

## Slums Under Attack: Resisting Violent Housing Policies and the Repertoires of Housing Contention of the Sitio San Roque Community<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This article examines the experiences of KADAMAY in Sitio San Roque, an urban poor community in Quezon City, as it navigates the challenges posed by the state's persistent and ongoing slum clearing efforts, driven by neoliberal urban development agendas. Utilizing data gathered over years of community engagement, including field notes and recorded interviews with selected community leaders and KADAMAY members, the authors document the detrimental impacts of state actions characterized by forced evictions and neoliberal housing policies on the community. In response to these challenges, the article traces the development of KADAMAY San Roque's resistance strategies. Utilizing the frameworks of repertoires of contention and arenas of interaction, it highlights several innovative practices such as Street Occupation, Tumbalik, Temporary Shelter, and the Community Development Plan as notable forms of resistance to unjust state practices and policies. These strategies emerged after the community's success in organizing barricades to prevent forced eviction. This article describes the context in which these resistance strategies surface as well as its implications for the state. Finally, it offers recommendations informed by the lessons distilled from KADAMAY San Roque's struggles, contributing to the discourse on urban housing social movements.

Keywords: *repertoires of contention, housing, urban poor, social movement, neoliberalism*

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<sup>1</sup> This journal article builds on an earlier work titled "Asserting Inclusion in Housing and Urban Development From the Barikadang Bayan (Community Barricade), Street Occupation and Tumbalik (Collective Home Restoration) to the Community Development Plan" from the Re-Imagining Post-Pandemic Societies: Alternative Practices across Southeast Asia (Volume 2) Monograph Published by the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) published 18 May 2023 p. 253-296.

*Umaasenso na kami, pero ano ba'ng ginagawa sa amin 'di ba? Dinudurog ang mga bahay namin kasama ang kabuhayan namin. Laging sinasabi [ng awtoridad] na uunlad ang lugar namin. Pero kaninong pagpapaunlad? [We are already thriving but our homes along with our livelihood are being destroyed. The authorities say that our land will develop. But who will benefit from this? Development for whom?]*

Estrelieta “Ka Inday” Bagasbas  
KADAMAY San Roque Chairperson

## **Introduction**

For over a decade, the urban poor organization Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (KADAMAY) in the Sitio San Roque urban poor community in Quezon City has staunchly resisted forced eviction and demolitions, fighting for the right to housing. Their primary method of resistance has been the erection of a community barricade or the ‘*barikadang bayan*’ as they call it. The most successful community barricade led by KADAMAY was on September 23, 2010, which saw thousands of Sitio San Roque residents preventing the clearing of their community. During this event, various urban poor organizations worked to "collectively map and execute a community barricade to control a street terrain—block state forces, disturb transport, minimize casualties and arrests—deter a forced eviction and demolition, and display demolition victims’ sufferings and resistance to arouse political condemnation" (Arcilla, 2022, p. 12). They used various materials available in the community, such as plastic bags filled with feces and urine, sewage water, stones, bottles, debris, and rocks as defensive weapons to stall the incoming demolition force without causing serious harm (Ortega, 2016a; Ortega 2016b; Arcilla, 2020; Arcilla, 2022).

During the 2010 community barricade, the solidarity among diverse urban poor organizations in Sitio San Roque was prominently displayed, despite their varying ideological perspectives and positions within the social movement in the Philippines. This unified resistance prompted then-President Benigno Aquino III to declare a three-month nationwide

moratorium on demolitions of urban poor communities, thus elevating the right to housing and in-city housing advocacies in policy discussions (Ortega, 2016b; Arcilla, 2020). Following this event, community barricades have emerged as a significant defense mechanism against forced evictions and demolitions in other urban poor communities, drawing inspiration from the success of the Sitio San Roque barricade (Arcilla, 2022). Urban poor leaders in San Roque continue to remember their collective unity and sacrifice during the 2010 barricade with a sense of heroism (Arcilla, 2020).

Since the success of the barikadang bayan in 2010, KADAMAY in Sitio San Roque has developed various forms of resistance in an attempt to prevent subsequent forced evictions and demolitions in Sitio San Roque, persistently advocating for the right to housing. In light of these developments of KADAMAY's strategies in contending unjust government and private sector practices, this paper tries to answer the question of how do residents of Sitio San Roque resist forced evictions and unfair housing policies from both state and private developers? With this question in mind, this study aims to examine the experience of KADAMAY by looking into the various strategies and tactics they employed, specifically through their deployment of street occupation, *tumbalik* (collective home restoration), temporary shelters and the Community Development Plan (CDP). The study will draw from Tilly's (1993) concept of repertoires of contention. Briefly, repertoires of contention is a concept deployed in congruence to the various routinary actions of social movements in their intention to oppose or assert against unfair government policies. In the concluding section, we also discuss some concrete recommendations to address the unfair housing policies pushed by the government.

### **Methodology**

This paper, however, draws extensively from solidarity and community work with KADAMAY in Sitio San Roque spanning from 2018 to 2024. The first author of this paper,

Mr. Rafael Dimalanta began his engagement through a graduate class in 2018, subsequently co-convening the support group Save San Roque from 2019 to 2023, assisting KADAMAY as a community architect, and later serving as an advisory member of the same group starting in 2024<sup>2</sup>. Another author, Mr. Geo Cabaron, volunteered with the research unit of the support group from 2018 to 2022, while Mr. Bernard Joy Dones served as head of the planning and design unit from 2020 to 2023. These grounded engagements enabled participation in and co-organization of activities with KADAMAY, providing firsthand experience in interactions with the local and national state authorities, security forces, and other urban poor organizations in Sitio San Roque. Data collection includes recorded interviews and field notes from these engagements over the years.

Additional data was derived from document review and a focus group discussion (FGD) organized by KADAMAY in 2021, exploring community experiences with the forced eviction and demolition conducted in the community, as well as their forms of resistance. Supplementary data includes informal semi-structured interviews conducted in 2024 with Estrelieta "Ka Inday" Bagasbas, KADAMAY San Roque Chairperson since 2010; Secretary General Mirafe "Ate Fe" Seduco, KADAMAY San Roque Secretary since 2017; and Jan Marvi Atienza, community architect and former co-convenor of Save San Roque from 2019 to 2022. Thus, this paper specifically aimed at examining the experience of KADAMAY San Roque covering the period of 2010 to 2024.

This paper responds to the lack of attention to the emergence of various repertoires of contention among the urban poor due to neoliberal urban development, and hopes to offer lessons for activists and urban poor communities threatened by forced evictions and demolitions. At the end of the paper, we also provide some concrete recommendations based on the insights we draw from the experience of KADAMAY San Roque.

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<sup>2</sup> Save San Roque was later rebranded to Inklusibo: Philippine Resource Center for Inclusive Development.

The paper is organized as follows: The first section explains the repertoires of contention framework used to analyze the emergence of these resistance forms. The second section briefly discusses neoliberal urban development in the Philippines and how it is manifested into slum clearing and fragmentation of urban organizations in Sitio San Roque to foreground the succeeding section; and using the repertoires of contention framework, the third section tries to unpack and understand the emerging practices of resistance observed in the context of the Sitio San Roque, primarily employed by the urban poor organization KADAMAY.

