

The Social Economy of Worker Co-operatives:
*A Case study on Worker Co-operatives as a Solution to the Issue of
Contractualization in the Philippines*

Authors:

Leo G. Parma

President

Kagawani Foundation

Maria Antonette D. Pasquin

5th year college student

Master of Arts in Political Economy with specialization

in International Relations and Development (5-year program)

University of Asia and the Pacific

Bienvenido P. Nito

Research Fellow

Center for Research and Communication

University of Asia and the Pacific

ENDO¹, short for “end of contract” is one of the highly contested issues in the Philippines. While considered an “old” issue in the country, many debates have spurred once again regarding contractualization² ever since incumbent President, Rodrigo Duterte, vowed to implement such endo policy in his term. The issue all the more heightened when it turned out that the ENDO policy which the labor groups expected to be passed came in the form of Department Order 174³ by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

While most related literature depict a constant push and pull between two extreme and contrasting paradigms of contractualization – the capitalist and socialist perspectives and so presents a gridlock, other scholars have focused more on studying alternative mechanisms which address the concerns of

¹ In this paper, an *endo policy* would mean the policy alternative proposed and passed by the Department of Labor and Employment as of 2017; it has a different usage with the term *endo* which would mean in this paper the illegitimate contractual practice (e.g. 5-5-5 employment scheme, labor-only contracting without sufficient benefits, etc.)

² Contractualization, contractual labor, contingent employment, temporary employment, short-term employment will be used interchangeably in this paper and would mean the type of non-permanent employment arrangement entered by an employer and employee either directly or through a third-party agency

³ This policy response issued last March 16, 2017 does not prohibit contractualization per se as what the endo policy initially aims, rather, only reinforces the regulation of contractualization allowed by existing labor laws. That is why its issuance was immediately met with contentions and protests from various labor groups. With such restlessness from the labor sector, the issue continues to escalate in the Philippines.

workers especially those in contractual employment. One of which includes the promotion of co-operatives – specifically worker co-operatives. Albeit internationally recognized for so many years due to its growing scholarly discussions and development of theoretical models, the concept of worker co-operatives have not yet fully seeped into the work culture of Filipinos precisely because of their relatively young institutionalization in the Philippine legal framework. Hence, the worker co-operative movement in the country has been usually met with challenges especially with heated issue on contractual employment.

Given the domestic and global realities faced by the Philippine labor market, research on the worker co-operatives in the country all the more becomes relevant in seeking solutions to the plight of Filipino workers. Thereby, this paper fits itself in the identified research gap by examining how worker co-operatives, as in the cases of four worker co-operatives, address the concerns of the stakeholders in the issue of contractualization in the Philippines particularly in aspects of sustainable livelihood, productivity, income equity, participation, identity and inclusiveness.

This paper is divided into three sections. First, a background on the history and theoretical underpinnings of the worker co-operatives especially on how it fits with the economic democracy model would be presented. Second would be the meat of the paper which is the analysis. This section is categorized into two parts: the contextualization of the worker co-operative movement in the Philippines as it relates to the issue of contractualization and the stakeholders' analysis using a case study approach. Lastly, a set of recommendations for the further development of the worker co-op movement would be provided in this paper.

Worker Co-operatives as a Practice of Economic Democracy

The co-operative movement is mostly cited in related literature as a response to the widespread capitalism which emerged mostly in the early 2000s. With the growing unemployment, income

inequality and economic unrest during those times especially with the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, many scholars were moved to hypothesize alternative mechanisms – one of which is the promotion of co-operatives, to resolve these socio-economic issues. The promise of cooperativism is clearly defined in the International Co-operative Alliance’s (ICA) seven-pronged principles of co-operatives as adopted from the British Society of Equitable Pioneers (Dickstein, 1991; Iuviene, Stitely, & Hoyt, 2010). This includes: Voluntary and Open Membership, Democratic Member Control, Members’ Economic Participation, Autonomy and Independence, Education, Training and Information, Cooperation among Co-operatives and Concern for Community (ILO, 2007). Eventually, growing public policy interest particularly focused on the role of worker co-operatives since its basic co-operative model has been claimed through studies to deliver the best solution to such problems.

