for self-empowerment. Karaos reminds us that since land is the overriding issue for the urban poor, their mobilization will always be vulnerable to politicians in the position to proclaim lands for distribution (99).

The reconfiguration of “new” collective visions and identities has also opened up spaces for the articulation of demands previously subsumed by more traditional issues of economic distribution and civil-political rights (17). Quesada-Tiongson and Lopez-Wui provide cases from the women’s and human-rights movements in the Philippines, respectively, to support this argument. Both studies situate the development of the movements with regard to the National Democratic (ND) movement. The apparent incompatibility of one’s class with one’s gender or humanity meant that both women’s and human rights were always secondary to armed struggle within the ND movement. For Quesada-Tiongson, the post-Marcos era saw different groups with feminist agendas converge. Armed this time with new legislative strategies and coalitions, the women’s movement has advanced feminist issues beyond demands for economic redistribution and rights and freedoms, to mainstreaming feminist perspectives into state and civil-society institutions. Lopez-Wui also traces the development of the human-rights movement to splits

within the ND movement. From its early days as a vehicle protesting the human-rights abuses of the Marcos regime, it now works to institutionalize human rights in the Philippine state.

Conditions that have mobilized new collective action have also demobilized “older” ones. The volume assesses the changing mobilizations of workers and farmers. Viajar’s study of garment and cement workers show how the Philippine state’s reforms to accommodate neoliberal capitalist expansion have “expelled” unions from their workplace in the factories (39). The impact of policy practices like subcontracting and outsourcing meant that unions could no longer simply dwell on local issues such as wages and working conditions. Viajar now finds local cement worker unions advocating industry protection and industry-line trade unionism (93). The sources of demobilization, however, are not always predictable. The extension of political and civil liberties following EDSA 1, for example, did not extend to the economic concerns of the Mapalad farmers (41). Berja narrates the struggle of the Mapalad farmers for their rightful land and presents a mixed picture in the face of legal defeat. While NGOs and POs are the primary mobilization structures across the volume, the main mobilizing vehicle of the Mapalad farmers was a co-op. In another chapter about the innovative usage of the co-op structure, Albano shows how the Cooperative Federation of Davao City attempted to modernize old cooperative practices. Like the Mapalad farmers, however, their attempt had mixed results.

Trying to understand social movements in the Philippines from the simplistic viewpoint of success and failure naturally misses out on the multidimensional nature of mobilization (38). Fabros demonstrates this feature in her chapter on the indigenous people of Saragpunta, which focuses on the “constellation of resistance” (422). The Saragpunta’s struggle for land is a mobilization at different levels for both identity and territory. Invoking the promising concept of “indigenous space,” Fabros’s sensitivity to the spatial dimensions of mobilization is not unlike similar attempts by other scholars in the field of social movements to pay greater attention to space (e.g., Javier Auyero *Routine Politics and Violence in Argentina*, 2007). Rendering mobilization in terms of spaces, sites, and agencies simultaneously at work opens up interesting new angles of critical engagement.

There is a puzzling reluctance by the editors to venture beyond signposting readers with themes to help understand the fluid and recurrent characteristics of resistance politics in the Philippines. As the editors argue, the politics of social movements in the Philippines is also

about the politics of meaning. This demands a high degree of discursive reflexivity, in which the editors and writers have no problems locating themselves. Disavowing “strict academic definitions” in favor of “political activism” (5), the editors acknowledge the omission of more influential and widely supported movements in the Philippines (e.g., evangelical Christian groups like El Shaddai) and the inclusion of only “progressive” groups as a political act. As such, *Social Movements* can also be seen as an artifact of the legacy of the fragmentation of a previously unified national democratic movement into contending camps.

In the final analysis, *Social Movements* is a rich empirical document of different flavors and currents, not unlike the dynamic political movement(s) without a manifesto that it clearly celebrates.—CHNG NAI RUI, PHD CANDIDATE, DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE.

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Ariel Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging*. Routledge, 2006. 242 pp.

This book attempts to analyze the relationship between the efforts of the New Order regime in Indonesia to define its political identity and the state of terror that allegedly reigned during much of the period. By state terrorism, the author refers to “the series of state-sponsored campaigns that induce intense and widespread fear over a large population” (19). It consists of five elements: (a) the fear generated by state-sponsored violence (b) “directed against individual citizens who are selected as a (c) representative of a particular target group. Target individuals are (d) publicly exposed so as to generate paranoiac response from the general public who, as a consequence (e) “reproduces and elaborates the images of violence and intense fear among themselves” (19).

Such a conception of state terrorism is noteworthy for eschewing the simpleminded and deterministic, top-down, and singular-center-of-power model that forecloses spaces for resistance and collaboration, as well as for the open-endedness of outcomes—aspects not merely theoretically desirable but empirically warranted. By incorporating the responses or the roles played by the general populace in reproducing the state of fear that the state-sponsored violence aims to generate, the author ups the ante for analysts of terrorism and state terrorism. In effect, a warning has been duly served: state terrorism is not all about