### **Framing KADAMAY's Struggle: Repertoires of Contention and Arenas of Interaction**

#### ***Repertoires of Contention***

Tilly originally defines 'repertoires of contention' as routines that "emerge from struggle" and are culturally "learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice" (Tilly, 1993, p. 264), performed by social movements to make collective claims and oppose decisions considered unjust (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). In Tilly's later works, he emphasizes that these repertoires are not solely focused on public displays of disruptive collective action but also on the constant innovation embedded within them (Tilly, 2008; Tarrow, 2008). Alimi (2015) extends this framework by introducing the 'arenas of interaction' to examine social movements' repertoire development. According to Alimi (2015), there are three main contending parties involved in contention: state authorities, security forces (e.g. police and military), and social movement organizations. The interactions among these parties give rise to three main arenas of interaction: social movement and state authorities, social movement and security forces, and interactions between social movement organizations. These are explained and differentiated in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Arenas of Interaction*

<p><b>Social Movement and State Authorities Interaction</b></p>	<p>The interaction between social movement organizations and state authorities plays a crucial role in shaping and selecting repertoires of contention. This is primarily due to the state's possession of legislative, executive, and judicial powers, making state authorities the ultimate target for claim-making of social movement organizations.</p>
<p><b>Social Movement and Security Forces Interaction</b></p>	<p>The approach taken by security forces, whether characterized by brutality or leniency, repression or tolerance, selectivity or diffusion, and legal or illegal, significantly affects the development of repertoires of contention. This complexity is compounded by the considerable discretion that security forces hold in actual implementation.</p>
<p><b>Intra-(Social) Movement Interaction</b></p>	<p>Establishing and sustaining solidarity among diverse organizations within a social movement is a complex and arduous task. However, when achieved, the capacity for claim-making and resistance becomes stronger, more far-reaching, and significantly more impactful. Interactions between social movement organizations, as such, have profound influence in development of contention repertoires.</p>

*Note.* Adapted from “Repertoires of Contention” by E. Alimi, 2015, *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, edited by Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, 410-422. Oxford. Copyright by Oxford University Press.

Furthermore, repertoires of contention are also shaped by interactions with a variety of other parties, including private sector entities (e.g. private corporations or developers), counter-movements, the general public, and other non-state or supra-national actors (e.g. World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations) (Alimi, 2015). The influence of these actors becomes particularly pronounced during periods of heightened conflict. Alimi (2015) elucidates that these arenas of interaction are not isolated from one another; instead, they are mutually influential and interdependent.

By employing Tilly's (1993) framework of repertoires of contention, this paper delves into the emergence of diverse repertoires of contention among the urban poor. The examination focuses on three distinct repertoires developed by KADAMAY in Sitio San

Roque. These include the Street Occupation, Tumbalik (collective home restoration), Temporary Shelter, and the CDP. The paper hopes to deepen the understanding of creation and emergence of such repertoires through the arenas of interaction introduced by Alimi (2015).

Adapting Alimi's (2015) arenas of interaction to the context of Sitio San Roque, this paper explores how the aforementioned repertoires of contention are influenced within the following arenas of interaction:

1. Interaction between the Social Movement Organization and State Authorities involves KADAMAY's interactions with both the national and local state authorities.

The national state authorities stated here is the national government agency National Housing Authority (NHA) with the private sector entities such as Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) and the Surestre Properties Inc (SPI). NHA and ALI through their Public-Private Partnership (PPP)<sup>3</sup> have aligned their economic interests, and thus function in tandem. Through their Joint Venture Agreement (JVA)—a form of PPP—with NHA, ALI has also influenced state authorities' implementation in relation to the Vertis North project in Sitio San Roque. Aside from ALI, SPI later entered the picture by purchasing a portion from NHA's land share in the PPP.

On the other hand, the local state authorities stated here is the Quezon City Local Government Unit (QC LGU). The LGU, through its Local Housing Board (LHB), is a decisive entity whether or not to authorize a large-scale forced eviction and demolition of urban poor communities. The LHB is also responsible for identifying the number of informal settler families (ISFs) in urban poor communities, and for

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<sup>3</sup> A PPP is a contractual arrangement between the government and a private sector entity, aimed at financing, designing, implementing, and operating infrastructure facilities and services traditionally managed by the public sector (PPP Center, n.d.).

planning and developing socialized housing in Quezon City through its Local Shelter Plan (LSP) (Ballesteros & Ancheta, 2021; Dimalanta et al., 2024).

Conversely, according to Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Executive Order (EO) No. 69, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) is tasked to ensure that LGUs create LHBs, are conscious of their responsibilities in carrying out just and humane evictions and demolitions (clearing house), and of their duties in the fulfillment of the Right of Adequate Housing through the creation of the LSP.

2. Interaction between the Social Movement Organization and Security Forces involves KADAMAY's interactions with state security forces such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the private security guards employed under NHA-ALI. This interaction also encompasses the influence of the current Presidential Administration, whose directives directly impact the operations conducted by the state security forces.
3. Interaction between Social Movement Organizations involves KADAMAY's interactions with other urban poor organizations in Sitio San Roque.

While the literature on repertoires of contention has been rich, its nuanced application in the context of housing struggles has been scant. For instance, there have been similar studies that have explored the repertoires of contention in the context of right to housing struggles in the local context (Dizon, 2019). Studies exploring how social movements and grassroots organizations have resisted unjust housing policies through the lens of repertoires of contention have also been explored in other countries such as Cambodia (Joshi, 2022), South Africa (Daniel, 2024), Spain (Guzman, 2024), Sweden (Polanska & Richard, 2021), and Ireland (Lima, 2019).

## **Neoliberal Urban Development in the Philippines**

The onset of neoliberalism in the Philippines was significantly marked by the restructuring of its economy through Structural Adjustment Loans (SALs) facilitated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). These loans provided an avenue for exerting control over the country's economic policies (Bello et al., 1982a; Bello et al., 1982b; Bello et al., 2004; Jimenez-Tan, 2009). Aimed at further integrating the Philippine economy into the global market economy (Broad & Bello, 1982; Jimenez-Tan, 2009), the IMF and WB imposed neoliberal urban development agendas through their loan conditionalities in the SALs, promoting the perception of global cities as key spaces for capital investment, and emphasized the role of private sector entities in shaping urban land (Shatkin, 2004; Mouton & Shatkin, 2019).

Subsequently enacted legislation related to urban development in the Philippines, such as the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 and the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) of 1992, institutionalized these neoliberal imperatives. The LGC shifted the decision-making to the LGUs in areas such as land use, taxation, and valuation, as well as transferred the national responsibilities of providing social services, including housing, to the LGUs (Rebullida et al., 1999; Porio, 2002). Ballesteros (2009) notes a key issue in this. She explains that most LGUs lack the financial resources to do these responsibilities. With LGUs' financial resources stemming mostly from their internal revenue allotments (IRAs) and from their collection of property taxes, LGUs, especially those with "less valuable" land, face significant challenges and limitations in resource mobilization to fulfill their roles in housing provision. Simultaneously, the UDHA provided the grounds of optimizing urban land for increased profitability, and explicitly aimed to enhance land use productivity and create urban areas conducive to commercial activities; however, without mechanisms of redistribution of land, regulation of land speculation (Hutchison, 2007), and

standards for land valuation (Ballesteros, 2005; Hutchison, 2007), this leads to urban land becoming increasingly commodified (Arcilla, 2020). Additionally, it emphasized that housing and urban development must be undertaken in cooperation with the private sector.

LGUs, as such, are conditioned to develop investment plans with private developers, through PPPs to raise the necessary financial resources for housing provision (Shatkin, 2004; Ballesteros, 2005; Ortega, 2018; Dimalanta & Bautista, 2024). As Ballesteros (2001, p. 2) observed, "most land developments in the country are undertaken by the private sector, leading to the transformation of the urban landscape primarily oriented toward corporate profit." These "profitable" development projects with private developers are pursued by LGUs not only for their revenue potential but also because they symbolize progress and modernization (Porio, 2002). Such PPPs usually result in the creation of Central Business Districts (CBDs) designed to attract investors and other businesses in urban lands deemed "unproductive". This makes urban poor communities, especially those situated on land owned by the government, a target for clearing to make way for CBDs and other "profitable" development projects (Ortega, 2016a; Ortega, 2016b; Ortega, 2020). As noted by Ortega (2016b), CBDs have been heralded as epitomes of urban development, particularly in Metro Manila.