Worker co-operatives is defined as a type of co-operative that has “the main objective of worker co-operatives was to create jobs for members (ILO, 2007).” While embodying the same co-operative identity, worker co-operatives are often distinguished as one which “attained the highest level of development and importance at present in the world, and is structured on the basis of the universal co-operative principles, values and operational methods stipulated in the Statement on the Co-operative Identity (Manchester, 1995) (CICOPA, 2005).” In the same document of CICOPA, the basic characteristics of worker co-operatives have also been laid out for its promotion:

1. They [worker co-operatives] have the objective of creating and maintaining sustainable jobs and generating wealth, in order to improve the quality of life of the worker-members, dignify human work, allow workers’ democratic self-management and promote community and local development.
2. The free and voluntary membership of their members, in order to contribute with their personal work and economic resources, is conditioned by the existence of workplaces.
3. As a general rule, work shall be carried out by the members. This implies that the majority of the workers in a given worker co-operative enterprise are members and vice versa.
4. The worker-members’ relation with their co-operative shall be considered as different to that of conventional wage-based labour and to that of autonomous individual work.
5. Their internal regulation is formally defined by regimes that are democratically agreed upon and accepted by the worker-members.

6. They shall be autonomous and independent, before the State and third parties, in their labour relations and management, and in the usage and management of the means of production (CICOPA, 2005).

Generally, a larger body of studies still confirms the advantages of worker co-operatives compared to the opposite. Most of these point out to the worker co-operatives' distinct governance feature as a driver for a host of benefits not just for the worker-owners themselves but also for the firms and community. Specifically, the democratic nature of being a co-operative largely sets apart a worker co-operative from conventional firms. Given this, theoretical foundations of worker co-operatives have been mostly attributed to democratic theories. An example is Robert Dahl's political insights on "workplace democracy" through cooperatives' sharing of property ownership and redistribution of wealth – the critical elements for political access, power and equality (Dickstein, 1991). Meanwhile, the more social perspective is introduced with William Thompson's idea of a co-operative community wherein democracy is manifested internally insofar as the members relate with one another or externally when the co-operative interacts with the rest of the community or becomes a catalyst of democracy (Kaswan, 2014).

Various market and non-market theories also reveal how the worker co-operatives model results to increased productivity, quality jobs, job security and job creation – all of which are noted to be problematic aspects in a traditional employer-employee labor structure in a capitalist firm (Dickstein, 1991). Results of these theoretical studies are likewise complemented with empirical ones, such as that of Craig & Pencavel (1995), in showing how worker co-operatives are indeed more advantageous. Precisely because the enterprise is owned by the members who are at the same time the workers, worker-owners are all the more incentivized to deliver the best service they could offer to their clients. Political Economist James Meade expounds on this idea by claiming that since both responsibilities and rewards are shared in a worker co-operative, worker-owners could enlarge their total net earnings. Moreover, contrary to the usual assumption that greater returns only take place the fewer the members are, Meade

also argues that other factors such as group loyalty still enable the sustainability and improvement of such enterprise (Meade, 1980 as cited in Lehmer, 2003).

While it is true that exclusive property rights are absent in such model unlike in a conventional firm, these are anyway translated to broader participation through democratic rights, surplus profit sharing, investment decision-making opportunities (Lehmer, 2003). Hence, from this perspective, worker co-operatives model reconciles what is initially thought to be the incompatible aims of the capitalist and socialist paradigms. In fact, for Ellerman (1992), the existence of worker co-operatives is the end of long standing Capitalism-Socialism debate as this model provides a different approach to labor, contracts and property. This is because for him, essentially, the approach must not be the abolishment of private property, rather the “employment contract” or master-servant relationship in traditional employment contract. He, along with other scholars generally make use of the concept “economic democracy” as the backbone for this whole idea of worker co-operatives.

