



**UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
OPEN UNIVERSITY**

MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

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**THE PHENOMENON OF RESISTANCE COMMUNICATION:
A CASE STUDY OF AN URBAN POOR COMMUNITY IN QUEZON CITY**

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26 April 2023

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Acceptance Page:

This paper prepared by **RAPHAEL MADARA UBALES** with the title: “***The Phenomenon of Resistance Communication: A Case Study of an Urban Poor Community in Quezon City***” is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Program.

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Biographical Sketch



Raphael Madara Ubales has a degree in Social Sciences from the University of the Philippines Baguio. His academic background includes a bachelor's degree in Social Anthropology and Psychology, which has enabled him to explore the complexities of humans. Throughout his career, he has been partial to writing stories and exploring the narratives that provide insights into the sociocultural and psychological dimensions of the human experience.

From his undergraduate thesis on the phenomenology of children's hunger to his current position as creative director for a sustainable marketing agency in the US, Raphael has consistently exhibited his partiality toward writing about the human experience, especially when it is related to inclusivity.

His efforts to promote the rights of the urban poor began in 2019 when he joined *Save San Roque*, an alliance dedicated to advocating for the needs and interests of urban poor communities, especially in the Philippines. In this experience, he has developed a deep connection with and a greater understanding of the importance of inclusive development.

Raphael's experiences with the alliance have inspired him to pursue a master's thesis topic that will contribute to the literature on urban poor development studies. Through his research, he hopes to further advance the cause of social justice by shedding light on the challenges faced by the urban poor and advocating for policies that promote inclusive and sustainable development.

He is driven by his passion for learning about people's experiences and sharing their stories, particularly those whose voices have been marginalized. Thus, he dedicates this research to efforts that contribute to amplifying the voices of the unheard, promote the principles of social justice, and serve as an inspiration to others who seek to effect positive change in their communities.

Acknowledgment Page

I would like to acknowledge and give my warmest thanks to my thesis adviser, Dr. Melinda Bandalaria, who helped make this work reach its highest potential. Her guidance and advice carried me through all the stages of finishing my research. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Benjamina Flor and Dr. Grace Alfonso, for letting my defense be a pleasant and learning moment. For your brilliant expert comments and suggestions, I am deeply grateful.

I am also grateful to the urban poor community in Quezon City who welcomed me for many years and taught me so many valuable lessons that I will carry both in my personal and professional life. I hope this research contributes to their continuous fight for inclusive development. Gratitude should also be extended to the advocates and groups that have helped me make this research possible

I would be remiss in not mentioning my friends and family, especially my parents, Rodolfo Sr. and Salvacion, my siblings, in-laws, nieces, nephews, and grandchildren. Their unwavering support and belief in me kept my spirits and motivation at an all-time high, especially during the most difficult periods of this research journey.

I am also grateful to our family pets, especially my very own Laya, thank you for staying up with me during the sleepless nights finishing this research and providing both entertainment and emotional support.

Finally, to God, whose presence has guided me throughout this journey.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, for their endless love, support, and encouragement.

*I also dedicate this to the urban poor communities—
the heartbeat that keeps the cities alive.*

#DevelopmentForAll

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand the phenomenon of collective resistance through a communication perspective in the context of the urban poor. A qualitative case study involving five (5) research participants from different backgrounds living in the same urban poor community in Quezon City, Philippines was used. The research participants were interviewed to gain their insights and knowledge as basis in understanding how they communicate collective resistance in their community. After reviewing the interviews and emerging themes and narratives have been analyzed, the results show that three key communicative elements are the basis in establishing resistance in the urban poor setting: communicating their lived experience, their defiance against shared injustices, and their response with collective action. All three elements center around the urban poor's continuous exploitation and marginalization. This study aims to contribute to the growing literature on collective resistance through a communication approach, highlighting the participation of the marginalized group or sector's lived experiences as imperative in establishing resistance. The findings on this study may be used by policymakers, development practitioners, and researchers in understanding how communication is a critical component in social mobilization.

Keywords: Development Communication, Resistance Communication, Collective Resistance, Urban Poor Resistance, Urban Poor

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

When we say development, what primarily comes to people's minds? One might initially talk about high-rise buildings, wide roads, and opulent establishments. All these can be categorically true depending on who you are talking to. In the development discourse, one sector has struggled to find and reclaim their voices and space for the longest time: the urban poor. As a marginalized and oppressed population, they face multifaceted risks related to poor housing, lack of access to essential social services, environmental hazards, and social, political, and economic risks. Unfortunately, decisions on what and who should be included in development and progress lie in the hands of those in power who, often, dismiss the voices of the urban poor from the development discourse.

The Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) reports that there are 1.4 million informal settler families (ISFs) in the Philippines, of whom 38.85% (544,000) are in the National Capital Region (Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, 2017). Although these urban poor settlements have a long-established presence in cities, they are routinely brushed aside by national and local governments. Typically viewed as obstructions to urban development, they are often forcibly uprooted from their communities and relocated to far-flung resettlement locations.

The right to adequate housing for low-income families is protected by Philippine laws, such as Article 13, Sections 9 and 10 of the Philippine Constitution

(Urban Land Reform and Housing) and the Urban Development Housing Act (R.A. 7279). However, even with these laws, housing rights violations remain rampant in urban poor communities (UPCs) facing development aggression. Such is the fate of most UPCs. For this research, the focus will be on a UPC situated on a piece of government-owned land managed by the National Housing Authority (NHA) located in Quezon City. Since the joint venture agreement between the NHA and a private developer was signed in 2009, the residents continuously faced threats and acts of violence to force them out of their homes. The signed agreement, made possible when then-president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo signed E.O. 620 in 2007 establishing the Quezon City Central Business District (QCCBD), aims to transform the area into a mixed-use development, including malls, condominiums, offices, parks, and a casino).

Despite efforts of the local government to relocate urban low-income families to housing projects, many from the community continue to collectively resist, because relocation sites are too far from their livelihood, and access to basic social services, such as schools, hospitals, and affordable transport options, is not viable. In particular, one organization in the UPC case study has successfully resisted several demolition attempts in the community while consistently calling for on-site development and affordable housing. For decades, this collective form of resistance in the face of repressive, anti-poor policies disguised as development projects has helped them face threats to their inherent rights to access basic social services, especially housing. Such a resistance is an embodiment of the collective mobilization of the marginalized community's identity to oppose the exploitative actions of the dominant powers that repress them.

The urban poor are often presented in social institutions, such as schools and the media as lazy, uneducated, and deterrents to development. However, despite the lack of resources, some UPCs have successfully resisted threats of displacement, and it is significant to understand this phenomenon. In today's world, where neoliberal policies often dominate the development discourse, the marginalized and oppressed are making a stand by voicing their collective resistance and reclaiming the narrative. In the case of the current research, the residents of the UPC case study have come up with their own community development plan as a counterproposal.

This study aims to understand the phenomenon of collective resistance through a communication perspective within the context of the urban poor, in this case, a UPC located in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines. It will look at how resistance is communicated in the UPC to help residents establish social movements and collective action against external threats to their community. As the UPC faces continuous threats of demolitions and forced evictions, how do they use resistance as their expression of collective agency to actively seek communicative spaces in the development discourse often controlled by those in power? By focusing on a UPC in one of the largest cities in the metropolis, this study intends to come up with an abstraction and an urban poor resistance communication framework that can be useful in understanding how they practice continuous resistance to the threats they experience.

Significance of the Study

Resistance among the urban poor is often initiated by the need to solve localized issues, such as demolition threats, human rights violations, and various forms of harassment in the community. This was observed by Anna Marie Karos (1998) in *Fragmentations in the Urban Movement: Shift from Resistance to Policy Advocacy*. She shares that a typical characteristic of poor urban struggles is that it is reactive and does not go beyond the required collective action for their parochial concerns, resulting in fragmentations within the urban poor social movement. However, this is not necessarily considered a negative result of subjective demands but as part of existing social and organizational dynamics due to attempts to gain access to the state's decision-making processes (Karos, 1998). Urban poor resistance stems from the need to reclaim communicative space in the urban planning and development discourse, where they are not considered decision-makers in the planning and managing of resources that directly affect them.

This study aims to understand resistance communication in the urban poor setting through the perspectives of urban poor residents and their experiences. Important insights can be obtained by interviewing research participants and asking them to recall their personal experiences. By understanding this phenomenon through a communication perspective, this study aims to explain how resistance takes place from the individual to the collective level, enabling community members to arouse, organize, and mobilize themselves to preserve their rights. This study also attempts to identify the communication processes and elements involved in collectively mobilizing and achieving social change through the establishment of

resistance against the hegemony of dominant structures in the development discourse, especially those that have traditionally dominated the narrative. Furthermore, this work examines how everyday forms of resistance in communities—both at the individual and collective levels—are governed by communicative processes that help them develop their resistive identities, enabling them to advance their objective of achieving social change.

By looking at the case study's continuous resistance to development aggression, the research will explore how they respond to external threats and capacitate themselves within the community to participate in dialogues with the local government and other government agencies in forwarding their agenda. Thus far, related studies have investigated how urban poor movements in the Philippines have successfully helped them fight for their rights to the city and demand decent, affordable, and mass-oriented housing. One is Maria Cristina Jurado's (2013) research on how organizing urban poor women in Manila gave them their housing and land tenure.

This instrumental case study aims to discover how resistance is established through communication processes in the urban poor setting. Such processes in UPCs that lead toward collective action is generally defined in this work as "resistance communication." This study focuses on a single case, a UPC in Quezon City that has continued to show resistance despite facing threats of displacement for years. The analysis is elevated to a level of abstraction in order to establish a resistance communication framework in an urban poor setting, which can contribute to the field of development communication.

General Research Question

How is the phenomenon of resistance communicated in a UPC setting?

Specific Research Questions

1. What drives urban poor residents to participate in collective resistance?
2. How are issues and concerns communicated in a UPC setting in ways that lead residents to practice collective resistance?
3. Are there elements in the communication process that are unique to communicating resistance in a UPC setting?

Research Objectives

1. Determine the factors which drive urban poor residents to participate in collective resistance.
2. Determine how information on community concerns is formulated, developed, and shared to communicate resistance.
3. Identify the unique elements characterizing the experience of the urban poor in establishing resistance from a communication perspective which can also provide insights to effective communication for social mobilization.

Research Propositions

1. Urban poor residents are driven to participate in collective resistance by their personal experiences and hardships, which they have endured from years of facing external threats to their communities. These experiences motivate them to reclaim their place in the development discourse, where they are often sidelined and subjected to unfair treatment and abuse. Residents in UPCs play an active role in practicing acts of resistance, guided by the goal of establishing a collective presence that can be acknowledged by those in power. This effectively involves them in the development discourse and in decision-making concerning policies that directly affect their daily lives.
2. UPC residents effectively communicate and establish resistance through a participatory approach to community concerns, where members—with their shared experiences of hardships from external threats—play an active role in self-organizing and practicing collective action to resist against those who continue to bring harm to the community.
3. Communication plays a central role as UPC residents practice collective action. They formulate, share, and provide feedback on information, helping them understand how they can better protect the interest of the community. In other words, communicative processes guide the urban poor in developing their own collective agency in resistance.

Scope and Limitations

As this study aims to investigate the phenomenon of resistance communication in the context of the urban poor setting, it focuses on a specific UPC that has long experienced threats of demolition and displacement through relocation. In particular, it will focus on how its residents have collectively worked to resist threats to their community through the processes of resistance communication that help them arouse, organize, and mobilize themselves to demand social change through active participation in the development discourse.

As with a case study, a select number of research participants were interviewed for their experiences and narratives, which could help in better understanding the phenomenon of resistance from a communication standpoint. This qualitative study involved several visits to the community and interviews with selected participants. However, given the time constraints as a student and a full-time employee, I completed the data collection period in no longer than 4–6 weeks.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There are already several studies on urban poor resistance and social mobilizations in the Philippines. These are vital in enriching the literature on the urban poor sector and providing valuable information for community workers and organizers struggling to understand how best to participate in uplifting the plight of the urban poor. First, this review explores how the urban poor sector is forced to resist threats to their communities. As the existing antipoor policies of both the national and local governments marginalize oppressed sectors and force them out of the development discourse, this triggers resistance from the latter. It will also look into the nature of urban poor settlements and the most recent data on the urban poor sector in the Philippines, the current issues they are facing (ranging from housing backlogs to off-city relocations to social movements among the urban poor in the face of threats to their communities), and how resistance communication is seen as a framework that they have been employing not just to participate in development discourse but to redefine its meaning. Finally, this chapter looks into a participatory approach to communication as a primary driver in establishing collective resistance, especially in the urban poor context.

The Plight of the Urban Poor

In the Philippines, the National Statistical Coordinating Board defines “urban poor” as individuals or families in urban areas with incomes below the poverty line (Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor, n.d.). In the underprivileged and

homeless sector, they are often unemployed, underemployed, or involved in informal employment, such as pedicab driving, vending, etc. They mostly live in slums and resettlement areas, unoccupied lands, and/or areas along danger zones. According to the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (n.d.), the urban poor “are an integral part of society and are partners in urbanization and industrialization, and they help turn the wheel of the economy.” However, despite this positive definition, the sector continues to experience government neglect and are often excluded from consultations regarding their right to housing. They are typically displaced from their urban settlements and relocated to far-flung relocation sites without concern for their livelihood and access to basic social services.

The United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT) has reported that from 1990 to 2014, there has been a downward trend in the percentage of people living in slums in the Philippines, from 54.3% to 38.3% of the urban population (World Bank, n.d.). However, since then, the percentage of people living in slums in the Philippines has steadily increased, with the 2018 World Bank data indicating that 42.9% of the urban population live in the slums. While there can be various reasons for such exponential growth, these growing cities are confronted with the challenges of coming up with solutions to address the increasing demands for housing and basic social services.

In the Asia-Pacific region, millions of people who have fled to the urban centers for better opportunities depend on informal employment so they can have access to housing and other basic social services (United Nations Human Settlements Program [UN-HABITAT] & United Nations Economic and Social

Commission for Asia and the Pacific [ESCAP], 2015). However, despite the significant contributions of these informal workers to the cities' urban economies, they are rarely considered in formulating economic and social policies. In the same report by the UN-HABITAT and ECAP, informal workers—often from the urban poor sector—are less likely to have pensions, protection, and fair access to basic social services. Furthermore, while economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region has significantly lifted millions of people out of poverty, it is still home to the most critical urban slum populations and the largest concentrations of people living below the poverty line (UN-HABITAT & ESCAP, 2015).

The exponential growth of urban slums is not isolated but also occurs across Asia, the Pacific, and even in other parts of the world. In the Philippines, the abovementioned disparity has continued to increase, and basic services, such as decent and affordable housing, utilities, accessible transport options, and healthcare, remain disproportionately shared by urban area residents. As the lack of opportunities for livelihood and access to social services force these people to migrate from rural to urban settings, further problems are created when cities are not capable of providing sufficient resources for their poor urban constituents.

The Housing Problem

Rapid urbanization is an ongoing problem exacerbated by expensive and rising land prices as well as urban development that does not match the rate of population growth. According to a study on housing solutions for the urban poor in Manila by Maria Gehander and Eva Mornhed (2008), the need for housing due to

urban population growth has led to the emergence of “spontaneous settlements” or slums. Characterized as settlements without official urban planning, slums are communities with houses made of poor materials, often located in hazard-prone areas (narrow alleys along city creeks and floodways). Historically, in the Philippines, the previous Marcos administration was the first to introduce on-site development projects, such as the Bagong Lipunan Improvement of Sites and Services or BLISS Condominiums to address urban migration and housing problems in the 1970s. Under the guidance of the then Ministry of Human Settlements, it was considered an urban community model with residents from both low- and middle-income families receiving subsidies and livelihood opportunities. Decades later, the project was neglected due to the lack of support from subsequent governments (Marcelino, 2013). Furthermore, the BLISS project was not sustainable and did not focus on the poorest of the poor, eventually succumbing to a lack of vision and long-term planning.

Under the Corazon Aquino administration, the Housing and Urban Development Coordination Council (HUDCC) was formed in response to the United Nations Global Shelter Strategy (GSS 2000), which aimed to make housing affordable even to the poorest of the poor. Unfortunately, efforts shifted to relocating families to socialized housing in off-city sites—a policy that has seen more problems than solutions to this day. Mainly, urban poor residents are uprooted from their communities in the heart of cities and relocated to housing sites far from their livelihoods with inaccessible basic social services.

Under the term of Benigno Aquino Jr., the Commission on Audit flagged its In-

City Resettlement Housing Program for 2011–2016 for only completing half the targeted number of houses under its 9.853-billion-peso budget. In particular, of the 16,748 in-city housing units pledged under the program, only 8,644 were built by December 2016 (Nonato, 2017). Issues found were immense delays and time extensions in construction, lack of coordination between the local government and the NHA, and the absence of an updated database of Informal Settler Families (ISF) beneficiaries. In 2022, a significant issue faced by the housing crisis was the lack of budget appropriation. Based on the 2022 General Appropriations Act, the housing budget share dropped from 0.08% in 2021 to 0.07% (Department of Budget Management, 2022). Under the Rodrigo Duterte administration, the housing budget was consistently below 1% in the last six years, making it impossible to address the housing backlog. The House Committee on Housing and Urban Development chair, San Jose Del Monte City representative Florida Robes said that according to government records, in 2022, our country needed 6.7 million housing units; thus, an allocation of just below 1% of the total national budget is not enough to address this problem (Fernandez, 2021). The abovementioned examples reflect how socialized housing has been neglected by the government, regardless of the administration.

Aside from the dismal budget, another housing problem is the general condition of relocation sites and what seems to be a lack of consultation on the part of those relocated to these sites. In a paper entitled “Examining Stakeholders Collaboration: A Case of Relocating Informal Settlers in the Philippines,” Mark Anthony Velasco (2016) conducted a case study of informal settlers from a community in Sta. Cruz Village, Dipolog City. He identified several issues raised by the relocated families, including (1) a lack of access to potable water, electricity, and

healthcare (which can be argued that life conditions from their place of origin may be the same given the lack of these services); (2) variations in quality of housing units, with some made of lighter materials than others; (3) no sense of security because the households are merely treated as “stewards” of these housing units and not granted their land titles; and (4) no significant difference in the quality of life from their place of origin. Mainly, there was little change to their living conditions due to the insufficient livelihood opportunities in the relocation sites.

These issues are very similar to the sentiments raised by residents of a relocation site in Montalban, Rizal, which I learned of when I went there for relief operations during Typhoon Ulysses in 2020. For example, the first batches of residents relocated there had to endure months of not having access to utilities until there were enough occupants for water and electricity to become available. Furthermore, many had to travel for hours because their jobs were far from their current residence. Some had to resort to renting bed spaces in the city to save time and money from the daily commute and only coming home during the weekends. This circles back to the point raised earlier that the urban poor are often excluded from any form of planning before relocation. Unfortunately, these perpetually experienced problems in relocation sites are often the same triggers that force beneficiaries to go back to UPCs. This is because in the cities, they at least have access to informal employment and are much closer to basic social services and institutions, such as schools, hospitals, places of worship, and markets.

This perpetual problem of affordable housing continues to plague the urban poor as they face demolition threats on their informal settlements, relocation to far-

flung housing projects, violent expulsion from their communities, and other forms of abuse, which have now become part of their daily lives. It is not surprising that living off the edge every day has pushed them to resist at the individual level. Then, through interactions with the community, a shared experience is established, strengthening their resolve to protect their community, which is often manifested through collective resistance.

The Urban Poor's Root Problem

“The poor are increasingly marginalized from discursive spaces where decisions of neoliberal development are taken” (Dutta, 2012, p. 19). In his book, *Voices of Resistance*, Mohan J. Dutta thoroughly discussed the relationship between neoliberalism and the increasingly unequal distribution of communicative spaces between those in power and those who are often affected by neoliberal policies. In this context, the poor are often left out of the discursive space to talk about growth and progress. Dutta emphasizes the role of the current landscape of globalization in the practices of forms of resistance and calls for social change. These spaces of resistance are born out of the unequal economic and political processes resulting from globalization and neoliberal policies. Dutta (2009, p. 14) defines “globalization” as:

...characterized by the increasing flow of goods, capital, labor, and services across national borders; economically, it is defined and marked by *neoliberalism* as the primary political and economic organizing framework for social relations, economic relations, relationships of production, institutional frameworks, policy making, and implementation of policies across various sectors of the globe.

Neoliberalism is manifested in acts aimed at privatizing, liberalizing, and minimizing

public services, all of which determine the economic and political global landscape and shape the relationships between the more powerful West and the developing nations. Its structure and nature create the space in which relationships among the state, non-government organizations (NGOs), transnational corporations, and the public come into play. The state's role in providing public services is reduced and taken over by private corporations and NGOs, guided by the idea of implementing market deregulation and opening economies to open free markets. Under neoliberalism, the state's role in providing public services is reduced and is focused instead on securing the market and developing military and police systems to protect the "free market" from those who wish to "destabilize" the economy. For David Harvey (2005), neoliberalism is an economic logic operating on the idea that opening markets to compete with global corporations with minimal state intervention is the most efficient political and economic system compared with others.

However, the people who are often the casualties of such policies are sidelined in the neoliberal agenda, primarily when transnational corporations work with the state to accumulate resources disguised as "development projects." For example, in the current research, the case study UPC is sidelined in the development project plan for the identified location. The project aims to turn the land into a mixed-use development with offices, condominium building, malls, and parks. This creates an illusion of a promise of development or progress, because in reality, it completely excludes the existing UPC from the discourse. To make matters worse, the state—through the NHA—works with the private developer in pushing through with this project, executing various forms of harassment against the community residents to force them out of their houses.