Relocation also became a precondition for implementing forced evictions and demolitions. This occurs when a PPP agreement is finalized between state authorities (whether national government agencies or LGUs) and private developers, aimed at clearing the area and preparing it for more profitable utilization (Ballesteros, 2009; Mabilin, 2014; Ortega, 2016a; Dimalanta & Bautista, 2024).

In the context of land commodification, increasingly precarious conditions of ISFs, and the scarcity of state housing resources, fragmentation among urban poor organizations is fostered as they are compelled to adopt exclusionary practices to mitigate risks and increase

their chances of securing limited state housing resources. As Arcilla (2020, p. 61) posits, the urban poor themselves become "transmission mechanisms of neoliberal technologies." This phenomenon is clearly manifested when urban poor organizations internalize and carry out pseudo-hierarchies based on market rationalities and formal property rights—by adopting membership criteria based on ‘capacity to pay’ or ISFs’ ownership of structures (or higher forms of tenure security). Consequently, this often leads to the exclusion of the poorest members of the community, who lack sufficient financial capacities or possess lesser forms of security of tenure (Berner, 1997; Arcilla, 2020).

The operation of urban poor organizations in this manner—contradictory, as they simultaneously facilitate exclusion while advocating for inclusion—is inevitable in negotiations within neoliberal frameworks. Arcilla (2020a) further argues that this dynamic also leads to the deradicalization of housing politics.

This illustrates how neoliberal urban development not only reshapes the physical urban landscape, but also fundamentally alters social relations within urban poor communities. Neoliberal imperatives in housing policies drive a wedge between community members, inadvertently contributing to fragmentation in urban poor communities, and undermining their potential for claims-making.

### ***Slum Clearing, Exclusion, and Fragmentation in Sitio San Roque***

Sitio San Roque is a large urban poor community that once housed an estimated 16,000 ISFs at its peak; this number has dwindled down to more than 6,000 in 2018, and decreased further to less than 4,000, according to the Philippine Commission for the Urban Poor in 2024. It is a 37-hectare community situated on government-owned land managed by the NHA in North Triangle, Barangay Bagong Pag-asa, Quezon City. It is within walking distance of government offices, shopping and commercial malls, transportation hubs, public hospitals and health centers, schools and universities, and employment opportunities. The

community has developed organically and incrementally, with residents constructing their own semi-concrete or shanty houses, cementing roads, creating water and electric networks, and establishing institutional, recreational, and commercial spaces such as chapels, mosques, and neighborhood stores over the years. Multiple neighborhoods and ethnic clusters of migrants from various parts of the country are also present in the community. The majority of its residents are essential but precarious low-wage workers, without whom the city cannot operate: construction workers, laborers, vendors, transport workers, home-based workers, and other workers in precarious employment (Ortega, 2016b; Cunanan, 2020).

The community became a target for neoliberal urban development starting in 1987, when then-President Corazon Aquino issued Memorandum Order No. 127. This directive allocated a 53-hectare lot in North Triangle, Quezon City for commercial purposes and authorized the NHA to sell the area through public bidding. Subsequent administrations under Presidents Fidel Ramos and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (PGMA) further solidified this direction with Executive Orders No. 58 and No.106, respectively.

Aiming to transform the city into a center of gravity for business, the QC LGU, then headed by Mayor Feliciano “Sonny” Belmonte Jr., came up with the Quezon City Central Business District (QC CBD) proposal. The QC LGU sought assistance from the WB to assess the feasibility of the QC CBD. In this study, the WB identified the North and East Triangles as “the center of gravity of all commercial activities in the coming years” (World Bank Technical Study, as cited in Gonzalez & Calugay, 2018, p. 37). Together with Japanese urban development consultant ALMEC Corporation, the WB conducted another study that served as the foundation of the QC CBD’s overall framework. By 2007, PGMA authorized the QC CBD project through the issuance of EO No. 620 and 620-A, creating the overseeing body Urban Triangle Development (TriDev) Commission. This agency is headed by the Chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Council (HUDCC), co-headed by a representative

from the Office of the Mayor (OCM) of QC LGU, and has as its members the General Manager of NHA and a representative from the Office of the President.

The master plan of QC CBD aimed to convert the North and East Triangle districts into a “well-planned, integrated and environmentally balanced mixed-use development” (Crisologo, 2011, as cited in Yambot, 2011). Recio and Dovey (2021, p. 2) notes that “this is a typical example of neoliberal urban planning, based on an economic agenda to enhance the city’s competitiveness and attract investment”. In anticipation of the huge economic potential of the North Triangle district being part of QC CBD, the NHA, which owned urban land inside the QC CBD, entered into a PPP with ALI in 2009. Their PPP materialized into the 29-hectare Vertis North project that aims to refashion Sitio San Roque into a central business and lifestyle district. In its plan, 60.6% of the project area will be developed for commercial and office space; almost a quarter of the 29-hectare sprawl for residential development; and the remaining will be for hotel, retail, hospital, school, and other public facilities.

In their PPP, the NHA is responsible for securing the project area against “unlawful” occupancy or any condition which shall delay the development of the project; clearing the project area of ISFs; and implementing the NHA relocation program. ALI will finance, plan, develop, manage, and market the project according to its expertise. It will also provide the necessary funding to finance the NHA relocation program through a Relocation Fund. ALI, through the JVA, has been granted unilateral control in adjusting, extending, and determining the closing date of the project for the fulfillment of the conditions precedent to project closing.

In 2015, SPI acquired 15.7 hectares from the NHA’s land share in the JVA, intending to develop a Solaire Resort and Casino. SPI serves as the development subsidiary of Bloomberry Resorts Corporation, the parent company of Solaire.

### ***Pseudo-hierarchies Based on Census***

The intervention of the NHA-ALI in the community has resulted in the establishment of discrimination amongst the communities resulting in hierarchies. Primarily based on the census status of ISFs—qualified or disqualified—some residents, for instance, were able to participate in government processes such as consultations and formal assistance if they were structure owners and not renters. These census statuses were determined based on the census conducted by the NHA in 2009, and Beneficiary Selection, Arbitration and Awards Committee (BSAAC) Reconsideration and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) in 2011. Consequently, ISFs are categorized as either qualified or disqualified based on these censuses discussed below. This census categorization determines whether an ISF is eligible for a relocation package and, if so, the type of relocation package available to them.

In compliance with its obligations under the PPP, the NHA conducted a census in 2009 to establish the criteria for selecting beneficiaries in its relocation program, which is funded by ALI. However, only structure owners and sharers (typically relatives of structure owners) qualified for the NHA's relocation program, while renters were deemed disqualified (Arcilla, 2020). Subsequently, the NAPC conducted another census in 2011.

For the PPP in Sitio San Roque, the BSAAC was created as a sub-committee of the Project Inter-Agency Committee (PIAC). PIAC is a multi-stakeholder body established in the context of a PPP development project and led by the City Mayor. It includes representatives from the LGU and its relevant departments, national government agencies (NGAs), people's organizations (POs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and from private sector entities. It is primarily responsible for preparing, implementing, and monitoring the relocation plan as well as registering beneficiaries from affected ISFs. The BSAAC ensured that housing units were allocated and distributed to “qualified” beneficiaries based on the beneficiary selection crafted by the PIAC (Dimalanta et al., 2024). Subsequently, due to

efforts by ISFs in Sitio San Roque, some were able to apply for reconsideration through the BSAAC. Those included through BSAAC reconsideration were clustered together with the NAPC 2011 census, which, in practice by state authorities, provided a lower level of relocation benefits.

