The Philippine Social Economy: A Case Study

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provision of the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed: Alice B. Acejas
Date: 15 December 2014
Acknowledgements

*Every daring attempt to make a great change in existing conditions, every lofty vision of new possibilities for the human race, has been labelled Utopian – Emma Goldman*

I would like to acknowledge my real and virtual family whose members personify the Filipino diaspora abroad. As a scholar in Australia, on the one hand, I was a sort of temporary ‘migrant’ experiencing the loneliness and anxiety of living alone in foreign country. On the other hand, the scholarship offered me the luxury of studying I could not have enjoyed in my home country, free from the concerns of making a living, limited only by what I could seek within the time frame of my study.

I have wonderful support groups to thank, inside and outside the university who made my Australian sojourn bearable and memorable:

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- Most importantly, to the research participants, thank you for sharing your experiences with me, allowing me a grasp of the Quixotic project of transforming unjust social and economic structures through social enterprise development, and sharing them with others.
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Abstract

This study of the Philippine social economy commenced in mid-2009, with the overarching purpose of developing an in-depth understanding of the social economy and its contribution to deepening economic democracy and promoting sustainable social development. To provide internationally comparable data on the social economy and the organisations that comprised it, the study undertook a comprehensive review of the literature on the social economy, social enterprise (SE), and fair trade organisations (FTOs) in Europe and the UK, USA and Australia. The study used a mixed method, complex multi-layered case study approach to understand the Philippine social economy and experiences of social enterprises and SE FTOs. By using secondary data analysis, the study mined archived data on the country’s civil society and socioeconomic indicators from official and NGO sources to generate a profile of the Philippine social economy. Data were collected from two Case Study groups to illuminate the experiences of Philippine social enterprises and how these translated into their vision, mission and goals (VMG) of equitable sustainable development. Case Study 1 interviewed 69 research participants from SAFRUDI and 11 of its active and inactive community-based enterprise (CBE) partners, while Case Study 2 interviewed 13 research participants representing NGOs, SE FTOs, and civil society networks. The data collection method blended documentary or secondary analysis, focused interviews, fieldwork observation, focus group discussions, and daily journal keeping.

The review of literature revealed that social enterprise models from developed Western contexts influenced forms of Philippine social enterprise. The review showed two dominant ideological strands in social enterprise discourse: one that promoted it as an alternative to the unfettered market and another that viewed it as a solution to neoliberalism’s twin crisis of legitimacy and accumulation. The first was represented by social science academics and supporters of social economy organisations, such as EMES, while the second was represented by Western governments, such as the EU, the UK, private philanthropic foundations, and social entrepreneurship networks. While there was still an ongoing debate in the literature about the nature of the social economy and social enterprise, other commentators believed that this provided the space and opportunity to be entrepreneurial, i.e., to be creative academically and not be constrained by the language of business and economics. European researchers, however, provided a first unifying step towards a theory of social economy through the plural economy or tripolar approach and a theory of social enterprise through the EMES social enterprise (EMES SE) concept.
The profiling of the Philippine social economy showed a pronounced blurring of boundaries among the three poles of the economy and a range of social actors that included not only NGOs and people’s organisations but also INGOs, ODA donor governments and public sector agencies. Given the dual character of the economy, the Philippine social economy had limited impact in deepening economic democracy and promoting sustainable social development. The social economy, however, was found to be the glue that held Philippine society together, while the Filipino Diaspora’s annual foreign remittances kept it alive. The experiences of participants showed the limited reach and scope of social enterprise. While they benefited a number of marginalised communities and producers, they were constrained by the nature of the capitalist market itself. Due to market isomorphism, translating their VMGs into practice was found to be problematic and challenging. The European plural economy framework showed the limits of the social economy against the dominant neoliberal market model.

This study makes significant contributions to the fields of economic sociology, social economy, and social enterprise development. As a mixed method, country comparative study, it adds to an in-depth understanding of the social economy, fair trade market, and social enterprise phenomena in selected developed countries and the Philippines. It adds to the conversation about the unsustainability of economic growth in the West, while the rest of the world is mired in poverty and political strife.
### List of Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACNC</td>
<td>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APFTI</td>
<td>Advocates of Philippine Fair Trade Incorporated</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRA</td>
<td>Australian Prudential Regulation Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATO</td>
<td>Alternative trade organisation</td>
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<td>AUD</td>
<td>Australian dollar</td>
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<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Australian Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>bn</td>
<td>billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>Business development services</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBE</td>
<td>Community-based enterprise</td>
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<td>CDA</td>
<td>Co-operative Development Authority</td>
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<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>COA</td>
<td>Commission on Audit</td>
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<tr>
<td>CODE-NGO</td>
<td>Caucus of Development NGO Networks</td>
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<td>CPO</td>
<td>Contract production organisation</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTI</td>
<td>Department of Trade and Industry</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>EESC</td>
<td>European Economic and Social Committee</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EuSEF</td>
<td>European Social Entrepreneurship Funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMES</td>
<td><em>E</em>mergence des <em>E</em>ntreprises <em>S</em>ociales en <em>E</em>urope European Research Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLO</td>
<td>Fairtrade Labelling Organisation</td>
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<td>FT</td>
<td>Fair trade</td>
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<td>FTO</td>
<td>Fair trade organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBP</td>
<td>Gabay sa Bagong Pag-Asa (Guide for a New Hope)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBP</td>
<td>Great Britain pound when used as currency symbol</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLO</td>
<td>Hired labour organisation</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International nongovernment organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISDP</td>
<td>Integrated Social Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>JHCNSP</td>
<td>Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>Keep-Sake Employees’ Savings and Loans Association</td>
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<td>mn</td>
<td>million</td>
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<tr>
<td>MABS</td>
<td>Microenterprise Access to Banking Services</td>
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MASS-SPECC  MASS-SPECC Co-operative Development Centre
MFI  Microfinance institution
MSME  Micro, small and medium enterprises
NAPC  National Anti-Poverty Commission
NASSA  National Secretariat for Social Action-Justice and Peace
NATCCO  National Confederation of Co-operatives
NEDA  National Economic and Development Authority
NCR  National Capital Region
NCVO  National Council for Voluntary Organisations
NGO  Nongovernment organisation
NSCB  National Statistical Coordination Board
NSO  National Statistics Organisation
ODA  Official development assistance
PACAP  Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program
PAGCOR  Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation
PBSBP  Philippine Business for Social Progress
PCSO  Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office
Php  Philippine peso
PDP  Philippines Development Plan
PIVS  Panel on the Independence of the Voluntary Sector
PO  People’s organisation when discussed within the context of social development work
PO  Purchase order when used for commercial transactions between social enterprise and CBE partners
PONPO  Program on Nonprofit Organisations
PRW  Piece-rate worker
PSE  Philippine social economy
RENI  Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intake
SAFRUDI  Social Action Foundation for Rural and Urban Development Incorporated
SBI  Social Business Initiative
SCE  Societas Co-operativas Europaea
SE  Social enterprise
SE FI  Social enterprise financial intermediary
SE FTO  Social enterprise fair trade organisation
SE IMO  Social enterprise intermediary marketing organisation
SEN  Social economy network
SEO  Social economy organisation
SEP  Social Enterprise Program
SFTMS  Sustainable Fair Trade Management System
SPO  Small producers organisation
SRA  Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act of 1997
SWS  Social Weather Stations
tn  trillion
TNC  Transnational corporation
TSO  third sector organisation
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
USAID  United States Agency for International Development
USD  US dollar
VICTO  VICTO National Co-operative Federation & Development Centre
VMG  Vision, mission and goals
WFTO  World Fair Trade Organisation