Sufficient documentation has been presented to show that globalization has caused a spike in inequalities within nations and between nation-states (Millen & Holtz, 2000). Such inequalities are often due to the unfair distribution of resources, disenfranchising vast population segments. In his discussion of neoliberalism, Farmer explains how its “trickle-down effect” logic, which ideally claims that the economic benefits felt by the rich would eventually be felt by the lower-income sectors, has been thoroughly questioned (Farmer, 1999). This is because, nation-states with neoliberal policies have shown a significant increase in the unequal distribution of communicative spaces and opportunities to participate in the discussion of growth and progress between the rich and the poor. This erasure from proposed policies and program platforms has led to reckless displacement, land-grabbing, industrialization, and other disturbances, such as mining, deforestation, etc., to poor and marginalized communities.

These threats to their communities are fortified by the state’s use of military and police efforts to “ensure the safety of the development projects,” often using tactics of “antiterror” policies and police and military force. In many cases, the use of state-enacted violence is justified in the neoliberal framework to ensure that power is retained at the hands of the few. This condition created by the neoliberal agenda has become the space in which the resistance of affected communities and sectors manifest. Indeed, one must look at the neoliberal framework to conceptualize the idealization of resistance. With its antipoor stance on progress and development, a culture-centered approach focuses on listening to the voices of those in the margins as part of the transformation of the existing globalization agenda, which creates these margins and commits violence in the name of progress and development

(Dutta, 2012). Dutta also shares that the fundamental value of a neoliberal theory is rooted in individualistic ownership of property (2012). Through this nature, the collective action to resist is a stark contrast to the individualistic nature of neoliberal ideas.

Collective Resistance

As the collective nature of resistance is investigated in this work, there is a need to understand the significance of the active engagement of a particular group, sector, or community in fostering collaborative resistance. The idea of “collective resistance” exists because of the collective’s individual relationships and shared experiences versus the existing social structure. The essence of collective resistance is acknowledging that a shared notion of a problem or issue affects people’s lives at both the individual and community levels. This requires action and reaction at a group level, as it is usually a race against time to devise solutions to an urgent shared problem (Decolonizing Architecture Advanced Studies [DAAS], 2022). Thus, it can be said that to “resist” means to “create change”—usually, to solve an existing problem by pressuring current social structures to counter injustice and oppression.

Collective resistance is often manifested through collective behavior, a noninstitutionalized activity in which several people voluntarily engage (Robertson, 2020). Robertson’s discussion in *Collective Resistance and Social Change* (2020) explains how collective behavior has four primary forms: the crowd, the mass, the public, and social movements. The current study highlights social movements as a form of collective behavior, which in turn, is a manifestation of collective resistance.

Social movements are purposeful, organized groups striving to achieve a common goal. Unlike other collective behaviors, social movements focus on collective action and may operate at the local, regional, national, and global levels.

In the UPC case study, the residents' grassroots social movement emerged from pre-existing conditions that forced them to engage in collective resistance against current threats. As previously mentioned, the local relationships within the community play an active role in collective resistance. With the lack of institutional support to help marginalized and oppressed communities, urban poor residents often turn to one another for support and mutual aid. As will be shared later, their personal stories will help explain how their community is not just passively taking injustices but is adopting a proactive stance in seeking change and fighting for the residents' rights.

In the book *Courageous Resistance* (Thalhammer et al., 2007), the authors discussed collective resistance as a phenomenon that occurs when people stand up against injustice together. It combines the dynamic interaction of pre-existing conditions, networks, and other contextual factors. This highlights how collective resistance is not just about individual or collective aspirations but also about who and what they know as well as the nature of the current environment. One type of collective resistance discussed is "communal resistance," wherein the people who resist come from an existing community of "activists" or people who are actively participating in collective resistance (Thalhammer et al., 2007). It highlights the relationships among people who share the same values and commitment, which

facilitate trust and reliance on one another, increase their effectiveness, and expand their reach within their respective communities.

Such is the case presented in Thalhamer et al.'s (2007) work: a community in the small Caribbean island of Providencia, Colombia. Unlike those living in other islands, they have successfully managed to keep their reefs clean and their culture intact. Furthermore, the people still own their ancestors' lands and have kept themselves relatively safe from the current drug problem plaguing the nearby islands and mainland Colombia. This was no lucky coincidence; rather, it was the successful collective resistance of the locals who had worked hard to organize and mobilize themselves to protect their island from threats and attacks thrown their way for many years. It started off with several residents stepping up after hearing about a development project called the Mount Sinai project on their island in 1994. Based on their experiences and observations of development projects on nearby islands, they knew it would be poorly executed and would significantly affect the locals' living conditions. As usual with development projects, the local government and developers did not consult the community. Fortunately, the residents quickly organize themselves and sought legal help. With information on the revised Colombian Constitution, which allowed political representation on their territory, the community was able to present an alternative development plan that demanded to have only sustainable development projects, kept business and land ownership to native islanders, and pushed for stricter emigration policies on the island to prevent overpopulation.

One of their first actions was a protest demonstration that caught the attention of major broadcast networks and newspapers. They pushed for more transparency in the local government's decision-making and demanded that the people be involved in the process through consultation. With this successful mobilization, they expanded their network by recruiting more residents to join their cause. As they grew in numbers, so did the threats against them, ranging from harassment to arson. However, despite the repressive and hostile moves against them, they successfully managed to stop the large-scale development project in 1995. In 2000, the island and the reefs surrounding it were declared a biosphere reserve, entitling them to protection under international laws. Even a decade later, the community continues to be proactive, with many local grassroots organizations holding regular meetings to discuss the islands' needs and how to achieve them.

In this summary of the case of Providence Island and the community's fight to protect their home, three critical factors characterize collective resistance: preconditions, a community's networks, and contextual forces. The first factor consists of the preconditions. At the heart of the resistance are the people who felt strongly about how the neighboring islands have suffered from large-scale development projects that displaced the locals from their homes and livelihoods. Many of the residents and community leaders have first-hand experience of how developers exploited other islands. This was key in gaining insights into the possible outcomes of the project, which prompted them quickly organize the community before it was too late. Thus, a combination of preconditions, such as experience, history, and shared memories, helped shape the community's response to the injustices.

The second factor in collective resistance is the community's networks. From knowing each other in a tight-knit community, such as their island, solid connections and relationships can become advantageous in developing a shared experience that can encourage people to participate in collective action. Networks can also include other social groups within the community, such as women's organizations and church groups, which could help by providing valuable insights into developing a more inclusive approach to collective action or by simply offering venues for meetings. The third factor, contextual forces, help shape collective resistance. What existing laws could negatively or positively affect the collective resistance? What is the current social, cultural, or political climate? These are the questions I aim to address with this work.

In the case of the UPC case study, in September 2010, the NHA, the local government, and police force executed a significant demolition event. More than a hundred demolition personnel were deployed together with peacekeeping officers. However, the community came prepared and showed up in full force: men, women, and the youth barricaded the community to prevent demolition forces from entering. With the residents outnumbering the demolition forces, they cascaded toward the adjacent major road (EDSA), causing severe traffic congestion that lasted for hours and paralyzed nearby businesses. This caught the attention of then President Benigno Aquino, who ordered the temporary suspension of demolition and relocation ("Aquino Stops NHA Settlers' Relocation," 2010). This significant success still lingers in the memories of many residents who, to this day, commemorate that historic event. However, more than a decade later, the harassment and attacks continue.

The developers today, knowing that significant demolition events cause negative press on them and resistance puts pressure on the local government, found new ways to effectively uproot the residents from the property. As mentioned by residents today, these practices include bribery, harassment, arson, and what they refer to as “voluntary dismantling,” in which residents are paid a hefty amount to dismantle their homes and leave the community voluntarily. For these reasons, the community has to devise creative ways to resist collectively. This is just an example of how the current context influences the strategies and the development of collective resistance.

Collective resistance is collaborative in nature. In the context of communication, spreading word in the community and persuading people to participate actively is the center of a collaborative process. The emergence of collective empowerment is perpetuated by continuous communication among the people and generating support and participation inside and outside the community. The core of collective resistance is protecting the endangered rights of others, even those who are not in their personal circle (Thalhammer et al., 2007), because they understand the importance of collective effort. Despite the risks involved in resisting dominant structures, the shared experience of the people against injustice helps them stand their ground.

Why do the Urban Poor Resist?

With all these forms of repression perpetrated by globalization and the neoliberal agenda, we have witnessed how the urban poor have collectively worked

together—organized or otherwise—to resist and protect their communities. Often, collective resistance is organically strengthened by and flourishes from catalyst/s or stimuli that trigger social action. What makes it essential for them to mobilize and fight for their space in urban areas and what are the motivations of those in power to displace the urban poor? By using the lens of David Harvey’s “right to the city,” through which he describes how rapid urbanization leaves out the marginalized and oppressed urban settlers from the development discourse, one reason emerges: they must collectively work together to reclaim their right to and space in the city.

This concept, initially theorized by Henri Lefebvre in 1968, calls for a transformation of the urban landscape in which the producers and “sustainers” of the city play significant roles in its development. However, Harvey argues that the existing expression “right to the city” has yet to be clearly defined. It is not just about a “right” to citizenship in the city but more of a collective effort and struggle by those who play an active part in making it prosper, gaining their right to claim it and deciding the path of urban development in the process (Harvey, 2013). He argues that it is labor that produces the city not just in terms of infrastructures but also social and cultural activities that, in a way, enrich city life. Furthermore, these people lack the right to the city owing to the existing nature of urbanization, which gives more importance and premium on generating income, removing all potential threats along the way.

While a larger population of the working class is exploited for their labor for the disbursement of only a few in the creation of surplus through urban transformation, “creative destruction” occurs, which according to Harvey, is “an act of expropriation for civic improvement and renovation” (2008, p. 9). In other words, the

desires of the privileged class can be addressed regardless of the manner by which it is executed (through development and innovation), often at the expense of the marginalized population (through violence and displacement), thus leading to their destruction.

In summary, the “right to the city” is a political idea contradicting the control of the privileged over the cities and regain democratic control. This framework justifies the urban poor’s continuous struggle to fight for their communities despite years of threats of demolitions, forced evictions, bribes, and other forms of human rights violation. Their right to the city includes access to quality housing, basic services, and livelihood, as well as other social factors that are just as important in establishing their presence in the cities. Using Harvey’s framework, the residents can only acquire it if they fight for it and establish the city to be extended to everyone.

The Role of Communication in Resistance

Social movements are a key factor in the continuous struggle of the urban poor for their right to the city. The Britannica Encyclopedia defines a “social movement” as a “loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal, typically either the implementation or prevention of a change in society’s structure or values” (Turner et al., 2020). Collective in nature, social movements are not just perpetuated by crowds. They are often spearheaded by an organization that creates a structure for planning and executing activities. Communication is vital in arousing, organizing, and mobilizing people to participate in social movements driven by the goal of achieving better living conditions for themselves.

According to Marcuse, man is a rational being, and we strive to achieve freedom and happiness as the highest good, not just for a few, but for all (Marcuse, 1988/1968). This idea is supported by Horkheimer, who argues that the goal of critical theory is a society without injustice—one that emerges from our reasonableness and continuous striving for peace, freedom, and happiness (Horkheimer, 2002). By establishing the notion that our society exists with oppressors and the oppressed, Karl Marx devised the categorical imperative of critical theory to overthrow existing conditions where man is degraded, enslaved, and neglected (Marx, 1997). This means that better living conditions are achievable without dominating and alienating the greater population. The dialectics between the rich and the poor and the capitalist and the worker establish contradictions and perpetuate endless domination and exploitation.

In the case of the UPC in the current study, the oppressors (e.g., the private developers and government agencies) continue to use various forms of threats and violence to dominate the marginalized urban poor. In turn, the urban poor use counter-resistance to push for their interest. The critical theory supports this phenomenon by showing us the interest of the oppressed groups in overcoming a class-based society. It is always political and should consistently be used to develop analyses of society to assist in the struggles against domination and exploitation.

Related to the above, Fuchs argues that at the center of all contradictions, communication takes on ideological forms where ideologies advance interests through communicating ways to present a particular group positively or negatively

(Fuchs, 2016). Communication is essential in social situations and society in general; in fact, even our silence means we are communicating something. Thus, social relations are established through communication. This means it has an organizing characteristic in social relations that are considered class relations. The role of communication in a capitalist society is, according to Fuchs (2016), oriented on this capital–labor relation.

In the Frankfurt School, Jurgen Habermas (1984) is a significant thinker with roots in communication and critical theories. For Habermas, capitalism’s history is also a reflection of the commodification of culture and communication. His theory of communicative action institutes a distinction between “purposive action,” which is oriented toward success, and “communicative action,” which leans toward reaching an understanding (Habermas, 1984, p. 185). In this context, linguistic communication is nondominative and oriented toward a mutual understanding, where two individuals who have a communicative action establish an interpersonal relation, allowing them to understand the situation and devise a plan of action. Furthermore, the very nature of communication, according to Habermas, is inherently good (1984).

However, Fuchs argues that we should not assume that understanding would automatically mean mutual agreement; rather, it can be an interpretation of society to make meaning of it. This means that communication is not automatically or intrinsically good. In the context of the current study, private developers communicate in meetings to devise ways to displace poor urban communities from their properties. At the same time, urban poor residents communicate with one another to organize themselves to resist demolitions collectively. Both are rational

forms of communication, but they have fundamentally different objectives (one dominating and the other transcending domination).

This domination in social relations is expressed as one group having control over resources and exerting different forms of violence at the expense of another group. This form of economic, political, and cultural domination is based on instrumental communication characterized by exploitation, control, and manipulation. In comparison, cooperative communication aims to create social relations that transcend domination and create a context that provides benefits and ensures the well-being of individuals. This nature of class-based societies allows the dominated groups to resist and self-organize alternatives to challenge instrumental rationality. Fuchs presents this distinction between instrumental and cooperative rationality and communication in response to Habermas (Fuchs, 2016). Communication among the marginalized, in this case, the urban poor, allows for self-organizing to establish the shared experiences of oppression and, in turn, counter existing hegemonic structures that facilitate their continued exploitation.

Resistance Communication

Given the role of communication in sparking social movements to counter the hegemonic narrative of neoliberal policies, it is important to highlight in the present study how communicative processes of social change spring from the very structures of oppression. The marginalized sectors initially take it upon themselves to resist existing structures of liberalization and privatization derived from neoliberalism. These collective voices of resistance aim to disrupt neoliberalism's oppressive and

exploitative nature through practices of communication for social change, together with distinct materials and methods.

Listening to the voices of the marginalized—rendered invisible by globalization’s use of structural, political, and physical violence—will pave the way for the emergence of resistive voices in the discourse of development (Dutta, 2009). Going to communities is vital in fully understanding resistance communication and its processes because these are the entry points of neoliberal governance. The participation of the community is co-opted by neoliberalism as a tool to consolidate resources. Thus, it is important to look how resistance comes about at the local level. There is a need to examine the resistive capacity of participatory communication and how it challenges the communicative inequalities that continue to keep communities sidelined. Communities are sites of resistance that offer insights, alternative theories, and methodologies on how humans resist. The goal of resistance communication is the reclamation of the fundamental human dignity of local communities to communicate and participate in decision-making, thus redefining democratic processes created by neoliberal policies (Dutta, 2012).

According to Mumby (2005), communication scholars have long been studying resistance to emphasize its discursive element. In other words, resistance, at its very core, is constituted, constructed, negotiated, and enacted through discourse. This means that communication plays a significant role in developing a resistance framework. Dutta (2009)’s discussion on the communicative approaches to resistance can be broken down into four ideas: (1) an approach to studying the notion of everyday forms of resistance, (2) understanding resistance through

understanding the individual's negotiating structures, (3) resistance studies emphasizing the collective processes of organizing, and (4) understanding resistance in the subaltern and postcolonial context. All four are communication roles constituting, reproducing, and enabling a resistance framework for social change.

With the formation of identities emerging from the external catalysts that disrupt people's everyday lives, such as development aggression in the form of neoliberal policies that threaten their spaces, sharing experiences through communication becomes the basis for collective organization and mobilization. Bolstered by shared experiences, participatory communication brings a community together to set into motion resistive collective action in the face of their oppressors. Resistance, through participatory communication, plays a fundamental role in demanding or seeking change. Its transformative nature is achieved with the mobilization of collective identity in exposing the exploitation by dominant powers. Through communication, residents of communities are encouraged to join the cause, plan strategies, participate in dialogues, and execute social actions as a form of resistance.

For instance, a catalyst for resistance in the urban poor setting can be a transnational corporation or a developer seeking to displace them from their homes for a development project on their community's location. This would trigger different reactions from residents, making it difficult to demand anything at the individual level. However, suppose the community bands together and participates in the resistance discourse; in that case, they can collectively arouse, organize, and mobilize effectively to resist and/or join dialogues with the state agents and developers so that

their concerns can be addressed.

Participatory Communication

This study aims to look at the communication perspective of establishing resistance in the urban poor setting. By listening to the community members' stories and experiences, a standard narrative might be extracted to help the current study define how resistance is communicated in the context of UPCs. The central proposition of this study emphasizes a participatory approach to communication and collective action as the primary drivers of establishing resistance. This is because such an approach puts a premium on involving community members in the development process, collectively determining the problem, and coming up with solutions instead of just an external factor exclusively providing a pre-established program.

In theory and in practice, participatory communication works in parallel with development communication. The entire premise of development communication is the application of strategic communication approaches to encourage people to change and improve development processes for the betterment of their community. It has evolved from behavior change communication and social marketing concepts that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. In the same way, participatory communication focuses on community members' active role in the development process. A Brazilian adult educator, Paulo Freire, conceptualized "participatory communication" when he promoted adult literacy campaigns among poor peasants in Northeastern Brazil, empowering them to formulate their objectives and goals for a better life and

enabling them to liberate themselves from their existing oppressive conditions (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). As an approach, participatory communication focuses on the importance of dialogue, which allows for sharing of information, perceptions, and opinions among the most vulnerable and marginalized sectors (e.g., the urban poor in the case of the current study). More than information and experience sharing, it also gives significance to exploring and establishing new information and knowledge in addressing problems (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

How is “participatory communication” defined? There are two approaches to participation according to Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009). The first, known as a “social movement perspective,” is the mobilization of people to “eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution.” The second, known as an “institutional or project-based perspective,” refers to the “reach and inclusion of inputs by relevant groups in the design and implementation of a development program” (p. 12).

As such, participatory communication can be used as a perspective to study how resistance is established in an urban poor setting. Participation encourages and empowers people to expand their capabilities to demand, negotiate, and hold institutions accountable (Narayan, 2005). When residents share their individual experiences on their living conditions with other community members, they create a collective sense of understanding, which encourages them to work with one another to identify root problems and devise solutions based on their personal experiences. However, while participatory communication is often used as a strategy in implementing development projects in communities by development practitioners, in

theory and practice, it is not exclusive to that purpose.

Meanwhile, the liberating pedagogy perspective of participatory communication (Freire, 1970) is more apt for the current study, as it focuses on the community's development of strategic communication objectives and articulation of collective action processes instead of the communication of "correct" or "relevant" information to specific audiences. It takes a more proactive approach where community members actively participate in the process—from problem identification to developing solutions and strategies. This fits well in establishing resistance from the community. When I use the term "resistance" in this study, I am not confining the term to protest actions and reactive strategies. Instead, I look at how UPCs come up with creative ways to resist based on their shared understandings of their living conditions and strengths. As communication is central to this study of how resistance is established in UPCs, it is important to look at how community members recall their personal and shared experiences that transformed them from reactive onlookers to proactive participants of collective resistance.

To sum up this review of related literature, an analysis of the urban poor situation in the Philippines through relevant data was presented, followed by a discussion of the existing housing problem in the country in terms of the housing backlog and the quality of relocation sites. It has been shown that both factors forced residents to leave the relocation sites and come back to the urban centers, resulting in a vicious cycle of the urban poor problem. This section then discussed how the current neoliberal policies of the government play a significant role in the continuous erasure of the marginalized from the development discourse and how they are

actively silenced by state-sponsored violence, including their perpetual concern of displacement.

Moreover, the nature of the urban poor's struggle for their right to the city is presented, along with the importance of exposing the capitalist nature of urbanization to justify the forms of resistance practiced by this sector. This section likewise tackled the role of communication through the lens of critical theory in arousing, organizing, and mobilizing community members to establish resistance. Finally, with the part of communication deemed necessary in creating social change, I looked at how participatory communication can be considered the central factor facilitating a community's development of a resistance framework for collective action.

Operational Definitions

Resistance - In this study, "resistance" is defined as a phenomenon of intervention against a threat to the life or living conditions of a marginalized or oppressed group. It is a process by which the demands of such a group to overcome inequality and injustice are actualized and articulated. In the case of the urban poor, "resistance" refers to the actions proactively implemented, performed, or executed to disrupt or challenge any form of threat of displacement from the community. These can be through holding mass protests, initiating signature campaigns, demanding dialogues with the government, or engaging in more creative forms, such as cultural performances, community pantries, and community kitchens.

Collective Resistance - This research defines "collective resistance" as the active engagement of a certain group, sector, or community in acts of resistance due

to their shared experiences of social injustice. In the context of the urban poor, the process of collective resistance in the community begins when residents acknowledge a shared notion of a problem, issue, or threat in the community that affects their lives at the individual and community levels. Common threats in the context of the urban poor are development aggression, demolition threats, and forms of harassment and abuse to force them out of the property, among others. “Urban poor collective resistance,” therefore, is the collective behavior of residents residing in a UPC to defend themselves from threats and demand better treatment from the government.

Dominant Structures - In the context of the urban poor’s struggles as part of city centers, a neoliberal society’s dominant structures perpetuate the oppression and marginalization of such a sector. Those in power render the urban poor powerless and invisible in the development discourse. This communicative erasure continues to disenfranchise the marginalized, with existing development policies often catering only to perpetuating the dominant structure’s economic wealth. Within the context of the urban poor and their right to the city, dominant structures are often manifested in collaborations among mega-corporations, private developers, and the government. These dominant structures employ various forms of exploitation and abuse toward the marginalized, driven by the goal of displacing them from acquired properties.