Table 2 demonstrates that at various points in time (2018 and 2023)<sup>4</sup>, the majority of ISFs in Sitio San Roque were disqualified. This also highlights the significant decrease in the number of ISFs in Sitio San Roque since the onset of the pandemic. The censuses primarily included structure owners, as they are recognized as the legitimate owners of the housing structures. It was in the best interest of the NHA-ALI to prioritize structure owners in the census to streamline the provision of relocation packages and hasten their eviction from the community.

**Table 2**

*Number of Qualified and Disqualified ISFs*

	Number of ISFs (2018)	Number of ISFs (2024)
Qualified (NHA 2009; NAPC 2011; BSAAC Reconsideration)	1,924 (29.66%)	659 (24.55%)
Disqualified	4561 (70.34%)	2,025 (75.45%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,485</b>	<b>2,684</b>

*Note.* Adapted from NHA, 2019 (personal request for information, January 11, 2019); NHA, 2024 presented during a PIAC meeting.

<sup>4</sup> The data in 2018 was obtained through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to NHA made in January 2019 by a student journalist from the University of the Philippines Diliman, who was in communication with Save San Roque. The latest figures in 2024 was from a leader of KADAMAY San Roque who attended a Project Inter-Agency Committee (PIAC) meeting in August 2024.

Moreover, substantial anecdotal evidence collected by KADAMAY indicates that numerous ISFs were omitted from the NHA census in 2009. Consequently, these families were disqualified despite being owners of their structures, primarily due to their absence from their homes during the census. This situation also explains the subsequent 2011 census conducted by the NAPC and the influx of reconsideration applications submitted by ISFs to the BSAAC expressing concerns over the exclusion of many in the initial census.

### ***Sitio San Roque's Urban Poor Organizations***

There are several urban poor organizations in Sitio San Roque before the pandemic: the San Roque Community Council (SRCC), SRCC-Magic 10 or SRCC Magic Circle Housing Cooperative (SRCC-MCHC), the United Muslim Association (UMA), and the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (KADAMAY) (Arcilla, 2020), and the Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Kristiyano at Muslim (SMNK) or Association of United Christian and Muslims.

The SRCC stands as the oldest federation of urban poor organizations in Sitio San Roque, originally comprising 17 smaller groups at its peak. In 2014, 10 of these organizations branched off to establish the SRCC-MCHC which is now affiliated with Kilos Maralita (KM) and the Institute for Popular Democracy (IPD). Both are adept in negotiating with state authorities and are associated with the country's social democratic movement (von Hofmann, 2009; Lero, 2018). The UMA, established in 1991, represents the Muslim community within Sitio San Roque.

KADAMAY is a national coalition of urban poor associations, workers, women, and youth groups rooted in impoverished urban communities across the Philippines. Aligned with the national democratic (ND) movement, KADAMAY advocates for genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization to address systemic inequalities. Its local chapter, as a result, has extensive knowledge and networks geared toward mobilizing disruptive collective action.

In mid-2019, an internal conflict within KADAMAY between the former Secretary General and other leaders resulted in the former Secretary General separating from the organization and forming the SAMANA North Triangle Federation in late 2019.

On the other hand, the leader of SMNK, Shaikram Abdulgar, is known in the community for having a dubious reputation due to his previous role as an officer-in-charge of NHA-ALI's private security guards in Sitio San Roque. Consequently, other urban poor organizations harbor significant doubts about the intentions of SMNK and, particularly, its leader in forming this organization.

Among the oldest organizations in Sitio San Roque, SRCC and SRCC-MCHC primarily require structure ownership as a membership criterion. Meanwhile, UMA prioritizes Muslim identity for membership, regardless of whether one is a structure owner or renter. Although KADAMAY initially organized structure owners when it began in 2010, by 2017, it started including renters in its membership.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, additional organizations emerged primarily through the Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP) of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) in Sitio San Roque. From the RCSP efforts of the NTF-ELCAC, other organizations within the community emerged: PMSR, SNBP, and NAGKAISA. Although not originally aligned with the NTF-ELCAC, SAMANA eventually developed relations with them during the pandemic.

### **Emerging Contention Repertoires in Sitio San Roque**

It is through the struggle against the neoliberal urban development and its violent nature that the practices of KADAMAY San Roque emerged. Others may classify the experience of the Sitio San Roque residents as living through the “War on Slums”, whereby Indivar Jonnalagada described it as the “use of exceptional forms of state violence to control and reconfigure slum spaces that were deemed as threats to security and public health and

also as nuisances to elite aesthetic sensibilities” (2023, p. 233). In this context, KADAMAY in Sitio San Roque has, over time, developed routinary practices that aim to disrupt and end systematic attacks against their communities.

In September 2010, Sitio San Roque saw the demolition (including forced and coerced) of over 50 housing structures along the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) that left more than 120 families homeless. This was carried out by the demolition team assisted by around 300 Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) of the PNP. This, however, was successfully impeded by the community barricade led by KADAMAY in 2010.

Following the triumph of different Sitio San Roque urban poor organizations in carrying out the 2010 barikadang bayan, there was a significant shift in the eviction tactics employed by proponents of the QC CBD and Vertis North, including the NHA, ALI, and SPI (national state authorities and private developers).

This shift in eviction tactics was accompanied by changes in leadership in key positions within the QC LGU (local state authority) and the Presidential Administration (national state authority) who wield significant influence in the security forces. From June 2010 to June 2019, the City Mayor of the QC LGU was Herbert "Bistek" Bautista, followed by Maria Josefina "Joy" Belmonte, who has been serving since June 2019 and will continue until June 2025. On the other hand, Benigno Aquino II served as President of the Philippines from June 2010 to June 2016 while Rodrigo Duterte served from June 2016 to June 2022; the current presidential administration of Bongbong Marcos, which commenced in June 2022 and is expected to conclude in June 2028.

The changes in eviction tactics, coupled with shifts in government leadership at both local and national levels, have significantly impacted the arenas of interaction for KADAMAY with these various actors. These transformations have influenced the contention repertoires of KADAMAY as they navigate their relations with state authorities (both local

and national) and private developers. Furthermore, the pseudo-hierarchies established by the NHA and ALI have further complicated the dynamics among urban poor organizations within the community.

This section will examine the emerging contention repertoires of KADAMAY in their arenas of interaction with the abovementioned actors across four time periods: (a) September 2010-January 2014; (b) February 2014-October 2018; and (c) November 2018-July 2024 (Present). Table 3 illustrates how over a span of 10 years since the community barricade, the repertoires of contention of KADAMAY San Roque have expanded.

**Table 3**

*Repertoires of Contention from 2014 to 2024*

	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'24
<b>Street Occupation</b>											
<b>Tumbalik</b>											
<b>Community Development Plan and Temporary Shelter</b>											

*Note.* Data collected by authors.

***Street Occupation (September 2010-January 2014)***

The 2010 barikadang bayan opened avenues for state negotiation with the DILG particularly benefiting urban poor organizations that conceded to relocation such as SRCC (Arcilla, 2020), while excluding KADAMAY and the other urban poor organizations that are still struggling for on-site development and rejecting the QC CBD and Vertis North. DILG, then headed by Secretary Jesse Robredo, assisted SRCC to gain concessions with the NHA-ALI. Then-President Benigno Aquino III, in December 2010, formed a Task Force for Informal Settlers, with DILG Secretary Jesse Robredo at the helm (Shahani & Mayuga, 2012). At the same time, Aquino III championed PPPs in the Philippines. In September 2010,

he signed Executive Order No. 8, which led to the establishment of the Public-Private Partnership Center of the Philippines, effectively reconstituting the Build-Operate-and-Transfer (BOT) Center (PPP Center, n.d.).

As pointed out by Arcilla (2020), what followed the 2010 *barikadang bayan* was a combination of large-scale demolition attempts and incremental evictions through “voluntary demolition”. Between 2010 and 2014, there were at least three demolition attempts in Sitio San Roque—one in 2011 and two in 2013 (KADAMAY, 2011, 2013). Additionally, a series of fires occurred in 2010, 2011, and 2012 (KADAMAY, 2010; GMA News Online, 2011; San Andres & Viray, 2012). Incremental evictions are carried out by offering structure owners increased financial incentives into agreeing to off-city relocation. Recio and Dovey (2021, p. 2) explain that “voluntary demolition” is a “complex mix of coercion, community fragmentation, surveillance and intimidation.”

Non-SRCC organizations, especially KADAMAY, were subjected to intense surveillance and policing after the 2010 demolition. Following the *barikadang bayan* in 2010, the NHA-ALI deployed numerous private security guards to monitor the community with KADAMAY being a primary target to constrain their protests and other militant activities. By 2011, these private security guards of NHA-ALI had already established outposts at strategic points within the community. These private security guards were also employed to prevent ISFs from constructing new housing structures. However, Ate Fe noted that "*sila rin [naman] ang nangunguna diyan...pinapayagan nila magtayo ang mga tao tapos nangongolekta sila ng renta mula sa mga pinayagan nila...Php 100.00 per week ang kinokolekta nila sa mga ito [they were also at the forefront...they allowed people to build and then collected rent from those they permitted...they collected Php 100.00 per week]."* This practice of the NHA-ALI private security guards was reportedly stopped by 2015 after being exposed by KADAMAY.

KADAMAY also observed numerous instances where alleged plainclothes PNP officers roamed the community, seeking out leaders and organizers to inquire about their activities and to invite them for “questioning” (Ortega, 2016b; Arcilla, 2020). In the experience of the KADAMAY and ND movement, invitations for “questioning” from security forces are almost synonymous with arbitrary arrest and detention, or even enforced disappearance.

At this time (September 2010-January 2014), the QC LGU, led by Mayor Herbert "Bistek" Bautista, introduced the 'Zero Squatters 2013' policy, as outlined in his State of the City (SOCA) Address (Ellao, 2011). The vilification of KADAMAY's militancy was particularly evident in the QC LGU's engagements with the organization. In both the demolition attempts in 2013, KADAMAY staged protests in front of Quezon City Hall, and on both occasions their pleas were ignored and they were met by battalions of the PNP, who eventually dispersed them with water cannons. Mayor Bistek, in the July 2013 encounter, even labeled KADAMAY as “professional squatters” who exploited the legitimate beneficiaries of the state housing programs (GMA News Online, 2013; Ortega, 2016b).

As a result of state negotiations, state authorities, particularly the DILG, compelled SRCC to not participate in protests led by KADAMAY or any collective action against the development project in the North Triangle (Arcilla, 2020).

On January 27, 2014, another large-scale forced eviction and demolition occurred in Sitio San Roque. This operation involved an overwhelming deployment of approximately 1,000 SWAT and PNP officers armed with guns, truncheons and shields, and tear gas, who employed brute force against KADAMAY and residents who joined the *barikadang bayan*.

KADAMAY once again led a community barricade to resist the demolition. However, they found themselves largely abandoned, with only UMA briefly participating. According to Ka Inday, "*Wala na talagang SRCC na nakilahok. Ang UMA, sumaglit lang din. 'Di na*

*katulad nang dati na ‘yung laban talaga nung 2010...bumabad talaga [ang lahat]* [None of the SRCC members participated. UMA was only briefly involved. It wasn't like the 2010 struggle when everyone was fully committed]." The demolition in 2014 resulted in the displacement of over 300 ISFs. Ishioka (2016) likened the result of the demolition to the aftermath of an airstrike.

In response to this event, the street occupation as a repertoire of contention was formed. Although the community barricade in 2014 did not succeed in stopping the demolition, the community, led by KADAMAY, occupied Agham Road. They built makeshift shelters from the debris that had once been their homes. With no place to go and lacking the means to move to another urban poor community, the residents saw the street occupation as their only viable solution at the time. They managed to meet their immediate food and water needs through local purchases and support from networks of KADAMAY. Despite living on the street, many residents continued to work, and children continued to attend school (Quijano, 2014; Ishioka, 2016).

This served as a performance to contest the inhumane forced eviction and demolition, and the exclusionary relocation policy of the NHA. The week-long street occupation eventually pressured the NHA to include previously disqualified ISFs in their relocation program in Gaya-Gaya in San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, and Montalban, Rizal; the ISFs were “transferred” to these relocation sites in early February 2014.

**Table 4**

*Arenas of Interaction in the Street Occupation*

<b>KADAMAY and National State Authorities and Private Sector Entities, and Local State Authorities</b>	<b>KADAMAY and Security Forces</b>	<b>KADAMAY and other urban poor organizations</b>	<b>Repertoire of Contention</b>
President Aquino III championed PPPs. NHA-ALI and DILG excluded non-SRCC urban poor organizations such as KADAMAY from negotiations.	NHA-ALI private security guards monitored and impeded the activities of	Arrangements with state authorities compelled SRCC to not participate in protest activities of	<b>‘Barikadang Bayan’ then Street Occupation</b>

<p>NHA-ALI created pseudo-hierarchies amongst ISFs in Sitio San Roque.</p> <p>NHA-ALI continued their clearing operations in Sitio San Roque through incremental evictions/”voluntary demolitions”.</p> <p>QC Mayor Bistek ignored concerns raised by KADAMAY and views their militancy negatively.</p>	<p>KADAMAY.</p> <p>PNP officers harassed</p> <p>KADAMAY.</p>	<p>KADAMAY.</p> <p>Divisions were furthered amongst urban poor organizations in the community due to the pseudo-hierarchies.</p>	
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*Note.* Data collected by authors.

***Tumbalik (February 2014-October 2018)***

During this period, Sitio San Roque continued to experience fire, with another incident occurring in August 2017; incremental evictions by the NHA-ALI also persisted, with the pleas of non-SRCC/SRCC-MCHC<sup>5</sup> urban poor organizations, particularly KADAMAY, being consistently ignored by both NHA-ALI and the QC LGU. In October 2015, SPI entered the scene by acquiring 15.7 hectares from the NHA's share in the JVA with ALI. SPI is the development subsidiary of Bloomberry Resorts Corporation, the owner of the Solaire brand. Since then, the land purchased by SPI from the NHA has been designated as Area J—the “priority area” for demolition to construct the Solaire Resort and Casino within the community. Area J includes the Samanaka and Sebastian areas in Sitio San Roque, where the majority of the ISFs are affiliated with SRCC-MCHC, with some belonging to KADAMAY.

In June 2016, City Mayor of the QC LGU Herbert "Bistek" Bautista announced the relocation of more than 55,000 ISFs residing in Quezon City to areas outside the city, specifically Santa Maria and San Jose del Monte in Bulacan, and Antipolo, to “allow the unimpeded implementation of development projects.” The relocation was targeted to be completed within three to six years (Roxas, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> In 2014, a segment of the SRCC urban poor organization broke away, creating the SRCC-MCHC.

By December 2016, the NHA, in collaboration with SPI, had begun eviction operations (Umil, 2017). Like the NHA-ALI, SPI deployed private security guards and established outposts at strategic positions encircling the Area J priority area. To facilitate the clearance of Area J, NHA hastened the relocation of SRCC-MCHC members, who constitute the majority of structure owners in the priority area. SPI also offered additional financial incentives to structure owners who agreed to “voluntary demolition”. Conversely, renters residing in these housing structures were left homeless and excluded from any compensation. In response, KADAMAY began recruiting and organizing renters in 2017, resulting in a significant increase in their membership.