Collective Goals - In this study, collective resistance as a phenomenon strives toward achieving a goal, often a solution or a demand that needs to be met to secure, improve, or develop the living conditions of a marginalized sector. The urban

poor's collective resistance strives to demand socialized on-site or in-city housing that is both affordable and of high quality. It also includes the demand for better social services, such as education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and public transport. However, beyond these concrete demands, the urban poor's goal is for local governments to employ inclusive development, where they, the major stakeholders in development projects, should be involved in dialogues and consultations. These goals transcend individual needs because they affect the whole community, strengthening their resolve to work together.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

The framework of resistance communication in the urban poor setting must be understood from the perspective of their collective action. To establish a collective approach to resisting oppressive agencies, one must investigate a community's environment and how its residents self-organize. This study aims to understand the establishment of collective resistance in the UPC case study from a communication perspective. In particular, by looking into the communication processes involved in establishing the urban poor's resistance communication framework, insights into this phenomenon from a communication perspective can be gained.

In the discussion of resistance and communication, it is important to note how both phenomena are intrinsically linked. Resistance, in this case from the UPC case study, is constituted, negotiated, and enacted through discourse. While resistance focuses on and emphasizes the collective processes in organizing and establishing collective action, at the same time, communication's at the individual and collective levels is to develop resistive identities based on shared experiences that can only be achieved through dialogue. Resistance communication, as a theory, posits that a participatory approach to communication in marginalized and vulnerable communities helps bring them together in solidarity, allows them to be visible, and encourages them to oppose oppressive structures that threaten their existence. It is an embodiment of mobilizing the collective identity of a marginalized group that fights

back against the exploitative goals of dominant social actors. The purpose of resistance communication is to establish solidarity in promoting and calling for politics of social change that transforms existing unjust practices or policies.

Sociologists Hollander and Einwohner (2004) define “resistance” in terms of action and opposition. Here, the action is connected to active behavior in opposition to an existing injustice perpetuated by a dominant culture or group. At the individual level, we may have personal agency on issues surrounding us, but our capacity to change is limited. However, by combining forces with those who share the same experiences, we can map out a course of action and bring about significant changes to our existing conditions. Thus, it is important to understand the root of resistance at the individual level and how experiences are shared from one person to another until they organize themselves to find a solution to their shared problem. In this case, central to this study will be the narratives of the UPC residents who possess the experiences, knowledge, and information essential to understanding how resistance is established. Listening to the narratives articulated by the very people deemed invisible in the development discourse can draw insights into how they self-organize and resist as a collective. The stories they tell are not just memories but words of wisdom and courage. These voices of resistance collectively aim to disrupt existing dominant structures through different means.

Marginalized communities often bear the brunt of injustices and, hence, are also key sites for the potential of collective resistance. Essential to community participation is the “resistive capacity of participatory communication in challenging the communicative inequities that render communities as silent in structures of

decision making” (Dutta, 2012, p. 36). As such, the present study aims to look at the communication perspective of resistance building and collective organizing in the UPC. Looking at the residents’ communication practices and patterns throughout their participation in the resistance can help in drawing alternative theories, methodologies, and applications of understanding resistance from a communication perspective in marginalized UPCs.

Internally, a participatory approach to communication and collective action seems to be the core element in arousing, organizing, and mobilizing community members into joining resistance efforts. Yet, it is also important to note how they communicate their concerns to those in power. Are their forms of resistance limited to protest actions? Or have they utilized other means so that their goals and objectives to be heard? This is why the narratives and experiences of individuals are important in this study because these can generate insights into how they developed their processes and plans of action related to the objectives of their resistance.

In the development discourse, resisting is a declaration of their agency and a reclamation of their voice in the communicative discourse of development, in which they are often left out. Those directly affected by these decisions actively resist mainstream ideas of development often defined by those in power. There is an existing inequitable nature in the communicative discourse of development, where marginalized sectors are often excluded despite being the most impacted. By resisting the minimization of discursive spaces, these collective voices aim to disrupt the top-down exploitative impact of “development projects” while simultaneously promoting and fostering spaces for democratic spaces. Through resistance, the

marginalized, the residents of the UPC case study, help shape the process of redefining development. In other words, resistance, established through a communication perspective, facilitates the process of arousing, organizing, and mobilizing community members to reclaim collectively their rightful space in the development discourse.

Research Methodology

To understand and better investigate the phenomenon of resistance communication in UPCs, a case study community serves as the focus of this research to draw narratives and experiences from the residents. Case study research is the ideal format to use when developing an in-depth understanding of a singular case or exploring a problem within a bounded system (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Creswell also acknowledges that case study research is a methodology that consists of:

[A] type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study, as well as a product of the inquiry. Case study research is qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case themes. The unit of analysis in the case study might be multiple cases (a multisite study) or a single case (a within-site study). (p. 97)

For this research, a single case study qualitative research was implemented as it solely focused on the context of a UPC case. The intention of this research is not only to understand the context of resistance in a UPC setting but also to draw an abstraction that can be used as a framework for further studies on urban poor

resistance. Creswell mentions that, according to Stake, an instrumental case study intends to select a specific case to explain a general problem (2017). An instrumental case focuses on a single issue and uses a single case to illustrate it. Thus, the research participants were encouraged to share their personal stories, narratives, experiences, and anecdotes to gain a better understanding of how resistance is established in a UPC.

Moreover, to thoroughly understand the communicative processes in establishing resistance communication in the context of an urban poor setting, this qualitative research conducted interviews with research participants from different backgrounds, all of whom reside in the community case study. This allowed for a broader perspective on the urban poor's struggles that led them to resist. Data were gathered from the research participants through the following criteria.

Research Participants

The research participants for this study were purposively selected with the following inclusion criteria: must be a resident of the UPC case selected, preferably but not limited to having lived there for no less than five years for them to be able to historicize; available for scheduled interviews throughout the study; willing to participate in the research; and can speak English or Filipino. From the pool of the qualified participants, purposeful sampling was employed to recruit at least five research participants to participate in the subsequent in-depth interviews. The aim of purposeful sampling is for the researcher to select individuals to participate in the study because they can purposefully inform the researcher of an understanding of

the central phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2017).

Ideally, the final chosen participants must come from different backgrounds to provide a multi-perspective view to the study. Using purposeful sampling, a minimum of five eligible research participants from each sector were selected. These included a senior citizen who has been living in the case study community for more than 30 years, an active community organizer/leader who continues to assume an important role in the organization, a newly recruited organization member (less than a year since joining an organization in the community), a youth resident (ideally 18–25 years of age), and a resident who has been previously relocated to a housing project outside the city but has since chosen to return to the case community.

Representatives from each group were selected to provide different perspectives in understanding the process of collective resistance in the community through communication. Upon identifying five eligible participants per sector, the fishbowl technique was applied to select one (1) participant per background.

Upon identification of the respondents, informed consent was secured to comply with research ethics requirements. To protect their safety and privacy, the respondents will remain unidentifiable, as this research might tackle issues that might be detrimental to their safety as community residents. At the end of the data-gathering process, small tokens were provided to all the research participants.

Site Selection

As already mentioned, the site for the research is a large UPC situated in a

government-owned property in Quezon City. The community has constantly been experiencing demolition threats, forced evictions, and off-city relocation since the signing of E.O. 620 in 2007, which established the Quezon City Central Business District. However, despite ongoing threats and forms of human rights violations, the community has successfully resisted through mass actions, protests, and dialogues with developers and the local government, among others. Many organizations exist within the community, each with different perspectives on dealing with threats, but there is also a portion of the community where residents are not part of any organizations.

Data Gathering Procedure

The primary source of data were the research participants' interviews, which were conducted using a semi-structured format. This allowed the researcher to have the freedom to explore more topics with follow-up questions while still having a structured guide to ensure that each interview did not stray too far from the topic. According to the SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Method (Given, 2008), this qualitative data collection strategy requires the researcher to have a set of predetermined but open-ended questions so that the researcher has more control over the topics (compared to unstructured ones). Nevertheless, there is no fixed range of responses compared with the approach of using structured interviews or questionnaires.

Interview guides are part of semi-structured interviews. These can be keywords or carefully worded inquiries and topics the researcher plans to cover. The

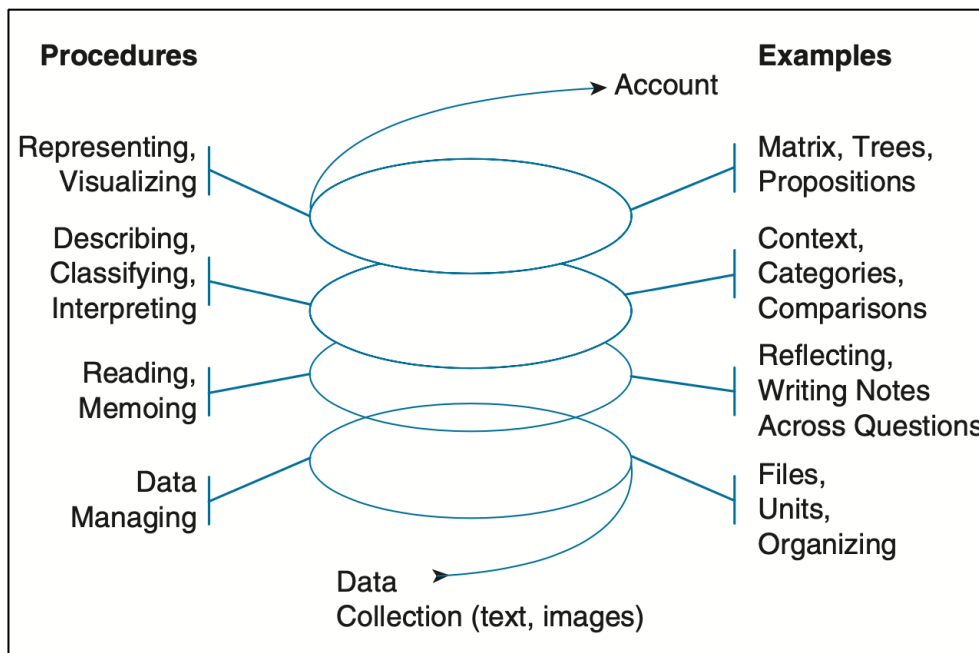
nature of this study focuses on the community members' communication processes in their collective effort for social change. Thus, personal experiences must be documented thoroughly. A semi-structured interview format is the most appropriate data-gathering method for this study. My interview guide was based on the processes of the conceptual framework—from the community dialogue to the collective action process—as well as potential individual and social changes. This guide allowed me to go back and forth into the key topics, depending on a research participant's response.

Each interview session lasted for about an hour to an hour and a half. I limited the interview duration so as not to take so much of the participants' time; the nature of living in UPCs meant that time was important, not just for livelihood but for taking care of their families. All interviews for every session were audio-recorded with consent from the interviewees. The data collection was conducted over a period of two weeks in October 2022.

Data Analysis and Coding for Themes and Subthemes

For this study, I followed the Data Analysis Spiral framework proposed by Huberman and Miles, as discussed by Creswell (2017). This framework follows the idea that data collection, analysis, and writing are not separate but interrelated steps that often occur simultaneously. According to Creswell, while qualitative research is unique, it follows a general contour in the analysis process, best represented by a spiral, wherein the researcher engages with data analysis in analytic circles rather than a linear approach (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Figure 1. Data analysis spiral.



SOURCE: Creswell and Poth (2017)

The image above shows the general overview of the data analysis spiral, where the process begins with the data collection, which in the current study, is mainly done through interviews. Data collection should be properly labeled and organized for easier use during data analysis.

Data Management

Once all primary data were collected, the next step was data management. The data were organized as computer files in the early stage of the data analysis process. Interviews were transcribed and converted from audio into document files to make them easier to access and review. I personally transcribed over 8 hours of recorded interviews for familiarization.

Reading and Memoing

Once the data were processed and collected into one extensive database, the researcher familiarized himself with the entire database. In this case, it meant reading the transcribed interviews repeatedly to gain a sense of the whole interview narrative before breaking it down into parts. This process involved taking notes and memos, which can be short phrases, ideas, or concepts that emerged while reading. This process allowed me to see the “bigger picture” while perusing the data gathered. From this, I formed initial categories from the emerging themes and went back and forth to the available data to gather evidence supporting these initial categories.

Describing, Classifying, and Interpreting Data into Codes and Themes

In these next steps, I moved on from reading and memoing into the spiral and proceeded to the steps of describing, classifying, and interpreting the initially processed data. This part of the loop in the framework entailed forming codes and categories that represented the core of qualitative data analysis. This process involved building detailed descriptions (the researcher described what he saw within the context of the person, place, or event), developing themes, and providing interpretations from their perspectives or those found in the literature.

In the coding process, I aimed to aggregate the text into more minor categories of information, which can be used as evidence of codes from the different databases used in the study. Each code was assigned a label. Creswell (2017)

suggests coming up with “lean coding,” which means coming up with only about five or six categories with labels and codes and then expanding them in the process of reviewing the database repeatedly. This process, made easier by focusing on initially established codes and being more open to “emerging” codes, enabled me to write the narrative easily.

Coding was followed by classifying, which entailed separating qualitative information and looking for categories, themes, and dimensions. This analysis typically involved classification by identifying five to seven general themes or categories (broad data units consisting of several codes grouped to form a common idea). These general themes or categories may have subthemes or subcategories of their own. As this research is a case study, the type of information coded into themes describes a particular case or process.

For the current study, I used a process of “visualized idea mapping,” first by lifting critical ideas from the transcribed interviews and putting them in an excel sheet using a color-coded scheme to come up with a visualized idea map. Then, I created a physical visualized idea mapping using sticky notes on a wall to navigate the notes quickly by moving, adding, and removing “ideas” in the process. Thus, I was able to trim the initial 14 code categories to six solid coding categories.

Interpreting the Data

Interpretation means trying to make sense of the data. In the case of qualitative research, this involves abstracting beyond the codes and themes to

gather the more significant meanings of the data collected. It can be a combination of a social science construct and personal views, which entails linking the researcher's interpretation to the more extensive research literature that already exists. In the current study, looking at and interpreting the interviews from research participants and processing that data allowed for an interpretation that would match existing resistance communication narratives.

Representing and Visualizing the Data

This final phase of the spiral involves packaging what has been found from the data and visualizing it through an image or chart. It can be a comparison table, a chart, or a matrix. This visual output should be able to demonstrate the different levels of abstract information. This is where a proposition is developed based on the data and information processed.

Data analysis in a case study involves detailed descriptions of the case and the setting. As the current research focuses on participatory communication in a UPC and its role in developing a resistance framework, the chronology of events that take place must be analyzed through the interviews. Once patterns emerge for each of the determining processes in their resistance framework development, I finally came up with a naturalistic generalization—one that others can learn from the case itself or apply to other cases.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As discussed in previous chapters, acts of oppression on marginalized sectors have been the status quo perpetuated by the dominant structures of our society. Furthermore, the urban poor is marginalized from discursive spaces of development under neoliberal policies. Thus, this research aims to understand how resistive ideas are born from these marginalized spaces. In this way, listening to the sidelined voices of the urban poor as they face the structures of oppression allows us to open the concepts of democratic participation within their community in light of such threats. Their lived experiences and the decisions they make, along with the transformative nature of participation through communication, bring about collective action and resistance. During the interviews, I have always reminded myself that the narratives of the voices of urban poor resistance are not for me to interpret but only to amplify, emphasize, and at the minimum, co-construct—paying careful attention to minimize my interruptions and to fully allow the voices of resistance to be heard.

After carefully transcribing and reviewing the interview materials, I created a visual mind map to combine and group similar thoughts, as well as to provide proper coding for statements forming the same narratives. On my first review, I came up with 12 categories that I initially coded from the texts. However, after a thorough review and several consultations with the analysis that I made, I realized I needed to elevate the voices of the research participants, so I had to scrap the first output (including a model I developed) and review the transcript again a couple of times. I needed a fresh start, remove potential biases, and just focus completely on how I will

be able to accurately present the voices of urban poor resistance. This time, I learned that instead of fitting their narratives to the existing literature on resistance communication, I should let the voices speak for themselves so that I can find elements that will facilitate a better understanding of and contribute to the literature on how the phenomenon of resistance is established through a communication perspective within a UPC setting.

As such, after carefully reviewing the transcripts, I had a better understanding of the stories, as told by the participants. I came up with 10 new categories, some of which were similar to the initial categories I identified. However, the majority are new and focused more on the points raised by the research participants. The first one, which I labeled as *Demolition Experience*, is the collective experience of the UPC case study, which the research participants all described as a game-changing moment because it helped them realize how impactful collective action and resistance could be in protecting their community. This category highlights the participants' experiences of a major demolition that happened to their community. Based on their narratives, they consider this as a trigger that mobilized the community to resist and fight for their homes.

The next category, *Reasons for Resistance*, accounts for all the personal goals and objectives as to why the urban poor respondents chose to participate in resistance. While their reasons range from livelihood, security, and owning a home, they all agree that staying in the community is the collective goal. The urban poor residents are always busy with work, livelihood, and their families, and participating in collective actions often takes time. However, these respondents recognized the

importance of participation so they adjusted their schedules to be able to do so. Close to this category is the one labeled *Forms of Harassment*. The research participants were very vocal about their living conditions and the daily threats they continued to face in their community. This category covered the respondents' recollections of everything they faced, which threatened their presence in the city, including constant harassment from private guards deployed by the developers, the lack of response from the local council, and the absence of consultations by the government housing agency in dealing with demolition, relocations, and having to deal with lack of resources to support their families, all of which led to their emotional burdens. The threats and injustices they face are the major reasons why the urban poor continue to resist.

Following the first three categories is another one labeled *Organization*. It discusses the stories shared by the research participants about the importance of grassroots organizations in arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the urban poor to participate in collective actions and other forms of resistance. With the minimal or lack of presence of the local council (*barangay*) as a primary source of information on community issues, the UPC residents often turn to grassroots organizations for updates on community issues ranging from utility problems to relocation and demolition schedules, among other community concerns. The trust that the residents have built in such organizations makes the latter a valuable presence in the community, giving them more credibility when calling for participation in collective actions and other forms of resistance against potential threats to the community, according to the participants.

The next category provides a peek into how urban poor residents communicate and how they discuss community issues. *Experience Sharing* is a category that emerged from the stories shared by the research participants on how community issues are talked about during informal gatherings or in casual conversations. As they live together and experience the same discrimination and injustices, the urban poor develop a shared understanding of their lived experiences, allowing them to be more open to one another in discussing and dealing with these problems.

The next category, *Collective Action*, highlights the importance of working together, according to the research participants. When talking about resistance, the narrative they create revolves around how important it is to work together and show up in numbers. They understand that they are in an unfair position against those who oppress them, so they need to be able to maximize their numbers not only to heighten their visibility but also to amplify their voices. For the urban poor research participants, resistance can only be effective if done through collective action.

The next three categories focus on how resistance is communicated in the UPC and the resulting dynamics considered unique to the experience of the urban poor. First, *Dialogue* is a category that discusses the urban poor's persistent calls to be present in discussions related to the community. These dialogues can either be with the local government regarding community residents' concerns (e.g., utilities, environmental hazards, government aid, and support) or with the private developers regarding construction risks, displacement of residents, temporary shelters, and others. This category highlights the urban poor's continuous fight to be included in

the development discourse. The next category is labeled *Community Consultations* and focuses on the mobilization of the community and the importance of residents' participation in devising action plans to deal with community issues. As self-explanatory as it is, this category emphasizes the participatory nature of the community in the resistance narrative, with the community organizations at the helm. Somehow close to this category is the next one labeled *Community Activities*. This category, which covers all manifestations of the community's plans on how it should deal with various community issues, showcases their collective power. These activities can vary from protests, mass actions, community kitchens, and urban gardens, as well as house-to-house visitations to discuss current community affairs spearheaded by grassroots organizations.

The final category is the *Role of Media*, which combines all narratives provided by the research participants regarding their experiences, both positive and negative, through the media presence's and subsequent portrayal of their collective resistance. This has been highlighted by the research participants who actively use social media to post everything that has been happening in the community, especially when harassment emerges as a type of evidence. The stories they have shared regarding the use of social media and the presence of traditional media give their narrative a boost to a wider audience, amplifying their unified voice of resistance.

Thorough descriptions of the categories are presented once they are merged into themes to achieve a more cohesive presentation of the urban poor's voices of resistance. As their stories are the highlight of this research, it is my duty as the

researcher to present their narratives in a truthful and just manner. The best way to do so is to first combine similar narratives and define central themes characterizing these similarities. However, before this, I believe it is important to highlight the context of the UPC as a sector that continues to face oppression and marginalization, which in turn, naturally lead them to collective resistance. By providing the context through the UPC case study, a better understanding of the phenomenon of resistance in the urban poor setting can be obtained, along with a better perspective of their living conditions, lived experiences, and where their stories are coming from.

Context of The UPC Case

The UPC case study is located on a government-owned piece of land in Quezon City. The land managed by the NHA used to be an almost 40-hectare property where the community is situated. However, due to a series of demolitions and evictions over the years, it now only rests at about 13 hectares of sprawled urban poor settlement. As of 2022, an estimated 5,000 families remain in the community. It has been previously described as a highly populated community, with houses stacked against one another in a maze of makeshift alleys and pathways. In July 2009, a joint venture agreement between the NHA and a private developer was signed under the Arroyo Administration as part of the Quezon City Central Business District, which paved the way for the supposed development of the property into a commercial mixed-use development with malls, condominiums, office structures, and a casino.

This signed agreement was used as the basis for implementing the relocation programs offered to the residents of the UPC. However, most, if not all, were met with strong opposition because of the off-city relocation sites, potentially displacing them from their employment, livelihood, and access to basic social services. Most of the current residents originally migrated from rural areas into the cities precisely for those reasons, which was why they strongly opposed the relocation offers. Furthermore, the residents highly questioned the housing structures themselves because they were made from substandard materials with visible cracks on the walls, incomplete facilities, no water and electricity services, and were often located in hazard-prone areas. Due to the community's strong opposition to the relocation programs, several incidents of harassment and threats were reported by the residents. Today, the community is continuously hounded by threats, ranging from monetary bribes to verbal harassment from private guards.