At the national level, the Aquino Administration continued to prioritize fostering an optimal environment for private sector investments (IBON, 2015), and by the end of his term, Aquino had initiated more PPP projects than the combined total of the three preceding presidents (Tahara-Stubbs, 2016). This enthusiasm for PPPs was subsequently maintained by then-President Rodrigo Duterte upon assuming office in June 2016 (Sy, 2022). In his inaugural State of the Nation Address (SONA) in 2016, Duterte outlined his plans regarding the urban poor in the country, framing his perspective on them as a “nuisance” to the government (Philstar, 2016). This stance was similar to that of Mayor Bistek, who viewed the urban poor as obstacles to development. Following the March 2017 housing takeover by another chapter of KADAMAY in Pandi, Bulacan, then-President Duterte expressed strong animosity towards KADAMAY, even threatening them with forcible eviction (Macas, 2017).

Since assuming office as President, Duterte has implemented the 'war on drugs' (Kine, 2017). This campaign was notably observed in Sitio San Roque in October 2018, where 53 residents were arbitrarily arrested and detained by the QC PNP. This incident coincided with a large-scale demolition attempt in the same month, prompting KADAMAY leaders to speculate that the drug war campaign might be used to bolster the demolition of Sitio San

Roque (Ellao, 2018). Sitio San Roque, according to KADAMAY, has experienced an increased presence of PNP officers during this period.

From February 2014 to October 2018, eviction operations were expedited, particularly targeting Area J in Sitio San Roque as a priority area for demolition. These operations became more frequent, conducted not only by NHA-ALI but also by SPI. Furthermore, there were instances when large-scale demolition attempts and incremental evictions took place simultaneously. As a result, KADAMAY developed another contention repertoire to ensure that their renter members have a place to stay after the structure owner's house is demolished—a practice known as *Tumbalik* (collective home restoration), combining the words *tumba* (tumble) and *balik* (re-erect) (Cunanan, 2020). Ate Fe elaborates on how KADAMAY executes this: “Tuwing may “voluntary demolition” ang structure owner, andoon kami para magbantay at mag-giit na hindi ma-ground zero at makapag-tira ng kapisang kwarto para sa renter. Nakikipag-nego[tiat] kami sa may-ari ng bahay at sa magdedemolish [Whenever there is a "voluntary demolition" by the structure owner, we are there to ensure that the housing structure is not completely razed to the ground so that the renter can retain a small portion of the housing structure. We negotiate with both the homeowner and the demolition team].”

Additionally, Ka Inday explained that if negotiations fail and the housing structure is completely demolished, only then is the process of *tumbalik* initiated. The primary focus of KADAMAY, according to her, is to prevent the complete destruction of the housing structure.

**Table 5**

*Arenas of Interaction in Tumbalik*

<b>KADAMAY and National State Authorities and Private Sector Entities, and Local State Authorities</b>	<b>KADAMAY and Security Forces</b>	<b>KADAMAY and other urban poor organizations</b>	<b>Repertoire of Contention</b>
<p>President Duterte continued mania for PPPs, and exhibited animosity towards KADAMAY (because of the housing takeover).</p> <p>Incremental evictions were carried out simultaneously with large-scale demolition attempts by NHA-ALI or SPI.</p> <p>QC LGU continues to ignore concerns raised by KADAMAY.</p> <p>Both QC Mayor Bistek and President Duterte view urban poor as impediments to development.</p>	<p>NHA-ALI and SLI private security guards monitored the activities of KADAMAY.</p> <p>President Duterte's 'drug war' resulted in heightened presence of security forces in the community.</p>	<p>Divisions between urban poor organizations due to the pseudo-hierarchies created by NHA-ALI persisted.</p> <p>KADAMAY organized non-SRCC/SRCC-MCHC ISFs (mostly renters).</p>	<p><b>Tumbalik</b></p>

*Note.* Data collected by authors.

***Community Development Plan and Temporary Shelter (November 2018-July 2024)***

Under the Duterte administration, the NHA-ALI intensified its efforts to evict the urban poor of Sitio San Roque. Concurrently, the administration continued its assault on KADAMAY, specifically targeting the organization's Pandi, Bulacan chapter for occupying unoccupied NHA housing units (Esguerra, 2019; Sy, 2022).

In December 2019, then-President Rodrigo Duterte also established the NTF-ELCAC through Executive Order No. 70. This aims to implement the government's “whole-of-nation approach” to achieving “peace” and “defeating the communist insurgency” by providing basic government services and social development packages, and developing necessary infrastructure for marginalized communities. In October 2019, the DILG, through its issuance of the Memorandum Circular No. 2019-169, provided the implementing guidelines for the RCSP. According to this, the RCSP aims to strengthen the community initiatives of the AFP

and to make the efforts to meet these objectives more LGU-driven (DILG, 2019; DILG, 2020; DILG Regional Office V, 2021; DILG, 2023).

In Sitio San Roque, incremental evictions continued through “voluntary demolitions” carried out by NHA-ALI and SPI; this was also accompanied by the continuing surveillance by private security guards from these entities. While tumbalik was developed by KADAMAY to mitigate the effects of these incremental evictions and prevent the displacement of renters, it was clear to the organization that this approach was primarily defensive in nature.

By April 2019, KADAMAY recognized the necessity of exploring alternative avenues for asserting their rights (Beltran, 2021), leading to them exploring the People’s Plan. Alvarez (2019, p. 53) defines this as “a new housing governance regime that proffered participatory approaches to slum eviction and resettlement.”

However, KADAMAY’s version aims to remove the neoliberal imperatives embedded within the People’s Plan<sup>6</sup> (Dimalanta & Bautista, 2024). They oppose the commodification of housing, the market segmentation of ISFs, and the exclusion of renters and the poorest members of society. Moreover, they also reject the state authorities’ practice of shifting the responsibility for housing provision onto the urban poor, leaving them to their own devices (Berner & Phillips, 2005; Alvarez, 2019; Arcilla, 2020).

KADAMAY called its version of the on-site People’s Plan the Community Development Plan (CDP), marking another repertoire of contention. Ate Fe explained this: “*Iba kasi ang tradisyonal na People’s Plan...ang atin kailangan gobyerno mismo ang gagawa ng pabahay para sa atin* [The traditional People’s Plan is different from ours; in our case, it is essential that the government itself builds housing for us].”

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<sup>6</sup> The People’s Plan is a participatory, bottom-up approach to shelter planning, rooted in principles outlined in the LGU and the UDHA. Initially developed by civil society organizations advocating for urban poor housing, it aims to shift the process by which ISFs access government socialized housing programs. However, in practice, these principles are often diluted when applied within existing state housing policies (Dimalanta and Bautista, 2024).

The CDP started with a socio-economic profiling of the members of KADAMAY from April to June 2019. This profiling aimed to comprehensively survey the diverse socioeconomic conditions of KADAMAY's membership and to ensure that the CDP aligns with their financial capabilities and basic needs. This effort was carried out by KADAMAY in collaboration with Save San Roque (SSR) who conducted the interviews. Concurrently, SSR, composed of young professionals, students, and advocates for the urban poor, was officially launched in early May 2019 to support KADAMAY in developing its CDP. One of SSR's co-convenors worked as a community architect in an NGO that facilitates People's Planning with urban poor organizations.

With the ongoing incremental evictions by SPI in the Area J priority zone, by the end of May 2019, the area resembled an urban war zone, having become deserted, with only dilapidated houses left in the wake of SPI's operations. Subsequently, SPI began erecting fences around the perimeter of the demolished areas to prevent ISFs from re-encroaching on the land (Recio & Dovey, 2021).

In early June 2019, a re-orientation workshop was held to facilitate the discussion between members and leaders of KADAMAY and SSR on the participatory planning process, and to reaffirm the importance of people participation in this endeavor. To assist KADAMAY in identifying individual housing needs and preferences, a Dream House Workshop was conducted from late June to mid-July 2019. Following this, in late July 2019, a counter-mapping workshop took place to visually map and assess the impact of eviction activities on Sitio San Roque.