In the 2010s, one of the most extensive cases of demolition resistance happened in the community case study. In the residents' accounts, they shared that they were informed the day before of a road-widening project that was to be implemented. However, they felt it might mean more than that, so the community—spearheaded by various community organizers—prepared for a demolition scene. The residents barricaded the entries and lined up outside, waiting until the next morning when the first trucks of the demolition team arrived. True enough, several SWAT and police forces came with the demolition team on that day. A clash between the two factions was inevitable, and it quickly escalated to one of, if not the largest, demolition clashes in the community. According to one of the research participants who were there to witness the entire incident:

Pag dating ko sa labas, nako ang daming demolition team pati mga pulis tapos may ilan-ilang mga SWAT. Yung organisasyon noon, nagko-command na sila na magbarikada. May mga kubo-kubo noon pinagitna, tapos andoon yung mga tao, may bato; magbabatuhan talaga. Nung nasa EDSA na, lumipat ako doon. Lumipat ako sa EDSA, alas tres nagbatuhan. Yun na yung sinabi ko, "Nako ano nang gagawin." Tapos nakita ko ang daming supporters, ang dami nila. Mga estudyante, at iba pa. Walang gusto sumuko!

I arrived outside and saw many demolition teams and police, together with some SWAT. The organizations then were already giving commands to the residents to fortify the barricades. Huts were erected along the stretch of the road, and people were waiting there with rocks, ready to throw them. Then I went to the other side, at EDSA, at around 3 PM, residents and the other side started throwing and hurling things at each other. That was when I said [to myself], what are we going to do. Then I saw many supporters. Even students joined in. Nobody wanted to surrender [the community!]).

According to the research participant, it was the first time many of the residents witnessed such a collective resistance against the threat of displacement from their community. Ultimately, their collective action forced the demolition team to retreat. It had such a huge impact that several organizations that led the opposition continue to commemorate the event annually, reminding the community that their unified action on that momentous day led them to a collective victory. However, this significant event in 2010 did not stop the NHA and the developers from pursuing their plans to clear the property for the development project. Since 2010, several so-called "pocket demolitions" and "self-demolitions" have been continuously observed. On the one hand, "pocket demolitions" refer to the small-scale, localized dismantling of settlements, usually involving less than ten housing structures. On the other hand, "self-demolition" refers to structure owners dismantling their properties in exchange for moving to a relocation site with a monetary offer or similar bribery.

According to the stories provided by research participants, other forms of threats, harassment, and abuse are being experienced by the residents. For example, since the beginning of a development project in the area, private security elements have been installed on major entry points of the community. The authorities also actively prevented construction materials, such as wood, cement, and roof panels, from being brought inside the community. When one of the community organizations asked why, the private guards allegedly said they were there to prevent new constructions as there had been an active order to relocate the residents. Over twelve years after the victory of the 2010 barricade, the threats to the community continue. The community continues to shrink, with more land already converted into buildings, roads, and bridges. Today, the case study is surrounded by condominiums, malls, and other high-rise buildings, literally casting shadows on the community's future.

However, despite ongoing threats to their homes, many residents continued to resist actively and participate in collective efforts to fight for their right to the city and involvement in the development discourse. The residents have been so used to seeing and experiencing threats that, against these, they have developed a sense of trust, respect, and solidarity with one another to a certain extent. Strong social ties have been established among members of the same organization, which have proven to be crucial elements in their continuous collective resistance. Their collective experiences of such threats have fueled the community's social capital. These urban poor residents originated from different parts of the country and migrated to Quezon City for better opportunities and access to social services. They have different cultures, religions, values, and beliefs. However, by living in the same

marginalized space and collectively experiencing oppression, they now share a common sense of responsibility to protect their families and one another.

Central to the phenomenon of resistance are the concepts of “participation” and “communication.” Thus, the current study conducted an in-depth investigation of how the UPC established its collective resistance through communication processes. The emerging themes were derived from the narratives and stories provided by the research participants. The process of meaning-making is then expressed through the following central themes and highly descriptive presentations of the urban poor’s experiences.

Theme 1: Lived Experience as Urban Poor

This theme captures the daily lives of the urban poor and the central role played by their experiences in discussions regarding how their struggles gave birth to resistance. Listening to the stories provided by the participants from the UPC case study, it becomes clear how their daily encounters with threats, abuse, and harassment, as well as their poor living conditions, all became triggers that encouraged them to participate in collective resistance. Another significant element that makes this theme important in the narrative of the urban poor’s resistance is how they are perceived and treated by the dominant structures of society, which grant the latter power to perpetuate the former’s marginalization through oppression. The experiences of the participants give us a better perspective of what life is like dealing with the struggles of being part of the urban poor.

As previously described, one major event can trigger members of a community to resist collectively. In the case of the UPC case study, it was the demolition event of September 2010 that mobilized the members. The experiences of the research participants during that time were so vivid that they can recall their personal stories of the event with such precision. As one of them revealed:

Kasi, nung 2010, kasagsagan ng mga demolisyon, wala pa akong organisasyon noon. Yun parang nakita ko yung mga nag-anuhan, nagbatuhan na sila doon sa kalsada. Nagbarikada na ang lahat; halos lahat ng mga organisasyon nagbarikada noon. Dito kasi, nasa likod na ng bahay ko andyan na 'yung backhoe eh, andyan na. So natataranta na ako. Hindi ko na alam gagawin ko. Wala kasing nag-aadvice sa amin na, syempre wala kasi akong organisasyon noon eh. Tapos 'yung kapitbahay namin, lumapit sa amin at niyaya kami na lumabas daw at sumama sa barikada.

It was in 2010, the height of the demolition, and I didn't belong to any organization yet. I saw the commotion [and] people were throwing things along the streets. A barricade was set up by almost all organizations. Behind our house, the backhoe was already there. I panicked. I didn't know what to do. Nobody was there to give us advice on what to do next because I wasn't part of any organization then. That was when our neighbor came to us and asked us to join them outside to form a barricade.

Another research participant vividly remembered where she was and how the demolition came about, which she said she would never forget because it was so traumatic for her:

Galing akong palengke eh, alas sais bumalik ako. Bakit kako ang daming pulis? Sabi nung iba, naku punta ka sa EDSA, ang dami doong pulis, may demolisyon daw! Diyos ko, ang dami kong dala-dala. Ginawa ko, yung cooler ng softdrinks ko, inalis ko yung softdrinks, nilagay ko doon yung mga karne na iluluto ko. Tapos iniwan ko yung mga tinapay, mga kakanin sa anak ko, siya na magbabantay. Sabi "Ano kasing gagawin mo?" Eh magkakaroon ng demolisyon, kailangan man lang tumulong doon. Magmasid ako kung ano na magaganap. Kasi kung matuloy yan, masisira tayo, patay tayo, saan na tayo pupulutin. Naka-shorts nga lang ako noon, naka-spaghetti (strap).

Pag dating ko sa labas, nako ang daming demolition team pati mga pulis tapos may ilan-ilang mga SWAT. Yung organisasyon noon, nagko-command na sila na magbarikada. May mga kubo-kubo noon pinagitna, tapos andoon yung mga tao, may bato, magbabatuhan talaga.

Nung nasa EDSA na, lumipat ako doon. Lumipat ako sa EDSA, alas tres nagbatuhan. Yun na yung sinabi ko, nako ano nang gagawin. Tapos nakita ko ang daming supporters, ang dami nila. Mga estudyante, at iba pa. Sabi ko, "Hala, mga ano 'yan?" May nagsabi sa akin na, "Ay mga supporters natin 'yan." Ay mabuti pala may mga ganitong organisasyon.

I came back from the market at around six in the morning. I was confused why there were so many police. People were telling me, "Go to EDSA, the police are there, there's going to be a demolition!" they said. Dear Lord, I had so much stuff with me then. So what I did was I removed the soda bottles from my cooler and stored the meat I bought. I left the bread and rice cakes I was selling to my child [to take care of the stuff we were selling]. There's going to be a demolition, I need to do something to help! I was going to go check because if the demolition happens, we're dead. Where are we going to live? I wasn't even wearing proper clothes when I went there.

I arrived outside and saw many demolition teams and police, together with some SWAT. The organizations then were already giving commands to the residents to fortify the barricades. Huts were erected along the stretch of the road, and people were waiting there with rocks, ready to throw them. Then I went to the other side, at EDSA, at around 3 PM, residents and the other side started throwing and hurling things at each other. That was when I said [to myself], "What are we going to do." Then I saw many supporters. Even students joined in. I said, "Hey, [who] are they?" Someone said they were supporters [from different organizations outside of the community]. I said, "It's good that there were organizations like that."

According to her, it was her first time feeling threatened not only of being displaced but also for her and her family's safety. To this day, she says it's a memory she holds on to. One research participant acknowledged that the community is currently facing threats of demolition, which started way back in 2010, sharing, "*Siyempre simula nung 2010, hanggang ngayon, kinakaharap pa rin namin kung paano kami hinaharass, binabantaan, na bubulldozin na lang itong lugar, kapag nakaalis na yung mga good census. Siyempre lalaban naman kami, kung sakto na may gagawin. Kasi una, hindi mapapantayan yung laban namin kaysa yung mga laban noong nakaraan.*" (It all started in 2010 and up to this day, we continue to face harassment and threats; saying they'll use a bulldozer to thrash this place when the residents with good census have finally been relocated. Of course, we're ready to fight to the

best of our abilities. Because, first of all, we know we did it before, so we can do it again).

The first major demolition acted as a wake-up call for the residents: that they need to resist through collective action to protect their rights. Today, their experiences serve as an inspiration to continue working together for the benefit of the community. As one research participant shared:

So malaking problema talagang kinakaharap, yung demolisyon. Nung nakaraang 2010, na nagsama-sama talaga yung lahat ng mga residente para labanan ang demolisyon doon sa EDSA. So nagtagumpay naman yun at napatigil nila yung laban kontra sa demolisyon. Ginugunita nga lagi't lagi yang barikada. Ika-labing dalawang taon na ngayon yung barikada. Dahil kung walang lumaban, na mga mamamayan ng [redacted]. At walang residenteng lumabas, siguro wala na ang [redacted]. Kaya nagpapasalamat din ako sa mga residente noon, na lumaban sa panahon ng 2010; na nakipaglaban talaga kaya ang [redacted] nandito pa. Buong-buo pa ang [redacted], noon nong 2010.

The biggest problem we face today is the possibility of another demolition. In 2010, the residents collectively worked together to resist the threat of demolition along EDSA. That was very successful because the demolition did not materialize. The community regularly commemorates the “barricade.” This year marks the 12th year since it happened. If we never resisted, if no one fought for the community, then [redacted] will probably not be here today. That’s why I’m personally grateful for the people who fought back in 2010; for those who resisted that’s why [redacted] is still here. The community is still intact since 2010.

Along with this major trigger that has “awakened” their resistive capacity, their current life filled with threats, unjust treatment, and poor living conditions all add to their experiences, which push them toward finding solutions to their community issues and participating in collective action and resistance. Their concerns not only for themselves and their families but also for the community indicate that there is always the potential of looking out for others serving as a catalyst for collective resistance.

The UPC is characterized by makeshift homes and shanties as well as temporary shelters, with some located in flood-prone zones. According to the research participants, the developers provided temporary shelters to those who were displaced from their original homes due to ongoing construction projects. Unfortunately, these shelters are spaces that are approximately no larger than 3x3 meters and only made of roofing and various light materials. Residents who moved to temporary shelters have complained that these dwellings are prone to flooding during rainy days and turn into hot tin boxes on sunny days. Nevertheless, they say they would rather stay here because the other option would be relocation. As one participant lamented:

Ang hirap, kasi andito yung trabaho, andito nagaaral mga anak mo na malapit lang pwedeng lakarin, ganun. Tapos ililipat ka basta-basta lang doon sa malayo. Tapos wala pang hanapbuhay. Hindi pa, kumbaga, yung pabahay dun, walang kuryente walang tubig. Parang wala, wala talaga. Kaya parang nakilahok na lang ako para lumaban at manindigan na, talagang dito na lang muna kami habang wala pang maayos na relokasyon.

It's hard because our jobs are here, my children can easily walk to their schools. Now you're being forced to relocate to far-flung areas without assurance of livelihood opportunities. When you get there, the housing units don't even have water and electricity. There's really nothing [there]. That's why I joined the calls of the community to fight and resist, that we wish to stay here until the relocation issues are addressed.

By looking at the current conditions of the UPC case study, we get a better picture of what they must deal with in their daily lives and their experiences that drive them to resist. As described by one of the research participants, they struggle more and more each day as the developer started claiming their community space. One participant shared the following:

Ngayon yung ano, kinakaharap namin sa komunidad, grabeng ano na eh, panggigipit. Kasi tinatangalan na kami ng kuryente...ng tubig. Parang ganun yung taktika nila para umalis yung mga tao, mga residente dito.

Tapos, pinapa-ikutan na kami ng bakod. Kinukulong ka na parang hayop. Oo, kasi puro na bakod e, puro na yero dinadaan diba? Tapos ang liit liit na ng daanan diba? Tapos wala pang ilaw. May naano pa diyan hold-up, oo apat na nahold-up diyan. Kasi maliit at madilim daanan diyan. Tapos yung ginagawa ngayon ng NHA, ginagawa nila na parang inaano na, umalis na. Kumbaga mag self-volunteer na ang mga tao.

Today, what we face in the community, is really a major kind of oppression. They are even cutting off access to electricity and water. This is just one of their tactics to force the residents out of our homes. We're also being surrounded by fences, boxing us out of the rest of the community. We're being garrisoned like animals. Yes, they are using roofing materials as fences, severely limiting our pathways, didn't you notice? There are also no lights outside so incidents of theft are high. Four people were already robbed there because of the narrow, dimly lit streets. Even the NHA, they are already forcing us to self-volunteer to leave our homes.

This is just one instance of oppression faced by residents once a private developer enters the picture. In the UPC where the research participants live, a mixed development project that includes a casino is being built on the community's land area. As a result, the construction and continuous destruction of former dwelling areas have altered the lives of many urban poor families.

So ngayon, malaking pagkakakiba, naitayo na yung building ng [redacted], kung saan [magiging] casino 'yan. Tapos puro bakod na, napalibutan na kami ng bakod. Tapos yung daan namin maliit na lang talaga ang access road naming papuntang EDSA, papunta dito sa palengke. Kasi isa na lang talaga ang daan dito sa area namin. Tapos yung sapa, dati malawak, hinuhukay nila tapos niliitan nila yan. Yan ang malaking pagkakaiba, kasi dati malawak pa, makapagtanim ka pa. Ngayon hindi na.

Today, there is a big difference [in the community], the construction of the casino is almost completed. We're now surrounded by tall fences. Our access roads have become smaller. In our area, only one small access road remains. Then there's the creek, it used to be wide, but they dug the land nearby and made it narrower. Those are the big differences. The lands were wide then, and we were able to plant produce. Now we can't do that anymore.

These development projects, often implemented without proper consultation with the community, have detrimental effects not only on the people but also on the environment. The literature on development aggression has established the

environmental risks on vulnerable communities, including the urban poor (Rasli, 2018). Most of the time, the environmental impact becomes permanent, completely altering the lives of the community in the worst possible way. UPCs in the Philippines' metropolis are residential spaces often made up of temporary shelter structures often situated in flood-prone areas. Participants in the research claim that the developers offered short-term housing, called temporary shelters, to people who had to leave their own residences owing to ongoing construction projects. Residents who moved to temporary shelters have experienced flooding inside these shelters during rainy days and extreme heat during hot season due to the materials. But for these people, they say they'd rather stay here because the other option would be relocation. This is perfectly expressed by one of the research participants:

Syempre mga baha. Binabaha kami dito dahil sa mga hukay hukay ng construction. Tapos 'yung condo minsan naglalabas ng madumi at mabahong tubig sa creek, nakakahilo 'yung amoy. Nagkasakit pa nga mga bata dito. Tsaka yung mga bubong, tulo. Kasi hindi naman makapagrepair ng mga bahay kasi ayaw ng NHA. Magdala ka nga ng kpirasong kahoy dito, kinukumpiska agad ng mga guwardya. So paano ka makpag-ano? Ang ginagawa na lang ng mga tao trapal-trapal na lang yung bubong. Eh hindi naman talaga magtatagal 'yan, kasi maulanang maarawan, rurupok 'yan. Ang baha naman, tuwing ulan talaga lalong lalo sa amin, babaha. Kasi natakpan na yung daluyan ng tubig dahil sa construction, binabaha kami. Lalo sa may tabing sapa, pag konting ulan lang talaga, inaabot yung mga kabahayan. Gawang pinaliitan nga yung creek, pinaliitan nila yung daluyan ng tubig...

Of course, there's flooding because of the construction. There's also the condominium nearby that dumps wastewater that has a terrible smell, causing headaches. People got sick at one point, including the children. Then we have the leaky roofs that we can't even repair, because we can't bring in raw materials from the outside as the NHA won't allow us. A piece of wood can even get confiscated by the guards, so how can we fortify our homes during the rains? So we just use whatever we have to cover our roofs. However, these get damaged easily because of wear and tear. Flooding has worsened even with little rain because the natural path of the water has been blocked off, the creek was trimmed down...

With the advent of development aggression in the community, the dynamics of the residents tend to change drastically. In particular, certain areas targeted as a priority for construction are aggressively being reclaimed from the urban poor settlers, displacing them in the process. According to stories shared by the research participants, this is usually done through a joint effort by private developers and the NHA, who deceive them into leaving their homes and relocating in exchange for cash or other incentives, such as grocery items. Considering how tight life is in such a setting, many families take on the offer despite knowing that relocation sites have very few opportunities for them to lead sustainable lives. A resident shared, “*Oo isang libo lang yung binigay tapos halagang 300PHP na grocery. Parang nasilaw sila doon kasi naiisip nila, natatakot kasi sila, biglang demolish-in, imbes na magkaroon sila ng bahay, hindi na sila magkaroon ba. Baka iniisip nila i-force demolition ba kaya parang tinanggap na lang nila*” (“Yes, they were given a thousand pesos and 300PHP worth of groceries. Some were tempted because they were afraid that if they don’t accept it and their homes get demolished, instead of securing a house in the relocation site, they’d have nothing. They might be thinking of forced demolition, so despite knowing how far the relocation sites are, they accepted the offer”).

Most of the time, development projects are jointly done through a public–private partnership between the government and a giant corporation. The community members are rarely involved in the dialogue, as developers often have little to no interest in the sustainable welfare of the communities that will be affected by a project. This practice removes the community members’ voices from the development discourse, which could harm their lives. In the UPC case study, a joint venture agreement (JVA) between a private corporation and the government was

signed in 2009 to develop the land (including the community's location). According to one research participant, the community was not involved in discussions prior to signing and was only informed after the agreement was signed. This meant that no consultation was done, and their opinions on how the development project was going to push forward were not considered.

Sa JVA? Wala! Eh lutang nga kami. Wala kaming alam ano yung joint agreement. Doon na lang pinaliwanag sa amin nung nagkaroon ng demolisyon. Doon na lang namin nauunawan na ito pa lang [redacted] ay may joint agreement sa national at local government hanggang sa developer. Ngayon eh kami namangha kami. Una pinagaralan pa daw ng local government kung magkaroon daw ng on-site [na pabahay]. Kaya doon kami tumindig sa on-site. Lutang kami diyan sa sinasabing agreement. Kaya matindi talaga panindigan namin na hindi namin yan alam, kaya hindi kami pwedeng umalis, kasi wala naman saming pinaabutan na may ganyan. Dapat may general asembliya na panawagan talaga sa buong mga residente na ito na yung magaganap. Pero wala.

With the JVA? Nothing! We weren't informed. We didn't even know what a joint agreement meant then. We were only informed about it on the day the demolition was set to take place. That was the only time that we learned that [redacted] was included in the joint venture agreement between the national and local government as well as the developer. We were surprised. We were told that the local government was initially looking into an on-site development for us, so we stood by that statement. That's why we are very vocal about us not being informed about the agreement, so we will remain here. There should have been at least a general assembly to consult community members regarding this, but there was none.

These multi-faceted problems faced by the UPC residents daily, from housing security, environmental and health risks, as well as abuses, threats, deception, and being taken advantage of, comprise the lived experiences of the urban poor. The stories shared by the participants capture the emotions that come with being part of a marginalized and vulnerable sector. As their voices are front and center in the narrative of their living conditions, we are given an opportunity to understand how their resistance stems from oppression. The continuous exploitation of their vulnerability by those in power is a perpetual trigger that drives the urban poor to

resist and protect themselves and their community. They are also driven by the idea of collectively fighting for something, knowing that doing something alone would be moot and ineffective in a society where they are currently treated as deterrents to progress.

Theme 2: Defiance and Resistance

Urban poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon manifested through poor access to housing, basic social services, livelihood, political threats, and environmental risks, among others. A UPC typically consists of poor households. A World Bank Development Report (2001) qualifies a household as poor when it is deprived of primary livelihood resources to meet basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and health, and when it cannot withstand the effects of various environmental and social hazards, making them highly vulnerable to different life-threatening events. Most significantly, a household is poor when it has no power to make decisions or participate in community-based issues. Urban poverty has many dimensions that affect one another to escalate their vulnerability to social, economic, and political threats.

This phenomenon prompts the community members to find ways to defend themselves and their community through acts of resistance. One act of defiance against forced demolition and eviction from their community is their outright fight to stay where they are. Among those who continue to stay in the community—despite the option of relocation with monetary offers—there is a consensus that the reason they do so is that the existing UPC is within a good location in the city. Therefore,

access to basic social services, such as schools, hospitals, and government offices, is viable. Living there, some are much closer to their jobs, while others have already established spaces as vendors.