Another large-scale demolition was attempted in August 2019. However, KADAMAY, other urban poor organizations, and affected residents in Sitio San Roque reached out to the newly elected Mayor of Quezon City, Josefina "Joy" Belmonte who only assumed office beginning June 30, 2019. During this dialogue, KADAMAY raised the issue

that the Certificate of Compliance (COC) used for the planned demolition by NHA-ALI was signed by former QC Mayor "Bistek" and had already expired. Therefore, it was no longer valid under the new term of the QC Mayor, as the Local Housing Board, tasked with authorizing demolitions by approving or disapproving COCs, had not yet been reconvened. The COC, issued on June 19, 2019, had exceeded its 30-day validity period. After this dialogue, Mayor Joy committed that the said large-scale demolition will not happen. This event signaled to KADAMAY a new openness from the QC LGU under Mayor Joy's leadership.

Despite this commitment from the QC LGU, KADAMAY remained vigilant and continued to plan for a *barikadang bayan*. Concurrently, SSR sent formal letters to NHA (as well as DILG, QC LGU, and the Office of the President) challenging the legality of the scheduled demolition in August 2019. They requested the necessary documentation in accordance with DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2008-143 for the forced eviction to proceed. On the morning of August 7, 2019, KADAMAY, with SSR and its networks still prepared for a potential demolition; fortunately, the eviction did not occur.

Subsequent participatory workshops conducted in September and November 2023 were dedicated to enhancing KADAMAY's shared vision for on-site development in Sitio San Roque and planning for site development and suitable housing typologies for the CDP. During the FGD in 2021, a KADAMAY leader underscored the significance of the participatory process within the CDP, emphasizing that it was empowering as they themselves took charge of decision-making and designing the plan.

On the other hand, while the CDP was being developed from April to October 2019, SPI continued its incremental evictions in Area J and erected fencing. By November 2019, the fencing in Area J had become severe, with little to no access left for residents living there. From this situation, KADAMAY developed another form of contention—temporary shelters.

To ensure that renters were not displaced from the community, KADAMAY negotiated with SPI to arrange the transfer of its members (mostly renters) and even other non-KADAMAY renters to temporary shelters constructed by SPI. However, these temporary shelters, upon turnover from SPI, typically consist of core houses—having only walls, columns, and a roof. And as a result, requires substantial financial resources to make these shelters more livable.

**Table 6**

*Arenas of Interaction in the Temporary Shelter and Community Development Plan*

<b>KADAMAY and National State Authorities and Private Sector Entities, and Local State Authorities</b>	<b>KADAMAY and Security Forces</b>	<b>KADAMAY and other urban poor organizations</b>	<b>Repertoire of Contention</b>
<p>NHA-ALI and SPI continued its incremental evictions and large-scale demolition attempts before, amidst, and after the pandemic.</p> <p>QC LGU, through its HCDRD, opened its doors to KADAMAY for dialogues; after the pandemic, continued its dialogue with KADAMAY; it also explored the possibility of in-city relocation through ALI.</p> <p>President Duterte continued to view KADAMAY, and more broadly, the urban poor as obstacles to “development.”</p> <p>President Duterte, prior the pandemic, established the NTF-ELCAC to further the government’s anti-insurgency campaign; DILG, then, provided policy guidelines formalizing a dedicated team concerned with implementing RCSP for NTF-ELCAC.</p> <p>After the pandemic, NHA-ALI, moving to clear other parts of the community, attempted a large-scale demolition of Area H.</p>	<p>NTF-ELCAC increased its presence within Sitio San Roque especially during the height of the pandemic; NTF-ELCAC through its RCSP vilified KADAMAY.</p> <p>NHA-ALI and SLI private security guards continuously monitored activities of KADAMAY; SPI private security guards constructed additional fences and zone obstructions.</p>	<p>Divisions between urban poor organizations due to the pseudo-hierarchies created by NHA-ALI persisted.</p> <p>SPIs fencing physically divided the community, severing relations between and among urban poor organizations in Area J.</p> <p>KADAMAY, through SSR, gained access to knowledge on the process of People’s Plan.</p> <p>KADAMAY, through its pandemic community relief efforts, fostered collaboration with other urban poor organizations; however, NTF-ELCAC through its RCSP, sowed division among urban poor organizations.</p>	<p><b>Temporary Shelter</b></p> <p><b>Community Development Plan</b></p>

*Note.* Data collected by authors.

On December 9, 2019, KADAMAY with SSR and its networks, presented the CDP to Mayor Joy Belmonte following a festive protest mobilization outside the Quezon City Hall. Representatives from KADAMAY and SSR engaged in a dialogue with Mayor Joy to discuss the plan in the CDP, which is an on-site housing development, along with its procedural aspects. She also reiterated her earlier promise to review and investigate the JVA between the NHA and ALI, if the UDHA had been followed. The City Mayor assured that no large-scale demolition would occur in Sitio San Roque, pledging to reject any renewal of the COC for Demolition (in her capacity as Chairperson of QC LGU's LHB) and ensuring that residents' voices are heard. She also called for the cooperation from the national government agencies and private developers to achieve a "win-win situation" for Sitio San Roque. Moreover, she reaffirmed that "people are not the enemies of progress and development" and vowed to review and consider the CDP of KADAMAY.

### ***Prospects for the KADAMAY's CDP***

After submitting the CDP to Mayor Joy in December 2020, KADAMAY persisted in their efforts to realize its implementation. However, these endeavors were disrupted by the onset of the pandemic in March 2020. It was only in March 2022 that KADAMAY refocused on housing issues after prioritizing community relief efforts such as the establishment of *Kusinang Bayan* (community kitchen) and *Tanimang Bayan* (community food garden). Due to these solidarity efforts, collaborations between San Roque organizations were briefly facilitated.

Inter-organizational interactions, however, were short lived. The period of the COVID-19 crisis was coupled with increased surveillance within communities that heavily policed people's organizations. The NTF-ELCAC, as the primary conduit of the state for repressing communist insurgencies, targeted KADAMAY's leaders and members. This is expected as the *Tanimang Bayan* and *Kusinang Bayan* may be considered as repertoires of

contention, revealing the inadequacy of the government to address pressing issues of the masses during this unfortunate time. It further highlighted the incredible gap of government policies in truly considering the most vulnerable while in lockdown.

The red-tagging of KADAMAY's efforts led to a chilling effect among the community, resulting to a fragmentation of earlier established solidarity. Additionally, NTF-ELCAC also conducted other "counter-insurgency" activities through distributing relief goods, forming their own "people's organizations" that discouraged mobilization and anti-state sentiment, which were prevalent during that time. Government aids were thus used to incentivize people to go against KADAMAY and echo state propaganda.

During the pandemic, KADAMAY's interactions with the QC LGU, particularly with the Housing Community Development and Resettlement Department (HCDRD) represented by Acting Head Atty. Joselito "Jojo" Conejero, also revolved around these initiatives. Despite conducting at least two dialogues on the CDP with the HCDRD before the local elections in May 2022, there was no further progress from the QC LGU throughout 2023, despite KADAMAY's persistent follow-ups. It is important to note that since March 2022, there has been a shift in KADAMAY from advocating strictly for on-site housing to considering an in-city approach, following consultations conducted by KADAMAY in early 2022. Even with the dialogues with the QC LGU's HCDRD, NHA-ALI in November 2023 attempted a large-scale demolition. This time, in the Area H of Sitio San Roque.

It was only in early 2024 that the HCDRD of QC LGU responded to KADAMAY. At least two formal dialogues have been conducted by KADAMAY with the HCDRD, with another scheduled for August 2024. In recent dialogues in 2024, the QC LGU maintained its stance that it does not differentiate between qualified and disqualified ISFs—all are eligible for relocation packages, provided they have not previously received one. This has been their position since engaging with KADAMAY in 2022.