It also does not help that the relocation sites are not conducive to sustainable living and are often situated in hazard-prone areas, as experienced by those who return to the community after being relocated. Furthermore, the materials used were substandard, and most units did not have readily available water and electric facilities. Most importantly, the locations are too far from the city where their jobs and livelihoods are. One of them shared, "*Kasi, nandito yung malapit yung kabuhayan, malapit yung pamilihan, malapit yung pasyalan, park, school, ospital. Syempre mahalaga yung ospital, eskwelahan eh*" ([We stay] because our livelihoods and opportunities are here. The market, schools, hospitals are accessible as well as recreational spaces. Of course these are important). This simple yet impactful statement encompasses the reasons why the urban poor resist displacement. Thus, their concerns are not singlehandedly solved by providing them with a housing unit, but by also ensuring that life there is sustainable with proper opportunities for livelihood and employment, as well as access to basic social services. This is the reason why they continue to resist—they are fighting for a more inclusive approach to development.

Moreover, while the community continues to find ways to adapt, their strategies and solutions are inconsistent with the local and national government's existing laws and policies. Thus, their proposed solutions are considered illegal or highly contested. In this research, the interviewees gave a more personal

perspective on why they joined collective resistance and social movements. Initially, they said they had different views on resistance when they were not yet involved. One participant expressed curiosity as to why some residents were so resistant to accepting relocation sites, mainly if the offer included monetary assistance. It was only after hearing stories from those who returned to the community after being displaced to relocation sites that they understood the situation. The more they heard similar stories from neighbors and friends, the better they understood why many opted to stay. Their exposure to threats and continuous communication with returnees have encouraged them to participate in social movements and other forms of collective resistance.

Another reason why they continue to resist the threats disguised as development is the location's proximity to their jobs, livelihood, children's schools, hospitals, and government offices, among others. A research participant lamented that despite their physical living conditions, they would rather stay in the community than return to their provinces because life is more challenging in rural areas. They say that money is more accessible in urban centers because even with a minimum wage, they still get a regular source of income. In contrast, the alternative would be farming, wherein they would have to wait for months for the crops to be ready for harvesting and selling.

Personal Reasons for Resisting

On a personal level, access to affordable and decent mass housing is the primary reason why residents of UPCs join protests and other forms of collective

resistance to fight threats to their homes. Essentially, all the residents of the community case study are squatting on government-owned land. Hence, they are always at risk of being relocated, especially now with the joint venture agreement in effect. The residents have always longed for security in terms of decent and affordable housing:

Siyempre gusto naming magkabahay. Ganun din talaga. Kasi ngayon, hindi na lang pamilya ko iniisip ko. Kundi lahat na e. Buong komunidad. Ang pangarap ko sa pamilya ko eh pangarap ko na rin para sa komunidad. Permanenteng pabahay talaga. 'Yun naman ang talaga ang gusto ng karamihan eh.

Of course, what we want is a house of our own. That's it. Right now, I don't only think about my family anymore, but the whole community as well. My dream for my family is the same for my community. A permanent home. That's what everybody wants.

Should the housing be located outside of cities, they urge the government to provide them with livelihood or employment opportunities. Having their own house is a personal interest for the residents in joining collective action. When they started becoming involved and hearing the shared experiences with others, they gained a deeper understanding of the importance of working together to achieve their personal interests and the community's collective goals. This becomes essential in creating a social movement within the UPC.

Economic factors are another reason driving the urban poor to resist, either because of employment or other forms of livelihood. Urban migration is instigated by the need for better opportunities and related to this, people settle in city centers to look for jobs or livelihood. Displacing them from their established communities and relocating them to sites that offer little to no security in terms of employment or livelihood create more problems than solutions. Many urban poor residents are either

employed in nearby locations or have their livelihoods, such as street vending and informal transport options, near their residences. In a way, relocating them in the name of development without considering the multi-faceted dynamics of urban poor settlements is a form of marginalization.

Regarding employment, many residents with jobs are contractually employed and often have minimum wage incomes. Those without jobs have ventured into informal livelihoods, such as vending and pedicab driving. The problem with informal livelihoods, however, is that they are not duly recognized by the local government and are treated as illegal activities. Thus, their tools for earning, such as their pedicabs and merchandise/carts, are regularly confiscated by local government forces. Despite being vital role players in the city's development, poor urban communities and their residents are often left out of the development discourse. They are also excluded during consultations for development projects that would significantly affect their lives. One participant from the UPC case study shared how the residents are the ones who developed and made the community thrive:

Kumbaga kami na lang mga residente nagpaayos dito, nasemento yung mga daan. Dapat, isama nila kami (sa usapang kaunlaran). Dapat maninidigan tayo. Dito na lang sana. Kasama dapat kami sa pagunlad. Tsaka karapatan natin magkaroon ng maayos na pabahay. Kasi dito tayo. Dito tayo nagkaroon ng mga pamilya. O diba? Tapos basta-basta na lang tatanggapin natin yung ganong halaga.

I mean, if you think about it, we are the ones who made this community thrive. We paved the roads and built our homes. That's why they should involve us [in the development discourse]. We need to stand our ground and say that we want to stay here. We should be included in the development. It is our right to have access to affordable and decent housing. Because we're here, we raised our families here, right? And they want to remove us here just like that by bribing us?

Another reason why they continue to resist the community threats disguised as development is the location's proximity to their jobs, livelihood, children's schools, hospitals, and government offices, among others. A research participant lamented that despite their physical living conditions, they would rather stay in the community than return to their provinces because life is more challenging in rural areas. They say that money is more accessible in urban centers because even with a minimum wage, they still get a regular source of income. In contrast, the alternative in the province would be farming, wherein they would have to wait for months for the crops to be ready for selling.

Kabuhayan nga. Kasi sa probinsya kasi namin mahirap talaga ang buhay doon eh. Basta mahirap! Kaysa dito, diba? Hindi naman pagkakaano, pero kung dito ka sa Maynila, "easy money" kung tawagin. Kasi diba, magaan ka lang ng isang linggo, papasok ka lang ng isang linggo, may sabaduhan ka na sahod. Eh sa probinsya kasi months pa hintayin mo sa saka.

Our livelihoods. Because back in our province, life is hard. It's not easy! Unlike here, right? Basically, here in Manila, it's called "easy money," because you work for a week, and by the weekend you get paid. Unlike in the province where you have to wait for months for the harvest season.

Urban poverty, as previously explained, is complex and extends beyond income. Many of its dimensions relate to the vulnerabilities of the urban poor in terms of access to housing, economic and livelihood problems, healthcare and education, and inclusion in development. The last part is considered vital to the community's continuous resistance. People resist and fight for their rights because they are often deemed powerless and voiceless in the development discourse. They are left out of the conversation over decisions and policies that may affect their lives, including development projects on lands where their community sits. Based on the research participants' experiences, they became involved in collective resistance because

they wanted to be heard, and the only way for them to achieve that was for them to resist collectively.

This means they need a show of force to convey their message. They understand that they are disadvantaged and that having the numbers is crucial because, otherwise, no one would listen to a single voice. “*Hindi naman magreklamo kaming mahihirap kung tinatrato kami ng tama ng gobyerno* (The poor would not complain if we were treated fairly by the government),” as one of them expressed. The statement is very much the essence of why people in UPCs continue to resist. Their experiences with abuses, threats, and harassment from those in power drive them deeper into marginalization and oppression. This phenomenon causes them to fight and act to protect their families and community:

Kasi itong laban na ito, di ito pang sarili mo, kasi syempre laban mo para sa kinabukasan ng mga anak mo na magkaroon sila ng maayos na bahay, may matitirhan. Kasi pag nagpera ka, sarili mo lang iniisip mo. Kasi ang pera pag nabawasan, wala na. Kumbaga yung bahay, magagamit pa siya, mapakinabangan pa siya ng mga apo ng anak mo or apo ng apo mo. Kaya nanatili talaga kami at ano ba, nanatili para ipaglaban talaga na magkaroon kami ng maayos at disente at abot kayang pabahay

This fight isn't just about yourself. It's fighting for your children to have a better future, a better home. Because if you just accept the bribe, you're only thinking about yourself at that moment. That money will easily be spent, whereas if you fight for a home, even your descendants will benefit from it. That's why we continue to stay and resist and fight for decent and affordable housing.

Importance of Collective Action

With the personal goals and objectives for resistance established through their stories and experiences, let's now discuss how they express the importance of fighting for their rights and resistance. The research participants have deeply

expressed how important it is not only to fight for their survival but to be involved and participate in the collective resistance of the community. For the residents of the community case study, collective resistance is more than just the combined efforts of individual resistance. The interviews were conducted to verify whether collective resistance must be cohesive and very public to gain traction in order to budge the oppressors' existing behaviors and challenge existing policies. Active participation is a crucial ingredient in a flourishing collective resistance movement because, according to them, you're basically giving up your rights by not doing anything. The urban poor understand how resistance can only be effective if they fully commit and participate—a sentiment shared by a participant:

Mahalaga talaga ang pagkilos. Kasi kung hindi ka kikilos, parang kumbaga suko ka na eh, parang sinusuko mo na yung mga karapatan mo. Kailangan talaga. Kasi pag hindi ka kumilos, doon kumukuha yung kalaban. "Kalaban" kasi tawag namin sa NHA, ganun. Kapag hindi ka kasi kumilos parang kampanti ka lang, inisiip mo lang "ay wala yan," doon sila bumubutas na, "hmm nananahimik na sila, gawin na natin ito." Kasi nung time na nanahimik kami, kaya nabakuran kami. Kailangan talaga kumilos, hindi lang kilos, dapat may boses. Yung kilos samahan ng boses, para mapakinggan, marakating (sa kinauukulan). Halimbawa, yung problema dito, kilos tayo ng tayo, wala naman tayong..hindi nila alam yung, kumbaga, ano yung gusto naming ivoice out?

Making an action is important. Because if you don't take a stand, it would seem like you've already given up. It's like surrendering your rights. It's necessary [to resist]. When you don't resist, your enemies will take advantage of that. It's why we call the NHA our "enemies." If you don't act, and just let things happen and say, "oh nothing's going to happen," that's when the oppressors would think, "hmmm let's take advantage of their inactivity." There was a time when our resistance lulled, and the developers immediately put up fences around one area in the community. [That's why] it's important to resist, not just to resist but to be heard as well. Our actions must be accompanied by our voices, so we can be heard better by those in power. We can't keep doing actions here without our voice because how else will they hear what we want to voice out?

The community, in its ongoing struggle for its right to the city, understands that their cause is just and warranted. Being in a disadvantaged position, they know that they

need collective resistance to have a fighting chance over influential giant developers working with the government. The idea of fighting collectively is something they believe in because they've seen how it has worked before and has continued to do so, "*Nainiwala talaga ako, kasi ano eh, diba sinasabi nga na hindi mo mapagtagumpayan kung isa ka lang. Dapat matagumpayan niyo yan kung sama-sama kayo, buo kayo. Kasi, maalarma na sila kasi marami kayo eh, buong komunidad kayo makipaglaban*" (Of course I believe [in collective resistance], you know there's a saying that you can't achieve things alone. People working together achieve goals because they're a collective. Those in power will see our numbers and see the entire community resisting). The urban poor residents know that for them to achieve their collective goal, they need to work together. Their needs, such as basic social services, are not given to them easily, so they need to work for it, they need to fight for it. At the core of collective resistance is every individual's conviction to fight and actively participate. One research participant fondly shared their experience:

Syempre mahalaga kasi nandito ka nakatira. Pangalawa, masaya yung pakiramdam na yung mga tao pinupuri ka kasi andiyan ka, hindi mo sila pinabayaan. Masaya ako kaya minsan kahit mainit ang pakiramdam ng ulo, pero pag naiisip mo yung mga naaappreciate yung ginagawa mo para sa kanila, masaya ako. Meron pa nga na inuuna ko sila kahit walang-wala na ako makain. Inuuna ko talaga sila. Yun nga lang, sana kailangan din sana yung mga taong nabibigyan mo ng ganung atensiyon, meron din sanang pagpapahalaga. Kasi, una, hindi naman kami tatagal dito kung ako lang. Sila yun. Pero dapat wag panghinaan. Matagal daw ang laban, wala pa rin naman daw pabahay, ganun kasi kaisipan nila eh. E di siyempre, batayan niyo na lang ako 12 years na ako sa mga pagkilos, hanggang ngayon butas butas pa din ang bahay, hindi makapagpaayos. Pareho lang naman tayo. Ang nilalaban lang naman natin, makamit natin yung tagumpay. Kasi pag nakamit natin yung tagumpay, hindi lang kayo ang sasaya, marami. Parang masaya ka na yung mga kasama mo dati, ay hanggang ngayon nandyan pa din.

It's important to resist for our space because this is our home. For me, it's also fulfilling to hear people praise you for fighting for and with them. I'm happy because even though things may be difficult at times, you think of how the other members of the community appreciate what you do for them. There are times when I go out of my way to help them with their needs. But at the

same time, you feel like, they should at least put in the effort or understand the importance of what we do. Because we wouldn't be here if we didn't resist. Some people are already discouraged because of the slow progress of the fight for the right to housing, so I tell them, just look at me, I've been fighting for it for 12 years now, we're all the same. But what we fight for, is our collective victory, not just our own. Isn't it nice to see that the people you fought alongside would also experience the victory that you have?

Looking at how residents of the UPC case study are mobilized to resist through the examples provided collectively, we can see an overview of how participation plays a big part. The community faces various issues, such as housing, access to essential social services, livelihood, and lack of employment opportunities. Such pre-existing "threats" are perpetuated by how dominant players in the picture discriminate against and excludes the poor from the development discourse. Being at a disadvantage, the urban poor relies on collective actions to acknowledge the problems, come up with solutions, and act on those. The premise of participation in resistance is the active role of members in communicating their shared experiences to one another to create a sense of unity that, in turn, will provide them with a space to resist threats to the community collectively. As one participant expressed:

Pag sama-samang pagkilos, magtatagumpay talaga. Ang layunin, tingin ko, makatwiran ang paglaban. Kasi isa ka na ngang mahirap, tapos tagpi-tagpi na nga bahay mo, aalisin ka pa? Eh di lalaban ka talaga, kasi alam mong doon ka lang mabubuhay sa lugar na yun dahil andun ang buhay mo.

If there is collective action, the goal is achievable. The objective, I think, is to justify resistance, that to fight is only right. You're already poor, living in the slums, and yet you're still being forced out of your home? That's why you're really forced to resist and fight for your space, because you know this is the only place where you can thrive.

They also made an analogy on their collective resistance, saying "*Dahil sa sama-samang pagkilos, makakamit ang tagumpay. Para lang kasi yang isang walis, pag binungkos mo, pag nagwalis ka, pag marami yung walis, mawawalis mo yung maraming kalat. Pero kapag nagwalis ka ng tatlong piraso lang yung tingting, hindi*

mo talaga mawawalis. Lalo kapag nagiiisa ka lang” (Because of collective action, success can be achieved. It’s just like a broomstick, if you gathered the sticks and tied them together, you’ll be able to sweep better. But if you sweep using only three sticks, you can’t do much with it. Now imagine doing it with a single stick).

The stories shared by the research participants elaborated on the importance of working together to reclaim their narratives. By doing something collectively to fight for their rights, they demonstrate that they are not just freeloading citizens but actual productive members of society. It’s interesting to hear how their stories reflect how they feel more empowered when they are working together than on their own, further strengthening the idea that for the urban poor, collective action is their best expression of resistance.

Kasi kung nandito ka na, at iilan lang kayo, hindi kayo pakikilingan. Mas mabuti ‘yung mas maramihan kayo. Mas mabilis magulantang ‘yung ano, mabulabog, magising, yung mga pinaglalaban talaga ng mga tao. Hindi naman magrereklamo yang mga yan eh. Hindi naman magpoprotesta yang mga yan eh kung tama yung ano, yung pagaano nila sa mga mahihirap.

Kaya, basta magkaisa yung mga tao. Tsaka tumindig saka may halong kamulatan. Importante yung pagkakaisa dahil hindi naman pwedeng ikaw lang. Hindi ka pakikilingan. Kailangan marami kayo. Hindi lang dapat basta-basta marami, para mapakinggan kayo, para magulantang, magising yung mga nasa ahensya ng gobyerno para mapakinggan. Malaman nila kung anong, yung karapatan diba? Kung ano yung mga problema. Kailangan nilang maaksyunan yun...

If you’re here now and there’s only a couple of people with you, people will never listen. It’s always better to resist with more people; it’s easier to shock, disturb, and arouse the public toward what we’re fighting for. These people will not be doing protests, and will not resist if we as urban poor are treated fairly like the rest.

That’s why the urban poor need to be united. Intensify the awareness. To be collective versus fighting alone because people will not listen that easily. When we’re united, we can voice out to the government agencies our rights, so they’ll listen, right? They should be able to help us resolve our sector’s issues.

One research participant expressed how community members are often stimulated to participate in collective action, because they see their neighbors who are active organization members united and working together to defend not just members of the organizations but also the entire community:

Bilib sila. Yung mga walang organisasyon, “Ang galing niyo naman,” sabi nila, “nagkakaisa kayo.” Ganun yung nakikita nila eh. Kasi kami sa org, kapag may isang member na maaapektuhan, pinupuntahan namin yan eh. Kinakausap kung anong plano. Tinatanong namin kung anong plano niya. Hindi naman kasi tutol kung magparelocate siya o magpatemporary shelter, kaya kinokonsulta namin kung anong plano niya. Halimbawa, gusto niya manatili siya, eh magbabarikada kaming lahat niyan, barikadahan namin, magset kami ng usap sa ganito, halimbawa kay [redacted]. Nakikipagusap kami sa kanila. Kung anong plano ng member namin, ‘yun yung pino-propose namin sa mga dialogue.

Those without organizations admire us [organization members]. They say, “You guys are great, you’re so united,” because that’s what they see. When one of our members is affected, we make time to visit that person and talk to them and help them come up with plans. They’re not really against relocation to temporary shelters, so we ask them. If they want to stay, then we mobilize and create a barricade around their home. Or we ask for dialogue with [redacted] and we talk to them. We propose solutions to help resolve the issues.

This statement depicts how the residents mobilize in the face of immediate threat. Consultations and discussions at the individual level play a significant role in determining the next steps of collective actions. Not only does this emphasize the participatory nature of communicating resistance, but it also provides a deeper understanding of how community members perceive these processes.

Resistance Through Dialogue

As part of the defiance and resistance theme that emerged from this study, the concept of seeking dialogue with those in power (e.g., the local government, housing agency, and developer in the case of the UPC studied) is an example of

resistance in such a way that it reclaims the residents' communicative capacity to be involved in the development discourse that they have been excluded from. This statement is based entirely on how the urban poor perceive the importance of communicating with those in power to bargain for themselves. Their stories reveal their empowerment, which comes from being able to express their concerns to those who have the actual power to make. This contrasts with how they are normally treated in the development discourse:

Tinataboy. Hindi kami sinasama sa planning. Kapag kami nanghihingi ng dayalogo, ang lagi lang sinasabi, huwag kayong aalis, hindi naman kami magbibigay ng COC, may mga ganun lang sila binabanggit. Pero hindi nila kinikilala yung aming paglaban. Kunwari, paano na yung mga nasa danger zone na ngayon. Yung mga nasa shelter, ang init-init, tinanggalan sila ng kuryente. Eh isang security guard? Magpapatalo ba kami? Kung kani-kanino na kami lumapit para mabalik ang kuryente pero hanggang sa ngayon wala pa rin, hindi naaksyonan. Ang mga tao ngayon, nakikikabit sa mga andyan pa. Ang problema, kung sila ay aalis eh wala na naman silang kuryente. Kaya binabanggit namin sa LGU, kailan ba yung sunod na usap? Para may makita na kaming development. Huwag na kaming paasahin. Kung wala, eh wala. Pero hindi kami aalis.

Driven away. We are not included in the planning. When we ask for dialogue, all they say is, don't leave, we won't give COC (certificate of compliance for demolition), they just say those things. But they do not recognize our struggles. What about those who are in the danger zone now? The ones in the [temporary] shelters, they endure the extreme heat, and their electricity is cut off. There's a private guard, we can't let ourselves be defeated. We have been trying to get the power back, but so far nothing has been done. The residents are finding ways just to have access to electricity. The problem is that if they leave, they will not have electricity. So we mention it to the LGU, when is the next dialogue? So that we can see any development. Don't let us down. Just tell us if there's no action to be made so we know. But we will not leave.

As shown above, seeking dialogue with the government and developers has become a tool of resistance for the urban poor. By demanding to be involved in the communicative discourse on development, their voices of resistance are provided a platform to be fully heard. A very important space where, often, they are sidelined and ignored. One research participant shared that after experiencing how effective

and powerful seeking dialogue is, they felt more visible and heard. They used to feel powerless and defeated when threatened and subjected to abuses by developers, but now they are quick to document everything and carry evidence when seeking dialogue.

Yung ginawa namin nung wala na talaga kuryente yung area namin, nakipagusap kami sa mga tauhan ng developer. Kung pwede, hanapan ng paraan saan idaan yung wire, tapos parang ayaw nila. Kaya umabot kami na nakipag usap na kami sa LGU. Humingi kami ng tulong kung ano ba talaga pwede gawin. Para lang talga maibalik yung kuryente ng komunidad. Kasi ang hirap kaya ng mawalan ng kuryente tapos may mga bata pa. Nakipagusap kami sa head guard ng developer, hindi kami pinakinggan. Nakipagusap kami sa barangay, kay Kap. Tapos umabit na rin kami sa LGU, kay Mayor. Nakikipag-dialogue kami.

We did this when we didn't have any electricity, we talked to the developer's personnel. If possible, to find a way to get the wire through, and then they didn't seem to want to. So, we decided to go to the LGU. We asked for help on what we could do to find a way to restore power in the community. It is difficult to lose power, especially for those families with children. We talked to the head guard of the developer; we were not listened to. We talked to the local council, to the chairman. We then went to the LGU, to the Mayor, asking for a dialogue.

This practice has been proven effective by community members, especially when dealing with community concerns that are mostly ignored by the developers. The process of documenting the site of concern, interviewing residents to gather more information, and compiling evidence to bring to the dialogue and communicate formally with those in power is deemed more applicable and receives more positive responses than simply attending and complaining. The processes involved in the dialogue rely heavily on proper communication among the community members as well as with other agencies, including the developer as well as the local and national governments. As expressed by the research participants, they know how much they are at a disadvantage as a marginalized group that is not taken seriously and sidelined from development discourse. That is why one of the ways they try to

communicate their concerns is by seeking an audience through collective bargaining and dialogue. They understand how they can only be heard and be given notice when they show up in numbers.

Such is the impact of seeking dialogue in the UPC case study that residents have completely changed their attitudes toward issues and problems faced by their community. From their initial defeatist attitude, they say they now feel like they have a voice if addressed through seeking a dialogue. As one participant shared:

Meron mga ilang-ilang mga kapitbahay na nagpapaabot sa amin, na may demolisyon daw. Galing sa mga pulis. Sasabihin daw, mag-ingat daw tayo kasi ang developer magko-command na bulldoze-in ang mga matitira kapag naalis na yung mga good census. Ah! Sabi ko, wag kayong matakot... Tapos nakikipag usap kami sa barangay. Una muna barangay, una naming kinokunsulta, "Ano na pong inabot sa komunidad, may demolisyon bang magaganap?" Eh sasabihin ng kapitan wala naman daw. Hindi kami agad maniniwala, deretso kami sa city hall...ganun hanggang makakuha kami ng maayos na sagot para kumbaga malaman namin anong gagawin namin.

We have neighbors who complain to us that there will be a demolition, according to the police. They were told to be careful because the developer has already commanded to bulldoze the houses once those who are tagged as good census have already relocated. I told them to not be scared. So, we went to the barangay to consult, "What's the update for the community? Is there going to be a demolition?" The chairman says there isn't a scheduled one, but we don't believe everything they say so we go straight to the city hall...that's what we do until we get a sufficient answer to at least help us prepare our next move.

For them, seeking dialogue is a form of resistance, as it gives them the power to reclaim their voices and not dismissed in the development discourse. By taking matters into their own hands and demanding to be heard, they empower themselves against the oppression they face. They are rendered powerless in terms of being able to participate in communicative discourse on development by the dominant societal structures that take their agency. So, by reclaiming their voices through seeking audience and dialogue, their voices of resistance are amplified and heard.

This is how the communicative process of seeking dialogue becomes an important part of the urban poor's resistance.

Theme 3: Community Action and Communication

It is essential to discuss that collective resistance in the UPC setting is not a one-time result of a threat but instead a community response to continuous threats. This belief highlights the nature of the UPC to always find a way to survive despite the odds. UPCs are often undocumented and are not given proper attention by institutions, such as the government and the media. Despite being disadvantaged, such communities always find ways to create opportunities for survival, such as reclaiming literal and figurative spaces, collectively working together to sustain the community, and resisting threats to fight for their rights.

However, before collective resistance is established, the residents involve themselves in community consultations that allow them to communicate their concerns to the others. This practice helps them find ways to air out their problems with the objective of finding solutions. Within this context, community leaders are revered because people trust them. Hence, people often air their concerns to community leaders through community consultations. When I asked where residents get the information they trust, one of them shared the following:

...Sa mga leader pa din. Minsan kasi yung barangay, hindi kami naniniwala. Kasi parang yung barangay kasi parang may pagka sinungaling na hindi mo naintindihan. Kumbaga, puro lang sila dakdak. Pero yung tulong? Hindi namin ramdam yun. Kasi diba dapat sakop nila kami? Dapat kung gagawa ng constrution, dapat yung barangay captain, barangay mismo kokonsultahin yung mga residente dito kung "Ok lang ba na magtayo ng ganyan diyan?" "Ok lang ba na urong muna kayo kasi kailangan nila ganito ganyan?" Wala eh, kumbaga biglain ka lang eh. Magulat ka na lang binakuran na

kayo, may construction na diyan, may malalim na hukay. Parang wala ba na, dapat sila mismo ang bababa sa komunidad at magpaliwanag na may plano na, eh wala eh! Kaya minsan hindi na kami nakikipag-ano sa barangay!

...From our leaders, still. Sometimes, we don't rely on the barangay [officials], because there are times that we feel like they're lying to us. They just say things, but we really can't feel their help. We should be under their jurisdiction, right? So if there's a construction project, the chairman should at least consult us, "What do you feel about the upcoming construction?" or "Would it be okay for you to adjust because they need this or that area?" But we don't hear anything from them. You'd be surprised to see construction is already taking place, or a deep pit has been dug while we're asleep. They should be the ones to go to our community to explain the plans, but they don't! That's why we no longer trust our barangay [officials]!

This experience shared by a research participant explains why instead of immediately going to the *barangay* (local council) to file community concerns, many of seek community consultations instead, because people who listen to their grievances are those who understand their situation. At the same time, with the *barangay* often overlooking the needs of the community, the urban poor has adjusted their ways of dealing with community concerns. For instance, community consultations are often spearheaded by grassroots organizations. This practice has become a staple and is open to every single resident of the community. While not every single resident joins these organizations, research participants have agreed that more people have been attending community consultations as concerns about demolitions and relocations continue to hound them.

In many ways, these community consultations are empowering because these provide them a space in which their voices can be heard, not only to complain, but to suggest solutions, share opinions, and provide feedback on different community issues. This communicative space where discourse takes place is a form of reclaiming their voices from a development discourse where dominant structures

actively keep them silent. These spaces have effectively emboldened the residents to be more outspoken regarding their concerns. According to one participant:

Bawat nasa meeting, tinatanong kung ano yung pagtingin o anong kalagayan nila. Kinokunsulta muna bawat isa para alam ng lahat at magagawan siya ng solusyon. Doon ko narealize na, ay ang ganda naman pala. Para aware din sila sa mga anong mangyayari. Para alam din nila ang mangyayari. Para manindigan din sila. Para hindi malusaw ang komyu. Kahit may organisasyon man o wala, dapat manindigan para sa komyu.

Kung ano yung mga natutunan ko sa org, shine-share ko yun, halimbawa kapag may nagtanong sa akin, sinasabi ko sa kanila. Yung iba kasi natatakot. Gusto na magparelocate. "Huwag kayo matakot." sabi kong ganon, galing kami sa ganon sa dialogue, hindi pa naman pinapaalis. Gusto nila malaman na dapat wala nang demolisyon. Kahit may relokasyon na para sa kanila, ayaw kasi nila umalis dito eh. Oo, kaya parang mas ano sa kanila na manatili dito, kaya lagi yan sila nasa mga meeting.

Each person in the meeting is asked for their opinion or feedback. Everyone is consulted first for each of us to hear and provide feedback and share solutions. That's when I realized how good consultations are. So that we are all aware of what's happening in the community, for them to stand up for their rights, too, with or without an organization, to help keep the community alive.

What I learn from my organization, I share it. For example, when someone asks me, I tell them... Some of them are scared so they just prefer to accept relocation. I tell them, "Don't be scared, we came from the dialogue, we're not being asked to leave yet." They want to know if there is a demolition, and even those who already are provided with relocation, don't want to leave. They really prefer to stay here. That's why they actively sit on consultations.

Presence of Grassroots Organizations

With the goal of protecting the community they have built over the decades, residents and community organizations have engaged in several approaches to ensuring the safety and welfare of the residents and the community. From negotiations with government agencies and network-building to more provocative actions, such as barricades and protests, the residents have repeatedly shown their united front. Existing collective resistance through social movements in the

community keeps the spirit of the UPC's fight alive. When residents, even those who already have papers for relocation, see that many in the community still resist relocation and continue to stay, they feel encouraged and join in on the fight. These residents are locally tagged "good census," meaning they have a record with the NHA, which gives them the benefit of being included on a list of housing grantees. While it provides a certain sense of security, many "good census" residents continue to stay because they prefer not to be relocated to far-flung sites.

Meanwhile, those who are active members of community organizations feel that they have a responsibility to encourage others to participate in collective resistance. As they know the feeling of being an outsider first, thus understanding the reservations or subjectivities of joining social movements, they can easily relate to the feelings of those who aren't active community members. They know their role is not just to participate but also to encourage others to join because, as pointed out by a participant, collective resistance is only as effective as the number of active participants. Being in a disadvantaged position because they are marginalized, they need to show force to be noticed both by the local government and the private developers. In the words, as stated by a research participant, "*Ngayon alam ko na bakit sinasabing kahit anong pagsisikap mo, hindi ka talaga uunlad kasi may nagsasamantala*" (Now I understand why despite working hard, we don't succeed in life. It's because there are people who take advantage of their privileges). This realization came after hearing a talk given by an organization in one of the areas of the community.

The research participants unanimously acknowledged the importance of community organizations for several reasons. These groups provide a sense of security to the residents, are the primary source of internal information about community issues, and are considered as reminders that the collective resistance is alive and well. The current research reveals that collective actions are not created spontaneously or enacted from the disorganized efforts of the marginalized and oppressed trying to find a way to air their grievances and be heard; in fact, they are outcomes of a systemic and organized collective resistance. The social movement in the UPC case study is a result of the continuous arousing, organizing, and mobilizing conducted by organization members to their networks of family, friends, and neighbors. The grassroots organizations are often the primary source of information on community concerns and issues. This is because these groups have members in different areas of the community, allowing for a more comprehensive reporting on community issues. They also help bridge the lack of information, which facilitates residents' mobilization and collective actions. This idea is expressed in the following excerpt:

Kasi sasabihin ng iba, "Bakit hindi namin alam?" Yun ang sasabihin nila. Kailangan talaga, maano, mahusay na komunikasyon doon sa mga tao, para hindi ka awayin. Kasi minsan nagagalit sayo tao, sasabihin, "Oh nabayaran ka yata eh." Kagaya yang tuwing pameeting, lagi namin pinapaalala, hindi lang porke't meron kayong shelter, masaya na kayo. Hindi yan pang habangbuhay. Kasi may tendensiya pa kayo diyan na marelocate.

Some people would say, "Why didn't we know that?" That's what they'll say. It takes a lot of communication so that people won't channel their frustrations toward you. Sometimes they'd get angry and say, "You must've been bribed by them, right?" That's why every meeting, we remind the residents that they shouldn't be content with being provided with temporary shelters because they're still prone to be relocated.

Another reason residents of the community case study consider joining organizations is because of the sense of security provided by the latter. Owing to their previous

experiences with demolitions and evictions, they have seen how organizations played a big part in protecting their members and helping them avoid demolition or relocation to off-city housing projects. While organizations aim to protect the welfare of the entire community, they also consider prioritizing members who actively play a significant role in the daily operations of the organizations, as a community leader research participant mentioned. On a personal level, residents look at joining community organizations as an opportunity to learn more about their rights. In this way, they can protect themselves if they must step up and safeguard their own homes from threats of demolition.

The residents also mentioned that being part of a community organization encourages them to fight for themselves and the community. This is because they recognize that if they work collectively, they can be more empowered with information when faced with their oppressors, who often use tactics to deceive them. As a summary of this section, it can be said that the residents of the UPC case study understand the importance of community organizations as a shield from threats to their homes. However, they also acknowledge that aside from relying on these organizations, they also need to do their part in ensuring collective resistance because these two mutually exist to safeguard the rights and welfare of the community. A participant shared her journey on how she decided to join an organization:

Sa kapitbahay ko, na may organisasyon noon. Chika chika lang. Noong panahon na yun, may relokasyon na para sa kanila at aalis na raw sila. So iniisip ko naman, "Pag umalis kapitbahay ko, wala akong organisasyon, paano kaya ako?" Parang naisip ko na kailangan ko talaga ng organisasyon para may kausap. Para alam ko lahat, alam ko yung mga plano, alam ko yung mga pangyayari. Kasi kapag may organisasyon ka, pag may leader, alam mo yun agad. Halimbawa, kung may demolition, nirereport sa leader tapos binabahagi sa amin. Kaya kailangan ko pa noon.

I had a neighbor, who was part of an organization. We were just chatting one time, she told me they already had a relocation site and that they'd be leaving soon. That's when I thought to myself, "If my neighbor leaves, and I still don't belong to an organization, who would I run to?" I realized I needed an organization so I can get all the information I need regarding relocation and other plans. Because I noticed that if you belong to an organization, you're easily informed about these things. For example, if there's a demolition, this is reported to the leader who then informs the members. I needed that.

The research participants that I interviewed unanimously agreed that belonging to a community organization or knowing someone who is part of one is a significant advantage. They understand that fighting for your rights alone would not be as effective as being part of an organization, where members support one another and other residents of the community. Their experiences with organizations have given them insights into how these groups can effectively help them in their personal and community affairs. One of them emphasized how being part of an organization helped them be more knowledgeable about their rights, which they said they wouldn't even know in the first place if not for the community organizations that shared this information with them:

Tsaka 'yung tiyahin ko kasi, nagsabi na, "Pag wala kang organisasyon, wawalisin ka sa komyu." Kasi sabi niya kapag wala ka sa org, syempre, inano ko din kasi sabi, oo, totoo nga naman talaga kapag ikaw lang mag-isa, hindi ka naman talaga papakinggan doon sa NHA, kapag ikaw ang pumunta. Kasi hindi sila nageentertain ng mga indibidwal sa NHA, kailangan may ano ka talaga, oo org.

My auntie said, "If you don't have an organization, you'll easily be displaced from the community [by the developers]." She said that when you don't belong to one, if you only fight by yourself, the NHA won't even look at you. They wouldn't entertain a single person there, you need to go to their office collectively to be noticed.

The idea of collectively working together has proven to be effective on many occasions. According to the participants, showing up in numbers has made a difference to their cause. Related to this, the grassroots organizations have strengthened the residents' sense of community because they have proactively

continued to arouse, organize, and mobilize the people. At the individual level, joining an organization has empowered the urban poor. The participants shared that even though they were not members, community organizations encouraged them to speak up as well as informed them of their rights and why they should fight for them. In a sense, these organizations gave them a sense of empowerment that, despite being mistreated by society, they're still people who have rights. As one of them expressed, *"Syempre noong may organisasyon, doon mo ba nalaman ang mga karapatan mo, bilang isang residente dito sa sa komyu. Diba dapat kasama ka sa pagunlad, ganun. Doon ko narealize na, bakit ako susunod? Bakit ako magpaparelocate? Parang hindi mabibigyan ng hustisya yung pagdevelop namin dito."* (Of course, when you are in an organization, you know your rights as a resident here. You should be part of this city's development, right? That's when I realized, why should I just blindly obey [the developers] and be relocated? It's like giving up on how we developed the community in the first place). This sentiment, according to the participant, is shared by many of their neighbors. They used to be exploited because they're gullible to information provided to them by the state's housing agency regarding relocation, but now, they say that while they don't know everything about laws, they take their time to ask around before blindly obeying. This has made them more inspired because they now feel like they've found their voices, not only to protect their interests but those of the entire community as well. One participant shared the following insights:

Once kasi na nasa organisasyon ka, tinuturo na hindi mo lang iisipin sarili mo eh. Ako hindi ko iniisip sarili ko lang eh, kaya nga nasa org ako, sila naman, mas maganda kasi pakiramdam na nakakatulong ka eh, sa kapwa mo. Kaya hindi ko iniisip sarili ko kundi iniisip ko yung mga kasamahan namin na nawalan. Ano pa na may kasama ka, pero hindi mo tugunan yung pangangailangan nila. Basta pag abot lang kaya talaga na maitulong, gagawa at gagawa talga ako ng paraan. Tutulong at tutulong ako.

Once you're a part of an organization, you're taught not to think only about yourself. Now, I don't think about myself anymore, since becoming part of an organization. It feels good to help others. That's why I don't think only about myself anymore, I think about others in the community who have lost a lot. What's the use of being part of a group if you don't try to help with their needs? As long as I can help, I will. I will help in any way I can.

This practice of helping not only themselves but also the community has resulted in remarkable gains for the urban poor. Their sense of community, strengthened by genuine concern for one another, has provided a buffer against the perpetuating oppression by the dominant structures who want them out of their spaces, instead of what they call "development." Becoming a part of an organization is not mandatory to help or be helped, as expressed by the research participants, but the research participants who belong to an organization have shared how they have grown so much as individuals because of the things they learned, and continue to learn, in terms of how best to protect the interests of the community. As one respondent shared, "*Kasi hindi lang yan laban ng isa, laban ng lahat.*" *Doon ko narealize na yung kolektibo sa org, okay nga siya. Kasi doon ako natuto magsalita, doon ako naging mulat, doon ko nalalaman ang karapatan ko bilang isang residente dito*" (It's not just someone's fight. It's everybody's fight. That's what I realized when I became part of an organization, that everything should be done collectively. The organizations taught me to speak, be aware, and where I understood my rights as a resident here).

For the residents, collective resistance is only effective if more people actively and consistently participate. Those things are basically what organizations create and sustain—activities that engage the community members and encourage them to air their grievances and learn about how they can best protect their community

through their opinions and ideas. The process of sharing concerns, ideas, opinions, and feedback are all governed by communication, which in turn, helps foster a healthy space for discourse for the urban poor who have been left out by dominant societal structures from the communicative spaces of development.

Community Activities and Communication

The abovementioned stories regarding the UPC residents' acts of collective action are concrete examples of their capabilities as proactive agents of change, which is in stark contrast to their portrayal as lazy individuals merely awaiting government support and subsidy. This is based on their shared experiences of not being able to receive support despite waiting for aid from the institutions that should be safeguarding their well-being.

One successful example of a form of a collective action in the UPC case study is the *Kusinang Bayan* (Community Kitchen). This initiative came amid the lack of government aid during the prolonged community quarantine resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The community worked with volunteers and volunteer groups who worked together and capacitated relief operations drive to drum up donations to help sustain the community. A few months into the first waves of lockdowns in 2020, the community has yet to receive adequate aid. A few weeks into procuring and distributing relief packs, the residents have developed a more sustainable method of relief through community kitchens. According to a volunteer, *“Halos lahat kaya ng mga tao dito nakinabang sa Kusinang Bayan. Hindi lang dito sa loob ng komunidad, meron din kami doon sa labas. Parang 32 na kusina ang tinayo noong pandemya”*

(Almost all the people in the community benefited from the kitchens. Not only here but also outside. I think we had almost 32 community kitchens built during the pandemic). When asked why they think the community kitchens are a form of collective action, they said that because not everyone is comfortable joining mass protests out of fear, they get to feel like they're part of something for the community when they participate in such activities, as one participant shared:

Mas nakaaano [hikayat] ka ng mga kapitbahay, 'yung mga taong hindi naman kaya mag-sigaw sigaw sa labas, dito tumutulong. Tapos kusi-kusina, ang dami talaga dito. Kahit hindi mga member, lumalahok, diba? Kahit sa simpleng ano, lumalahok sila.

You can encourage your neighbors more. There are people who can't and won't participate in protest actions outside, so they volunteer in the kitchens instead. There are a lot of volunteers in the kitchens. Even those who are not part of organizations, they participate.

As the name implies, this project provided residents with hot, freshly cooked, and nutritious meals. With this initiative, community leaders from different organizations worked together to address food insecurity due to the pandemic. At the same time, it provided residents a sense of empowerment in being able to help themselves by preparing meal plans, as well as cooking, distributing, and preparing hot meals. At its peak, it reached a total of twenty-seven (27) kitchens spread across the community and even to nearby UPCs and was able to feed up to 5,000 heads per day.

A research participant expressed the impact of the *Kusinang Bayan* in forging unity in the community amidst the prolonged lockdown. Much like how they banded together to overcome previous threats to their homes, the residents developed a certain sense of responsibility toward one another because they knew that only by working together can they survive the ordeal of lack of aid and loss of livelihood and jobs during the height of the pandemic. As one participant stated, "*Ay sa kusinang*

bayan talaga maraming nahikayat. Ah, nagpakusinang bayan kami tapos namimigay kami ng pagkain sa mga tao. May mga ibang org na hindi naman kasali, pero naging bahagi din ng kusinang bayan. Nailabas pa sa ibang komunidad” (The community kitchen really encouraged a lot [of people]. We were able to provide food for many residents. Some residents who were members of different organizations participated as well. We even managed to bring kitchens to nearby communities).

When asked why they thought this was a form of collective action, the research participants expressed that something as simple as this initiative can be demonstrated as a show of force. In turn, they can show those threatening the community that they can work together and make something happen. It has also solidified a collective sense of responsibility because work is distributed to residents in different kitchens. As the needs arose, they spontaneously organized themselves into a functional collective. As such, they consider it a form of collective resistance to demonstrate that they can find ways to sustain themselves despite the government’s lack of support.

Another example of the UPC’s collective action is their *Tanimang Bayan* (Community Food Garden). This community effort was also initiated at the height of the lockdowns imposed in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the sudden lockdowns implemented without considering the consequences of such haphazard policies, many, especially in the urban poor sector, were caught off guard. With a militaristic pandemic response to people who “violate” quarantine protocols, many in the UPC case study had no choice but to stay indoors. This proved difficult for many residents who were, at the time, working as contractual

workers employed on a “no work, no pay” policy. At the same time, others were engaged in informal livelihood, so not being able to go out meant economic turmoil for many urban poor households.