The change in 2024 involves the QC LGU's HCDRD now considering a 10,000 sqm (or 1-hectare) plot in Pingkian, Quezon City, owned by ALI, for in-city housing for Sitio San Roque, compared to the originally proposed 5,000 sqm in 2022 (also in the same plot). Moreover, in 2022, the LGU planned to purchase the land from ALI and oversee the housing development. However, as of 2024, ALI will reportedly take charge of developing the housing, while the LGU will procure it at construction cost and the land at fair market value. Despite these changes, the housing expense for ISFs from Sitio San Roque who may relocate remains unchanged at Php 800.00 per month, consistent from 2022 to 2024.

Ate Fe explained, "*Alam naman na namin na ang CDP natin... 'di talaga ibibigay ng gobyerno lahat-lahat ng gusto natin... mahirap kausap ang mga 'yan* [We know that with our Community Development Plan (CDP), the government won't fulfill all our requests... they are difficulty to work with]."

For KADAMAY, the CDP is a platform for empowerment and negotiating with state authorities who have control over state housing resources. Ate Fe stated that "*Ang pakikipag-usap ng QC LGU ay ibinunga ng pag-pasa natin ng CDP at iba pang pag-gigiit na ginawa natin* [Our dialogue with the QC LGU resulted from our submission of the CDP and other strategies we employed]." The outcome of the CDP, according to her, depends on how far KADAMAY can push state authorities to adopt inclusive, affordable, and people-centered socialized housing.

In the preceding sections, our case study of KADAMAY San Roque has shown the neoliberal character of the state and its intent on primarily protecting the best interest of the private sector through, for instance, the PPPs and putting development projects instead of public welfare. This is the primary logic from which it operates especially with regards to how it solves "the housing problem" and the development of the city. In the 10-year period analyzing the experience of KADAMAY San Roque, we made apparent how at almost every

turn, the state, whether through the NHA or the old LGU has only been concerned with violently displacing and uprooting the urban poor creating a milieu where they had to constantly struggle for survival.

As the state continues to railroad its “development” agenda—in this case the establishment of the QC CBD and Vertis North, the urban poor communities are again left as mere afterthoughts and eye sores that need to be cleared and moved away from the center. This process, besides being violent, also illustrates the undemocratic character of the development regimes in the country. It does not consult the grassroots and the marginalized. When they do consult them, it is often half-hearted. When left systematically unheard, social movements, in this case KADAMAY, develop different tools for contention. These tools unsettled the housing policies by democratizing its categorization of informal settlers accessing state housing resources. For example, previously renters were disqualified from accessing state housing resources, and even from other forms of interactions like dialogues, etc.

Because of this unfair treatment, KADAMAY San Roque has resisted and persisted. Shaped by the different dimensions of Areas of Interactions, specifically, KADAMAY and National State Authorities and Private Sector Entities, and Local State Authorities; KADAMAY and Security Forces, and KADAMAY and other urban poor organizations; we saw how their repertoires of contention has evolved from street occupation, to tumbalik, until the current CDP.

KADAMAY San Roque’s case shows the ingenuity of the marginalized in their resistance against unjust practices of the state, like mass evictions. It also shows some limited agency, especially given the imposing and undemocratic actions of the state. Through the lens of repertoires of contention conceptualized by Tilly (1993) and by extension, Alimi (2015), we saw how KADAMAY San Roque has learned to come up with different routines of

resistance due to the continuous onslaught of state marginalization. Further, the study made sense of the shifts in their collective claims-making such as the change in their openness to the idea of a CDP to counter traditional housing policies that primarily recognizes the issues with the People's Plan. This shift we saw was due to some semblance of democratic opening on the part of the LGU to really hear the organization.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Through various Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and various field notes, this paper makes sense of the practices observed by the authors that were conducted by KADAMAY San Roque in asserting their claim for more democratic and inclusive housing policies. It introduced innovative ways that the residents contended the actions of state authorities and private developers that aim to displace them. Further and contrary to common misconception of militant organizations, the case of KADAMAY in Sitio San Roque is able to show that social movements do not only rely on disruptive forms of resistance but also draw from a variety of repertoires of contention developed through struggle. Their toolbox is not limited to disruptive practices; it also includes strategies that rely on negotiation. However, it is evident that these negotiation efforts are frequently accompanied by disruptive practices, which serve to further widen spaces for negotiation and amplify their assertions towards state authorities, private sector entities, and security forces.

Through the years of experience of KADAMAY San Roque and their subsequent innovative techniques in resisting the violent dispossession perpetrated by the government's War on Slums, we can gather some valuable lessons. While not fully a success, their development of various repertoires of contention brought some incremental gains for the community. In general, the strategies enumerated above pried open some important democratic concessions vis-a-vis the state. In this case, some notable gains were the provision of relocation packages and other options for the community. It also was able to prolong the

continuity of the community. Without resorting to these repertoires, Ate Fe claims the demise of San Roque: “*Yung strategies na ito ay nagbunga ng gantong klase, nagbubukas ang mga authorities, dahil lumaban ang KADAMAY. Kung walang KADAMAY, wala na ang San Roque—kayang kaya nila i-wash out* [These strategies brought about an openness of the authorities, since KADAMAY fought for it. Without KADAMAY, there would be no San Roque].”

However, these repertoires of contention have their limitations. One important factor noted was the temporal aspect of the strategy. Specifically, a time where the organization had its most members mobilized. Compound this with the hostile treatment of the security forces through the state and private interests, as well as the pandemic. Unsurprisingly, this has led to the deterioration of the social movement and its structure.

KADAMAY San Roque further illustrates the non-stationary characters of social movements. Following the framework of repertoires of contention and its arenas of interaction, we saw, through the years, the evolution of ways KADAMAY withstood unfair institutional policies and tactics. We specifically highlight their continuous restyling of practices from street occupations, tumbalik, temporary shelter, and CDP.

The case study of KADAMAY San Roque makes apparent the polar extremes in terms of housing policy. In terms of accessing housing programs, the marginalized are left to choose between state rigidity through NHA programs where a fixed menu of inhumane off-city relocation sites are presented. On the other hand, those opting out of this mode are left to their own devices, abandoned by the state. They are forced to come up with a “people’s plan” by themselves without adequate technical assistance that is important for its implementation such as spatial mapping and drawing blueprints. Housing policies, through the people’s plan pathways, should not be a means for the state to transfer their responsibilities in providing crucial resources such as housing. This trend of neoliberalism

should be critiqued, and aligns with the argument put forth by Berner and Philips (2005, p. 8): “Governments...need to make themselves responsive to, not absent from, poorer communities, and especially the poorest of the poor. They need to encourage initiative not by walking away but by offering stable, long-term, targeted financial and technical support.”

Regardless of the small democratic gains achieved by KADAMAY San Roque in their 10-year experience resisting the government’s inequitable neoliberal urban development policies to assert housing rights, this should not be interpreted by analysts to further shift the burden towards the capabilities of grassroots organizations and the ingenuity of the marginalized. Housing programs and policies should definitely be reformed and be pushed away from the neoliberal condition. In particular, housing should not merely be an afterthought or by-product of development projects between the state and private developers. Various state apparatuses, at baseline, should be more proactive in their planning especially with regards to public housing. Ideally, policies that concern communities should start from them. At the same time, the state should also recognize their duties and their capabilities at implementing these housing developments. Many of the technical aspects drawn in the CDP were in collaboration with architect, engineer, and research volunteers. The state should be the primary institution in proffering help to the marginalized such as crucial technical help needed in coming up with concrete and doable housing development.

The CDP is indicative of the marginalized to meet the government half way in resolving public issues, but at the same time resisting the issues embedded in utilizing the people’s plan approach within the current housing policies. As a concrete proposal, LGUs/NGAs should, for example, provide technical assistance like land surveying, settlement planning and other highly complicated processes in housing development. Government should play a more proactive role in making land available for housing the marginalized.

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