Initially, the community mobilized for relief goods through donation drives, but seeing that it was not sustainable with the unknown length of the lockdowns, *Kusinang Bayan* came to fruition. Subsequently, *Tanimang Bayan* emerged. As observed, the community came up with a proactive approach in dealing with issues they were facing, especially during the pandemic, knowing they cannot expect adequate support from the government. As shown in these examples, they devised their solutions and coping strategies against their challenges. Initially, the residents created the community food garden to mitigate food insecurity during the lockdowns. With the help of an artists’ collective, the residents learned about agroecology and the basics of taking care of vegetables as a viable alternative food source. Armed with such information, they planted vegetables on idle, demolished parcels of land. In this way, from being a food source, the garden has evolved into a form of collective resistance. In particular, it empowered residents in highly vulnerable areas to work collectively and use the gardens to reclaim spaces to resist development aggression. It has also become a symbol of reclaiming and defending their lands. When asked about the role of the community gardens in their collective resistance, a research participant who was also a community leader expressed:

Ang kadalasang paliwanag, asikasuhin natin ang tanimang bayan, kasi pag-delay yan, delaying tactics yan sa pagpapatayo ng mga building. Kasi pag may tanim, hindi yan sila basta-basta maninira. Hindi nila maitatayo yung proyekto. Isa siya sa sina-suggest sa atin ng mga professor at teachers na “Magtanim kayo ng magtanim para hindi kayo agad-agad makuha ang espasyo.” Maninimbang din yan sila na may tanim.

We usually tell others that we must take care of the community food gardens because they are part of our delaying tactics against demolition and construction threats. If the developers see that we have food gardens, they usually step back and don't immediately destroy or demolish areas. They can't put up their projects. Professors helping us also advised us to "Keep farming and planting crops so the developers can't easily claim the area." They would hesitate to do something because of the gardens.

The residents played a significant role in the development of this "act of resistance" by utilizing their local knowledge to identify lands for the gardens. As with other community-led initiatives, their perspectives were incorporated at every stage of the project's development through participatory communication. As previously defined in this paper, the primary focus of this study is participatory communication as the key factor in establishing resistance through the involvement of residents in the development process—from problem identification to solution creation. The entire process should be inclusive and consultative. Further exploration into the role of communication in urban poor resistance will be discussed in subsequent sections of this paper.

A more consistent form of collective action from the community is their constant protesting and social mobilizations on multiple issues affecting the community. Since the historic 2010 *Barikadang Bayan*, the community has embraced the importance of resisting threats and how they can effectively protect their rights and welfare as city residents. The 2010 collective resistance was so effective that neighboring UPCs have looked up to the UPC case study's significant victory against development aggressors. Since then, the latter have used mass mobilizations and protests to seek an audience or be heard by private developers and the national and local government agencies on various issues.

Nagba-black friday protest kami diyan sa palengke. Namimigay kami ng polyeto. Dito sa palengke, tapos sa iba't ibang area dito sa komunidad, polyeto sa mga tao. Galing sa mga organisasyon 'yung polyeto, tapos andun mga kalagayan ng komunidad at ano 'yung mga aksyon na pwede naming gawin. Minsan, pinapaliwagan naming sa mga bahay-bahay, tapos kadalasan hindi pa nila alam na may ganung isyu. Kaya kapag nalalaman nila, doon lang sila nagsasabi na, "Sh sige sasama kami diyan sa city hall para managawan kay mayor." Kaya tuloy-tuloy kami sa komyu sa mga pagkilos sa loob at labas.

Sometimes, we stage a Black Friday Protest in the market. We hand out pamphlets here and in various areas in the community. These came from organizations. They have information on community issues and how we can collectively address them to protect the community. Sometimes, we go from house to house to explain what's on the paper. Unsurprisingly, some of our neighbors are not even aware of the issues in the community. Only until we explain it to them that they would positively respond and say, "Okay, we'll participate in the mobilization to call for the mayor's attention." That's why we try to go to houses, so we reach more people in the community.

Their most recent win through community barricade was barring a scheduled demolition on an area in the community in 2019. At that time, the NHA presented a Certificate of Compliance affirming the planned demolition in a dialogue with the developers and residents. However, the residents were smart enough to review the document and found that the certificate was expired, thus rendering it null and void. They then decided to seek help from the LGU to support their claim and even called for a press conference to expose the NHA. Although the community knew they had the upper hand on the matter, they still organized a barricade on the supposed demolition day just in case. Needless to say, many people showed up, just like the people back in 2010 did. In the end, the certificate's expiration was conceded, and the demolition did not occur.

The research participants also discussed their proposed Community Development Plan (CDP), which is a source of pride for the community. The CDP resulted from the residents' collective efforts of to defend their community and their

right to the city while resisting demolition, eviction, and relocation. Given that state housing programs often exclude the poor, the community decided to create a development plan that prioritized their interests over those of developers. Initiated and led by a grassroots organization with the help of a volunteer network, the formulated CDP is both a proposal and a campaign for affordable, decent, mass housing that includes residents in the discourse. Unlike the previous people's plan, the CDP's conceptualization had significant community participation. It is a technical initiative that requires a systematic process of profiling, mapping, and planning. In 2019, the residents, with the help of the volunteer network, conducted a series of workshops and activities. To ensure that the CDP remained an inclusive endeavor, a community-based participatory design was used, giving residents a significant role in determining its components. As the CDP's goal was to provide affordable mass housing, this aligned with the personal objectives of the urban poor residents. Therefore, many residents participated in its development process. According to a participant:

Halimbawa, yung panawagan namin noon na ipatupad ang CDP, ang daming lumahok noon. Pabahay kasi talaga. Halos lahat dito interes pabahay. Interes ko. At tsaka bakit nila gusto, eh kasi andito na lahat malapit. Halimbawa yung isang nanay, "Ay dito na lang tayo on-site na lang ang laban, kasi yung mga bata nagaaral mapapalayo, tapos yung palengke." Tsaka yung mga tao, isip nila, kabuhyang at bahay dahil andiyan ang interes nila. Sabi nga nila, "Ayaw nga namin pa-relocate kasi ang hirap nga doon eh. Dito may kuryente pa kami, eh pano pag lumipat walang kuryente." Tsaka yung lapit ng eskwelahan, simbahan, palengke, ospital. Ganyan sila magisip. Hindi katulad dati mga lutang sila. Ngayon tanungin mo sila, bakit kayo sumasali sa mga pagkilos, "Eh kasi nga, pinaglalaman natin pabahay na disente at abot kaya"

For example, in our call to implement the CDP, a lot of residents participated. It's because the goal was on-site public housing. Almost everyone here has that interest. I'm interested. And if asked why they want it here, they say all the things they need are so close. For example, one mother shared, "We should fight for this because we're for on-site development. Our children's schools are here, the public market is here." People's interests here are housing and livelihood. They said, "We don't want to be relocated because there's no electricity there." It's near schools, a church, a market, hospital.

That's how they think now, unlike before when they barely know these things. Now, if you ask them why they participate in collective action, they'll tell you "Because we're fighting for decent and affordable housing."

The CDP recognizes that all residents have rights and should be encouraged to participate in this alternative housing program. Its main thrust is inclusive, decent, and affordable on-site housing versus current state housing programs that are often located in hazard-prone areas, made of substandard materials, and lacked access to essential social services. Most of the time, the public has always had a negative connotation about the poor only wanting free things from the government, especially housing. However, that is far from the truth based on the results of the CDP workshops. The truth is that the residents of the community case study recognize that housing is not free, and this is why a central component of the CDP is profiling. This process includes surveying the residents' socioeconomic profiles to understand the average net household income to be used in determining the pricing and mortgage rates. Unlike state housing, the CDP considers the residents' net household incomes to ensure that they can afford the mortgage of their awarded housing units.

The research participants unanimously agreed that the CDP was, and continues to be, a successful form of resistance. It is essentially an antithesis to the government's housing plans for the poor, which relies heavily on relocation without consideration for livability and access to essential social services. Unlike state housing, it is participatory and inclusive, which means that many, if not all, of the facets of the CDP consist of the community members' consolidated ideas, suggestions, and vision. One research participant even reiterated its difference from

a previous version of a “people’s plan,” saying “*Yung CDP, community development plan, hindi yan katulad ng people’s plan na ilan lang nagplano. Kasi nung binuo ang CDP, mga tao yung nagdecide, nagdrawing, nagplano*” (The CDP, or the community development plan, is different from the people’s plan where only a handful of people participated in drafting. Because when the CDP was being produced, the residents were the ones who decided, drew visualizations, and planned the whole thing).

In the process of the CDP development, communication was vital to the entire program. A participatory form of communication where everybody’s opinions, ideas, and feedback were carefully considered at every step became the foundation of the CDP. During the peak of the CDP building, many people from outside the community volunteered to provide technical assistance in the form of surveying and encoding, among others. At the same time, engineers, architects, and designers helped finalize the CDP, along with students, professionals, academics, and even other organizations and sociocivic groups. This encouraged the residents to participate actively, knowing that individuals and groups supported them outside the community. The community eventually submitted the plan to the LGU, which the mayor herself received and acknowledged, with a promise to review the material and continuously hold a dialogue between the LGU and the community.

In summary, this section enumerates several examples of collective actions that the UPC case study has organized and implemented as a form of resistance against various threats. It is necessary to discuss each example to thoroughly understand both the natural collective capacity of the urban poor to band together when facing an imminent threat to their livelihood and community and how each

community activity is organized through a participatory form of communication, wherein each voice is given importance. This practice is far different from how the urban poor are treated by their oppressors, where their voices are often shut down and restricted from the development discourse. For the UPC case study, their collective resistance is not limited to protests and mass mobilizations but also through other creative means, such as community kitchens and community food gardens. Finally, the residents were able to collate their ideas to create a counterproposal in the form of an inclusive CDP. All of these activities are spearheaded and initiated by the residents, with the help of organizations and volunteers, as a direct response to various issues experienced by the community. This helps us comprehend the resistive capacity of a collectively working UPC.

Role of Media

This element is not a major theme across the narratives presented by the research participants in their resistance discourse. However, it's interesting to explore how they perceive both traditional and digital media in relation to their ongoing struggles. Thus, I have decided to include this as a special element that furthers amplify the stories of the urban poor and the challenges they face as a marginalized sector.

In today's world, social movements and collective actions on the ground are magnified on social media and television. By now, we already know that social media platforms are essential and practical tools for raising awareness and sustaining social movements. In the context of the urban poor collective resistance, what they

call coverage or “news landing” on television or social media has proven beneficial to the urban poor’s collective resistance, among others. According to the participants, social media provides a lens through which a largely unaware public can learn about their struggles given their “stories” are not often featured in mainstream media. As it is, the urban poor grassroots organizations understand that they are underrepresented in the media. They are often framed as lazy, stubborn, and deterrents to development. This is why they try to penetrate mainstream media so that their stories and voices of resistance can be seen and heard by more people. As one of them said:

Kasi diba, sabi ng gobyerno, ng media, kami daw mga nasa squatter, tamad daw. Umaasa na lang sa gobyerno. So ‘yan yung mga porma na pagpapakita na hindi kami umaasa sa kanila. Gumagawa din kami paano kami makakain, makatulong sa kapwa na hindi aasa sa kanila.

Both the government and the media portray us people in squatters’ areas as lazy. They say we only depend on government aid. That’s why we do all these things to show them that we also do things on our own. We find ways to feed ourselves and help the community without asking for help.

Whenever community organizations plan protest actions and mobilizations, they invite media presence to cover their story in the hopes that it will cut the national news on TV. Unfortunately, news coverage from mainstream television networks does not always cover such activities, and when they do, they tend to skew the angle to focus on the disruptions they have caused and only barely mention their purpose for staging a protest action in the first place. Nevertheless, it has become a standard procedure for them to invite media presence to their activities, whether they come or not. According to one of the participants:

Syempre para maexpose yung...nakikita kasi sa TV, ay may pagkilos ang [redacted] ganyan ang ginagawa ng mga tao. Hindi ko lang sinasabing naglalanding, maganda kasi pag nag-landing sa media, kasi parang makilala talaga ang pagkilos. Kasi ang [redacted] salamin ng barikada. Kasi nung

barikada nung 2010, sunod-sunod na ang mga barikada sa ibang komunidad.

Of course [it's necessary], for them to get exposed. When people see on TV or on the news that the developer has been harassing us. It's always welcome when our stories land on the news and media for the public to see our collective resistance. Because when the media covered the major barricade we did in 2010, many other urban poor communities saw it and have since replicated it [in their areas].

However, in some instances, the media outlets reach out to the community to feature their stories of resistance. An example would be the height of lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, a group of UPC residents went out of their houses in desperation because they had yet to receive any government aid. They did so in order for their demand their voices be heard. As it was early in the pandemic, mass gatherings were not allowed, so police forces naturally arrested the protestors. Twenty-one individuals were detained and cases were filed against them (Talabong, 2020). This sparked outrage from many observers after watching the news because instead of receiving aid from the government, these individuals were jailed for breaking strict lockdown protocols.

Other forms of collective resistance, especially the community kitchens and farm garden initiatives, have also been featured by the media. The media presented these community-led initiatives as the UPC proving themselves to be resilient and industrious amidst the pandemic. While it was helpful because the coverage allowed them to receive sponsorships and donations for their initiatives, it did not do much to highlight the lack of state support for the community reeling from the prolonged effects of the pandemic. Nevertheless, while the coverage of mainstream media needs improvement in terms of highlighting the marginalized urban poor's narratives

of resistance, the platform it provides to shine a light on such a resistance remains incomparable.

Meanwhile, in the realm of the relatively new forms of social media, the urban poor has more control over their narrative of collective resistance. As it is more personal, the UPC residents have more freedom on what to show and what to say. According to the stories shared by the participants, the residents who actively join protest actions are encouraged to take photos of mobilizations and post them on their social media accounts to reach out to their networks. Facebook is the most prominent social media platform used by urban poor residents because it offers free mobile data service, which means they can browse the app without spending on data, although some features may be limited. When faced with unprecedented attacks from their oppressors, mostly the developer, they immediately take photos and videos of the incident and post them on their social media for transparency. Doing so also gives them an upper hand by publicly giving evidence before their aggressors spin the story with their PR.

Social media's primary purpose concerning the urban poor's collective resistance is to expose the ongoing threats, abuses, and oppression. It provides them with an even playing field to tell their stories and for their voices to be heard from their perspective and lived experiences—something that the traditional media cannot offer. As in Dutta's (2012) discussion on social media and resistance, the purpose of social media to the urban poor's collective resistance is to accompany grassroots organizing activities on the ground. Furthermore, it helps mobilize

resources for the social movements through communicating and amplifying their narrative of resistance to even the global stage.

Both traditional and digital media have provided the urban poor's collective resistance broader platforms through which they can be heard. This has been proven to be advantageous because when a story about the community goes viral, the developers and even the housing agency keep a low profile and cease their oppressive and abusive tactics. As one research participant puts it, *"Magka-media pa nga lang dito, may hawak ka na camera, may mga press na pumapasok dito, magdodocu ka, nagkakandawalaan na sila eh. Ayaw na magpainserview nila. Sobrang takot nila [security] kapag nakakakita ng camera."* (Whenever a media presence visits the community to do a story or report on an incident, the personnel representing the developers vanish. They avoid getting interviewed. They're scared of facing the cameras).

In summary, this chapter thoroughly discussed the context of the urban poor's struggles amidst the development discourse. By laying down the context of years of struggles experienced by the UPC case study through the narratives of the research participants, we are provided with accounts based on the lived experiences of urban poor residents. Before looking into how the phenomenon of resistance is established, it is essential to first understand the pre-existing conditions within the community. After developing the context of the UPC case study's vibrant history of resistance, we then elaborated on the themes that emerged from the stories they provided, such as the reasons why they continue to resist. We found that the community members are primarily inclined toward their interests, which is their

motivation to participate in collective resistance. It is only through exposure to the more collective struggles they face do they understand and accept that the fight is not just for their own but for the whole community.

Three major themes emerged from the urban poor narrative on the resistance and communication perspective of their struggles: their lived experiences as urban poor, their concepts of defiance and resistance, and community action. All three themes that emerged have communication processes as a primary driver of these concepts. Communication plays an immense role in transforming personal interests to collective objectives. By reclaiming the discourse on development from dominant societal structures defining what development means, they used communication strategies and methodologies to establish their presence and strengthen their ranks. Through participatory forms of action and communication, all activities related to their collective resistance have encouraged the community members to participate and be included—from planning to executing various forms of resistance. Moreover, by highlighting the role of the community members as decision-makers in their collective resistance, they are empowered to reclaim their space in the development discourse.

This chapter also discussed how mainstream and social media help amplify the UPC residents' voices of resistance. They provide broader platforms where they can be seen and heard, which the urban poor have maximized, because they are not usually offered a space in discussions pertaining to development. Such exclusion significantly affects not only their homes but their livelihood. Unlike mainstream/traditional media, where their narratives are often construed or given limited exposure, social media gives them complete control of how they want their

voices to be heard. By maximizing access to social media platforms, such as Facebook, the urban poor have connected their stories to a global stage, creating an immense opportunity to reclaim their voices and demand to be included in the development discourse.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research aims to understand how the phenomenon of resistance is established in UPCs through a communication perspective. This work identified a UPC located in Quezon City as the case study, which has been engaged in a protracted struggle and resistance. To obtain different perspectives on the discussion, we conducted extensive interviews with five research participants who are residents of this community coming from different backgrounds. To answer the general research questions, we have identified three specific research questions to help us better expound on the subject. Our research questions and the answer to each question are all presented below.

RQ 1: What Drives Urban Poor Residents to Participate in Collective Resistance?

Urban poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon involving various concerns, such as lack of housing, limited livelihood, access to basic social services, environmental risks, and social and political threats. Urban poor households are deprived of the agency to endure the risks they face and typically lack power to participate and make decisions on concerns regarding community development (World Bank Development Report, 2001). The current research has identified several reasons why the residents of UPCs participate in collective resistance. First, based on their personal experiences of dealing with threats, abuses, and oppression for having no legitimate claim to the land where their homes are built, the urban poor are

always at risk of displacement. However, despite the generally poor quality of life living in makeshift dwellings prone to hazards and environmental risks, they prefer to stay and resist relocation. This is because they have already established their lives in the city, where their jobs and livelihoods can be found and where schools, hospitals, markets, and government offices are nearby. Given that the off-city relocation sites often have limited access to essential social services, they therefore insist on staying in urban centers.

The urban poor's lived experiences of oppression and marginalization serve as triggers prompting the residents to act in order to survive. They could easily accept relocation and live quietly in those sites, but they choose to resist and act against the repressive actions committed by the dominant societal structures that justify their oppressive actions in the guise of development. This unjust system where the residents are sidelined, silenced, and excluded from the communicative discourse of development is their primary reason why they are inclined toward joining collective resistance and actions. They know that when they have the numbers, there is a higher likelihood of being seen and heard—something they don't have the privilege of if they do it alone. Therefore, they are driven to collectively resist so that they can be taken seriously as they voice their demand to be included in the development discourse.

Every day, there is a sense of uncertainty in the lives of the urban poor. They know that their homes are sitting on government-owned properties and that they are subject to demolition, displacement, and relocation anytime. Constant fear, discouragement, threat, stress, and anxiety drive the urban poor to communicate

with their neighbors, and this shared experience creates a mutual sense of understanding within the community, eventually motivating them to act together. With existing grassroots organizations in the community, the process of arousing, organizing, and mobilizing them has become more systematic, affecting the ways by which collective resistance through social movements can be practiced. By resisting together, they can more effectively demand solutions to their problems in housing, livelihood, and employment opportunities; access to essential social services; and inclusion in the development discourse. “Development for all” is not just a slogan used by the UPC. It represents an ardent demand for better, more inclusive, and more participatory strategies in implementing so-called development plans.

Ultimately, the urban poor collectively resist because they have goals and objectives—both personal and collective. Their personal goal is to have a sense of security with housing. They prefer to stay on-site where the state can provide them with more affordable and decent mass housing. Related to this, it has been shown that, contrary to a popular notion that they simply wait for dole outs, they do understand the burden of owning a house and having to pay for it. Thus, they would rather pay for on-site or, at the very least, in-city housing that is much more viable because of its proximity to their livelihoods and jobs as well as basic social services and institutions. Displacing them and moving them to distant relocation sites will cause them to lose their livelihoods, employment, and access to schools, hospitals, and government offices. Finally, on the personal level, urban poor residents want a permanent home so that they no longer have to worry constantly about being displaced.

Collectively, a UPC's goal differs from the residents' personal goals. As a perpetually marginalized and oppressed group, the UPC faces economic, environmental, political, and social threats daily. When its seek help and assistance, it is usually provided with solutions that are not long-term and permanent (relief goods, aid, relocation, etc.). These are the same reasons why they collectively resist; they want to be rightfully heard and their demands answered. UPCs want to be involved in the housing and development discourse so they can finally have a say on why they prefer to stay in-city and be provided with homes of their own through decent, affordable, and mass-oriented on-site housing projects.

As a collective, the UPC's goal is to remain in the community permanently and finally claim the settlement they have developed over the decades, where they have established relationships and created history. However, this can only be achieved when they collectively resist any threat that may put them at risk of being wholly displaced and relocated, their homes demolished. Therefore, their collective resistance aims to ultimately help them reclaim a seat at the table, where they are treated as an equally important and relevant stakeholder in the communicative space of development discourse.

RQ2: How are Issues and Concerns Communicated in a UPC Setting Leading to Collective Resistance?

UPCs consist of diverse individuals of different ethnicities, religions, and cultural backgrounds. Thus, the behaviors, values, and morals of the residents significantly vary. However, they know one another well enough because they live

closely together and have unique shared experiences of threats, abuses, and marginalization. Thus, they have developed a strong sense of mutual understanding over the years. Members actively contribute to the sustainability of the community's social capital through different acts of support, reciprocity, and kindness to one another. This idea of having shared experiences allows them to open up to one another and communicate freely about the daily worries and anxieties they face.

Furthermore, with no sense of security from their source of income and the houses they live in, residents often share facilities and resources, allowing them to strengthen personal relationships with one another. In turn, these relationships serve as channels through which they open up to one another regarding their concerns in living in UPCs. Sharing in the form of informal chatting opens the conversations, which most of the time, are meant not to find solutions but to just air their frustrations. However, in a tight-knit community, stories and hearsay spread quickly, and sometimes grassroots organizations take their cues to learn more about the residents' issues or problems through these channels. They gather more information on the topic, verify the details, and then consult affected residents about their plans and what they hope to achieve. When sufficient data are available, the steering organization will develop strategies and solutions to address these community affairs.

Often, grassroots organizations arrange community consultations to provide residents with a platform to air their grievances, share ideas, give feedback on community concerns, and offer their respective opinions. The act of staging dialogues in the community can be considered a form of resistance because it

creates a space where residents' voices can be heard, rejecting the status quo of being sidelined by those in power. Through these conversations, discourse elevates the mindset of the urban poor to have a shared collective experience, creating formations that act collectively.

For the urban poor, collective action can take many forms, not just limited to mass mobilizations and protests. For example, community activities led by grassroots organizations, including community dialogues, community kitchens, and urban gardens, empower residents to participate in activities that not just address immediate needs in the short term but also improve community relationships in the long run. In turn, these platforms provide spaces to encourage more people to participate in other forms of collective action, such as petition signing, peaceful demonstrations, and other mobilizations. When residents speak up about their concerns and issues in the community, they ultimately reclaim their voices and visibility, which have been routinely taken away by dominant structures of society in the development discourse.

Through the integration of a participatory approach to collectivity with the residents' sense of community, along with the ongoing communication among them, the urban poor are inspired to explore the possibilities of collective action to achieve their ultimate goal: to protect the community. While different approaches to communication methods in the processes of the urban poor's collective action, we must emphasize a participatory and inclusive approach to information dissemination and acquisition. In addition, we must highlight the importance of seeking the opinions of community members before collective actions of resistance are developed and

executed. In this way, they are included and empowered in shaping and practicing their acts of collective resistance. Unlike their experiences with the dominant societal structures that render them voiceless, collective resistance from within the community prioritizes their voice and stories in mounting unified actions. In other words, any form of resistance from the community comes from the collective consensus of the community members.

This study examines how resistance is communicated within urban poor communities, as well as explores how the urban poor communicate such resistance beyond their community. The research reveals that when faced with oppressive dominant structures, the community tends to seek immediate dialogue with developers in order to solve localized issues, such as flooding concerns, construction hazards, and drainage problems. If their concerns are ignored, they turn to the local government for assistance. When the local government intervenes, developers are more likely to respond. However, there are times when it may take longer than expected. Therefore, in such cases, community leaders may organize protests to demand quick action, as further delays can put residents at greater risk.

Protest actions and other forms of collective resistance done by the community are primarily directed toward the developers; however, they also seek the attention of the NHA and the local and national governments. The community invites media coverage of these activities so that their issues achieve crucial media mileage. As explained in an earlier chapter, the media plays a significant role in amplifying the urban poor's voices of resistance. However, while traditional media provides a platform for their collective resistance, it should also be noted that, often, it paints the urban poor in a different light, emphasizing the inconvenience of protest

actions or social movements rather than shining a light on the reasons behind them in the first place.

Thus, the community has chosen to take advantage of social media—a platform where they have total control over what they want the public to see and hear. Furthermore, it provides them the power to share raw and unfiltered events in the community as it happens. According to some residents, in the past, when they experienced threats and harassment from private guards deployed allegedly by developers, they failed to provide evidence of such tactics while seeking protection and help from the barangay. However, with social media, they can even post these events as they happen while also securing very public and solid evidence against these forms of oppression. Once these postings become viral and the local government gets a hold of such news, it tends to act quickly. Meanwhile, the developers and their personnel stay low profile to avoid bad PR.

In addition, social media has allowed the urban poor to reclaim their voices of resistance, which have been silenced and ignored by the dominant structures in the development discourse. Their communicative capacity to be involved in policy- and decision-making concerning the city's development has been sidelined for the longest time. Therefore, the urban poor are now capacitating their collective resistance on the ground with a complementary online presence, which in turn, draws in more support and resource acquisition to sustain their movement. As their collective actions (e.g., the CDP, community kitchens, urban community gardens, and regular protest actions) are amplified online, this allows them to gain visibility in mainstream conversations on development. These collective actions are considered

strategies to alleviate their current problems and show those in power that they can work collectively. Indeed, when people work together to resist, many great things can be accomplished.

RQ3: Are There Elements in the Communication Process that are Unique to Communicating Resistance in an Urban Poor Setting?

Communication is not a simple process wherein one can easily identify the stage of communication and identify the sender and receiver of information. Furthermore, while communication involves several (but similar) steps across different communication models, the focus in this study is on the unique elements in the process of resistance communication in the urban poor setting.

For the current study, Osgood–Schramm’s Model of Communication (Schramm, 1955) can best help us dissect the elements involved in resistance communication within the urban poor setting. This model is considered the most suitable because of its circular communication principle, which means each person serves as both the sender and receiver—a unique feature that has been highlighted in the nature of the UPC’s communication practices. As demonstrated previously, urban poor residents are in constant communication in the process of establishing collective resistance. The first step in the communication process is *idea formation*. This step highlights the start of the process, in which a sender formulates an idea to be communicated. This idea is influenced by complex factors surrounding the sender. During this stage, an internal process occurs wherein the sender tries to clarify the idea and the purpose and how it must be communicated. This element is

also known in other models as “encoding” or “developing the message.” Within the urban poor setting, idea formation does not always follow a singular path; rather, ideas are created spontaneously through informal communication in the form of light conversations and sharing. For example, the UPC residents have similar lived experiences so when they have an opportunity to talk, they often talk about the same topics, ranging from domestic concerns to community issues. Once they hear other similar stories from neighbors and friends, they begin to formulate a more solid idea regarding their concerns as UPC residents. This much richer idea is better expounded because their interpretations are now interpolated with ideas from their shared experiences. In turn, this makes it easier to *encode the message*, which is the second step in this communication process model.

While the next step entails encoding the message, there is no unique aspect in the formulation of resistance communication at this point. However, the next step has a more impactful process in resistance communication within the UPC setting. The Osgood–Schramm Model calls this *message transmission* or *channel selection*. This step involves the sender choosing the best medium to transmit the message effectively, be it verbal, written, or visual. In the context of the urban poor’s resistance communication process, the sender (an urban poor resident) has several ways to send intent. First, they can share this idea, concern, or experience with their neighbors, where they just share their thoughts and concerns regarding a community matter with the intention of inviting people who can relate to them and sharing a collective concern for one another. At the same time, they can also address their ideas, concerns, or experiences through a more directive process by reporting it to their community leaders and grassroots organizations, guided by the goal of finding

a solution to their concern. Notably, as the sender chooses the communication channel based on their relationships and the sociocultural context of the UPC, they are not bound to follow a singular route in communicating their concerns. Several factors, including social, cultural, and relational context, can define how the sender communicates their message.

Decoding is the next step in the model's communication process, and this is where the element of resistance is most prevalent. On the one hand, when the receiver starts to decode the message as intended by the sender, they both create a collective understanding of, let's say, a community concern. At the same time, they create a sense of collective consciousness of the problem in their community and that immediate action must be taken. On the other hand, when the sender communicates it to community leaders and organizations, the message is decoded with the objective of verifying the authenticity and gravity of the information. As a result, the latter formulate the steps to be taken next and create action plans meant for collective resistance. Finally, a vital part of the communication process is generating *feedback*. As a shared responsibility between the sender and receiver, this is a give-and-take process wherein information is provided between them to ensure that message is conveyed positively.

Overall, the elements in the communication process of resistance communication lie in the social, cultural, and relational context of the urban poor setting. The context of the collective experience of the marginalized group encompasses what they experience, what they share, how they share it, and who they share it with. In this case, the goal of the communication processes in relation to

their distinct communication resistance leans toward arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the community to collectively resist and fight for community's survival.

How is Resistance Communicated in the Urban Poor?

With a better understanding of the role of communication in engaging the urban poor to participate in collective action, this study can now answer the general research question (“How is the phenomenon of resistance communicated in a UPC setting?”) by looking at the major elements that have emerged in the research. These elements influence how the idea of resistance is developed and sustained through the reclamation of their voices, which have been silenced in the development discourse perpetuated by the dominant societal structures that continue to marginalize them. The major themes that have emerged from the narratives and experiences of the urban poor provide us with better insights into how the urban poor's sense of resistance develops from the individual to the collective through the sharing of information within the community.

This research concludes with the idea that resistance is established by the urban poor from three key elements: (1) their lived experiences as a marginalized group, (2) their defiance in the face of injustices, and (3) the process through which they choose to practice collective action. Each element is governed by communication processes, which allow them to reclaim their voice from the communicative discourse on development via formulating, disseminating, and acting on information. This statement is an overview that addresses the general research question based entirely on the narrative provided by the voices of resistance, in this

case, the urban poor. As thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter, these major themes that emerged from the stories and experiences shared by the research participants captured what “resistance” means and the significant role played by communication in its progression within the UPC setting.

To understand how resistance (in the form of collective action) is established in the urban poor setting through a communication perspective, I examine the internal communicative processes involved. First, I look at their lived experiences as one major element affecting how resistance is established in the UPC. The characteristic of the community investigated in this study is no different from many urban poor settlements across the country. They typically consist of overcrowded housing made mostly of mixed concrete and light materials and are located in government-owned properties or along risk-prone areas, such as city rivers and hillsides. As they do not have legitimate claims to the lands where their houses stand, they are always at risk of eviction, demolition, and displacement. Furthermore, access to safe water supply, sanitation, drainage, and waste collection provisions is questionable, along with limited access to basic social services. Other than that, the urban poor have limited economic capacity to sustain their households because of the lack of employment and livelihood opportunities. This means that they mainly resort to engaging in informal jobs to become vendors, pedicab drivers, household help and laundry service providers, or become minimum-wage earners with contractual jobs. The multifaceted dimensions of their struggles already exist in many, if not all, UPCs. By determining the community’s current conditions, this study can establish why residents of the UPC case study is inclined toward collective resistance.

These factors directly affect the urban poor and their families on a personal level. While people in UPCs come from diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, by living so close together, they are bound to establish common relationships and social capital. They tend to talk to one another about many topics, including, most importantly, their fears, stress-filled situations, anxieties, and feelings of discouragement from the multifaceted problems of urban poverty. This establishes their shared experiences and mutual understanding of the collective nature of the issues they are facing. Furthermore, with the lack of state support, the urban poor come up with strategies and solutions that may not be deemed legal by the existing local or national laws and policies. This adds another layer to their continued marginalization and oppression.

Naturally occurring in the UPC case study is the phenomenon of sharing lived experiences among its residents. This research echoes the narrative of the urban poor's natural tendency to communicate vital concerns to one another within a community. The residents mainly do this to vent out and seek comfort from their neighbors. This research has drawn the information that sharing about their lived experiences is a common occurrence through which they express their frustrations to one another as a form of social bonding. The element of the urban poor's lived experience is where resistance begins to unfold, because it allows them to see the collective injustice they experience.

Defiance and resistance against injustice are major elements that affect the collective struggle of the urban poor. These acts of defiance are a way of reclaiming the voices of resistance that have been taken away from the urban poor by dominant

structures in the guise of development. As they continue to experience repression, the urban poor will naturally gravitate towards others and find ways to preserve not only their own interests, but also those of the community. Acts of defiance are not limited to social protests and mobilizations, although these are easily the most visible and effective means of communication. Sometimes more direct approaches (e.g., protests and mobilizations) are needed to confront community threats, which may invite media coverage. In addition, the community can also use social media to complement on-the-ground social movements with an online presence for narrative building, reaching out to a broader global audience, and as a security measure in case evidence is required. This approach is particularly applicable when an issue requires an immediate collective response from the community, such as an illegal demolition.

Another form of defiance is the act of consistently seeking dialogues with several entities, including the barangay, the local government, the NHA, and the private developers. This communicative strategy of collective action puts a premium on reclaiming the urban poor's space in the development discourse. Through these dialogues to address community issues, their voices of resistance are given a platform, and they can convey their grievances to the dominant societal structures that have long sidelined them in the communicative discourse. This strategy, however, is more slow-paced and requires several sessions until a consensus is reached. Nevertheless, the community is able to sustain these dialogues and complement them with social movements and other forms of creative protest actions to pressure the other parties to answer their demand for inclusion in the development discourse.

As the findings indicate, a participatory approach to collective action is important in expressing defiance against the injustices they face. Regardless of the acts of defiance and resistance they choose to adopt, collectivity is almost often required for their successful execution. The urban poor's tight sense of community becomes a key factor in launching collective action. This brings us to the final element that demonstrates how resistance is communicated within the UPC setting: *collective action*. As mentioned previously, collectivity is the key to successful urban poor resistance. Working together for a common cause motivated by their collective interests can be difficult given how individuals often focus on their personal concerns for survival than participate protests. That is why grassroots organizations play an integral part in arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the urban poor toward collective action.

As discussed earlier in this paper, in "Collective Resistance and Social Change," Robertson (2020) states that social movements are a primary form of collective behavior. These are purposeful and organized groups striving to work for a common goal focused on collective action. In the case of the UPC case study, the pre-existing conditions of threats of displacement manifested through abuses, harassment, and other forms of oppression drive them to participate in social movements. When people have shared experiences of abuses, they can amplify their voices against their oppressors and gain public sympathy. More than anyone, the UPC residents who have experienced more than a decade of constant demolition and displacement threats, understand the importance of working together. They know how effective it is because they have witnessed the fruits of successful social movements and collective resistance. One participant also expressed how joining

collective resistance makes them feel good about themselves because they feel empowered in realizing that they can go against powerful “enemies” of the community. This shows the community’s collective nature and how residents’ value their relationships with one another.

One perspective that thoroughly explains the phenomenon of collective resistance in the UPC case study is discussed by Thalhammer et al. (2007) in the book *Courageous Resistance*. It explains that protecting the threatened rights of people within the same community, even those outside one’s circle, is the heart and soul of collective resistance. Being part of a coordinated resistance, they seek just treatment not only for themselves but for the whole community as well. The natural flow from being an outsider or bystander into an active participant in collective resistance begins by helping a neighbor, hearing their stories, and realizing their shared experiences, which in turn, lead them to better understand the problem. Once they see the broader picture, they are more inclined to learn further and develop a sense of responsibility to act. This is not a quick and easy process, but it is how many residents of the UPC became active participants in collective resistance. It starts with acting in their interest and then being exposed to the collaborative endeavor of the opposition, eventually turning them into selfless members of the community.

In summary, the phenomenon of resistance is established in the UPC setting based on three key elements that emerged from the residents’ narratives, namely, (1) their lived experiences, (2) their defiance against shared injustices, and (3) the community’s response to collective action. These elements are governed by

communication processes that allow them to acquire, share, and formulate information that is necessary to better understand their situation and how to best address them. Their lived experiences as a marginalized group is multifaceted and involves several aspects of their daily lives, such as housing security, health, economic risks, and social and political oppression, among others. Their daily struggles of being taken advantage of and sidelined from the development discourse, amplified by the continuous sharing of experiences and information within the community, set the foundation upon which they gain a further understanding of their situation. Through this process, they also realize that the problems they face as a community can only be solved if they stop relying on the promises of those who are in power, but instead, to take it upon themselves and proactively defy the injustices they face. As can be seen from this example, a communicative approach to community grassroots organizations plays a crucial role in arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the urban poor to be involved in collective action, which basically, is the essence of the urban poor's resistance: the reclamation of the voices of resistance silenced by those who promise development.

Recommendations

Having said these, here are the recommendations formulated from the results of this research:

For policymakers: The government, both local and national, should design policies to ensure that each development project with a private partner will include consultation with communities that will be affected. Such a feature, which should be

institutionalized, must be executed not just through assemblies and formalization of development projects but also by seeking the latter's input as the major stakeholders in such projects. Communication is crucial in consultations and dialogues, and as stakeholders, the urban poor have every right to be acknowledged and heard in the development discourse.

For other researchers: Urban poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon. Thus, it requires further academic research to achieve the following tasks:

1. Fully understand the phenomenon so that we can generate more concrete information and data that can help those in power create policies that will alleviate urban poverty;
2. Conduct further studies on several issues hounding relocation sites in the Philippines in general;
3. Engage in similar studies on other UPCs in the country, ideally generating quantifiable data to complement information from the current research; and
4. Using the findings of this paper, conduct similar qualitative studies on other UPCs to debunk, compare with, or expand the results of this research.
5. Using the results of the research to effectively communicate social mobilization. Three key elements have been identified as factors that help effectively communicate social mobilization in the urban poor: their lived experience as a

marginalized group, their actions towards injustices, and the processes involved in participating in collective action.

Several aspects of UPC residents' lived experiences involve the multifaceted threats that they face on a daily basis. This makes them the most critical element in building collective resistance. Their experiences should be the basis for developing strategies and solutions through participatory communication. Hence, in the entire process, they should be involved from the very beginning because collectively resisting means putting a premium on participatory and inclusive communicative discourse on development—a form of agency that has long been denied by the dominant societal structures that perpetuate their marginalization and oppression. Should there be any development, it must be inclusive and designed with everyone's interests in mind. As the UPC residents and their advocates battle cry say, "Development for all!"

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APPENDIX

Interview Questions Guide Matrix

<p>What drives the urban poor residents to participate in collective resistance based on their personal experiences regarding threats to their community?</p>	<p><i>(Pagpapakilala: Edad, Pamilya, Pinanggalingan, Trabaho/Kabuhayan, Ilang taon na naninirahan sa komunidad, Miyembro ba ng organisasyon?)</i> (Getting to know: Age, Family, Previous address, Employment/Livelihood, How long have they been a community resident, Do they belong to any organization?)</p> <p><i>Maaari niyo po bang ibahagi kung gaano na kayo katagal na naninirahan dito?</i> (Can you tell me more about how long you have been a resident of this community?)</p> <p><i>Ano po ang mga pagkakaiba sa komunidad noon at ngayon?</i> (What are the differences between the situation in the community then and now?)</p> <p><i>Ano po ang mga problemang kinahaharap ngayon ng mga residente ng komunidad?</i> (What are some of the issues and problems that the residents of this community?)</p> <p><i>Ano po ang pakiramdam ninyo at ng komunidad sa kinahaharap na isyung ito?</i> (What sort of thoughts or feelings have these issues or problems invited to you and the community?)</p> <p><i>Maaari niyo po bang ibahagi ang isang halimbawa kung pano kayo personal na tumugon sa isang krisis na kinaharap ninyo at ng komunidad?</i> (Can you think of a situation or an anecdote in which you personally responded to a crisis or issue that you and the community faced?)</p>
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	<p><i>Naging bahagi po ba kayo ng kahit anong uri ng pagkilos para tutulan o labanan ang mga kinahaharap na problema ng komunidad?</i> (Have you been part of any form of resistance to fight for and protect the interest of the community?)</p> <p><i>Ano po ang mga personal ninyong dahilan sa pagsali sa mga pagkilos? Paano at sino ang humikayat sa inyo?</i> (What are your personal reasons for agreeing to be part of the community's resistance? How did this come about, and is there anyone who talked you into it?)</p> <p><i>Bakit po mahalaga para sa inyo ang pagsali ninyo sa mga pagkilos ng komunidad?</i> (Why was doing this important to you?)</p>
<p>How do the urban poor residents communicate from a personal to a collective standpoint to effectively establish their collective resistance?</p> <p>How do they communicate their resistance to the dominant societal structures?</p>	<p><i>Kumusta po ang relasyon ninyo sa inyong mga kapitbahay?</i> (How is your relationship with your neighbors?)</p> <p><i>Napag-uusapan niyo po ba ang mga isyu na kinahaharap ng komunidad? Gaano kadalas at sa paanong paraan?</i> (Do you often talk about the issues faced by the community? How often and in what manner?)</p> <p><i>Ano pong mga pag-aalala ang nabababanggit nila sa inyong mga kuwentuhan?</i> (What kind of grievances about your current situation do they share regarding the threat to the community?)</p> <p><i>Marami po ba sa inyong mga kapitbahay ang naging bahagi na ng iba't ibang pagkilos para tutulan o labanan ang mga tangka sa inyong komunidad?</i></p>

	<p>(Are most of your neighbors active participants in the community's ongoing resistance?)</p> <p><i>Alam po ba ninyo ang kanilang mga rason sa paglahok?</i> (Do you know the reasons why they participate?)</p> <p><i>Masasabi niyo po ba na pareho kayo ng mga kadahilanan sa paglahok sa mga pagkilos?</i> (Would you say their reasons for joining or participating in resistance activities are the same as yours?)</p> <p><i>Ano po ang reaksiyon ng mga ibang residente ng komunidad na hindi bahagi ng inyong mga pagkilos sa inyong mga ginagawa o nagagawa para sa komunidad?</i> (How do other residents who are not active participants in resistance activities react to your collective actions to protect the community's interests?)</p> <p><i>Ano-ano na pong mga pagsubok ng komunidad ang nalagpasan ninyo o napagtagumpayan dahil sa sama-samang pagkilos? Paano po ninyo ito napagtagumpayan?</i> (What threats to the community did you overcome through collective resistance? How did you do it?)</p> <p><i>Ano-ano pong mga uri ng protesta o pagkilos o programa ang inyong mga ginawa? Maaari niyo po bang ibahagi ang inyong mga naaalala?</i> (What protests or other forms of action did you collectively do? Can you share and elaborate on those you can remember?)</p>
<p>What are the personal and collective goals of the urban poor residents in establishing their resistance against</p>	<p><i>Ano po ang personal ninyong mithiin sa paglahok sa mga pagkilos ng komunidad laban sa mga nagbabanta sa komunidad?</i> (What is your personal goal or objective in actively participating in the</p>

<p>threats to their community?</p>	<p>community's collective resistance against threats to it?)</p> <p><i>Ano po ang kolektibong layunin ng komunidad sa patuloy nitong paglaban?</i> (What is the collective objective of the participants of the joint resistance in its continuous fight?)</p> <p><i>Sa tingin po ba ninyo ay makakamit ng komunidad ang mga ito? Bakit?</i> (Do you think that these goals or demands are attainable? Why?)</p> <p><i>Ano pa ang kailangang gawin para tiyakin ang tagumpay ng inyong kolektibong paglaban?</i> (What other things must be done to ensure the success of your collective resistance?)</p>
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