While already often cited in many relevant literature, “economic democracy” is still more described to be a political philosophy rather than a theory or research model. Nevertheless, with a growing interest on such idea, scholars have slowly invested on theoretical studies on this concept as it prescribes reform agenda such as worker co-operatives to address many employment issues nowadays. For instance, in a study by Iuviene, Stitely, & Hoyt (2010), they made use of this as a research model for their case studies of worker co-operatives. In the same report, Economic Democracy is explained as “a socio-economic arrangement where local economic institutions are democratically controlled. These economic institutions include business, finance, research and development, and education sectors. Economic democracy does not reject the role of markets, but rather de-emphasizes the primacy of the profit-maximizing motive among economic decision makers.” Given this, the idea of worker co-operatives along with other co-operative businesses indeed fit into the economic democracy model. In the early works of Schweickart (1992), he cited Economic Democracy as a form of socialism which features, among other things, worker self-management like that of worker co-operatives.

As what could initially be drawn out from the vast related literature on co-operatives, it seems suggestive that the classic idea of cooperation yielding the optimal results is manifested in this worker co-operatives model. More importantly, the integration of both the social and economic functions of a firm are intertwined in one single concept of this worker co-operative. Specifically, in the economic democracy paradigm, the worker co-operatives like that of the Mondragon cooperativism, suggests that the model could be a solution to the issues of the traditional employer-employee labor relationship (Schweickart, 2012). In a study conducted by Wilson (2010), co-operatives as pivotal in the areas of control, benefits, decent wages, support and flexibility, and social capital and empowerment of workers is presented. That is why ultimately, this paper, through a case study of different worker co-operatives, seeks to find out whether these theoretical claims especially in employment and productivity, broader participation and economic benefits, etc. of worker co-operatives offer viable solutions to the problems of substandard working conditions, poor exercise of democratic rights in the workplace and economic benefits – problems that as mentioned earlier on, the offshoot of abused forms of contractualization in the Philippines.

Analysis

Contextualization of Worker Co-operatives and Contractualization in the Philippines

The Prevalence of Contractualization in the Philippines

According to Macaraya (1999), the main difference of the regular employees with those under contractual labor is their security of tenure. In the same study, Macaraya (1999) illustrated the new employment relations in the Philippines wherein there is a diminishing degree of regular employment and expanding bulk of those engaged in contractual labor. The author further notes how this is quite alarming considering that “compared to the regular workforce and those in a triangular or trilateral arrangement, these [casual workers, home-workers, the commission- paid and contractual workers] are

the most legally inadequately protected employees.” In fact, as noted by the Philippine Statistics Authority, there has been indeed an increase in the number of contractual employees in the country. As seen in the table 1 below, there has been a total 16.3% increase of these contractual workers from 2012-2014 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016).

Table 1. Total Employment in Establishments with 20 or more Workers by Type of work

<i>Type of Worker</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2012-2014</i>
Total Employment	4, 471, 785	3, 769, 259	18.6
<i>Working owners/ unpaid workers</i>	35, 080	30, 487	15.1
<i>Managers/Executives</i>	232, 547	208, 099	11.7
<i>Supervisors</i>	330, 404	288, 286	14.6
<i>Rank and File workers</i>	3, 873, 754	3, 242, 387	19.5
<i>Regular</i>	2, 538, 081	2, 093, 822	21.2
<i>Non-regular</i>	1, 335, 673	1, 148, 565	16.3

While such table also shows a greater increase among regular employees with 21.2% change from 2012 to 2014, this still does not guarantee its increasing trend. If one is to look at another data provided by Paqueo & Orbeta Jr. (2016) for distribution of nature of employment in the Philippines, one could still see the trend of rising share of temporary workers as compared to regular employees which then opens possible opportunities for different practices of contractualization – even the illegitimate ones to continually be practiced in society.

Table 2. Distribution of nature of employment

<i>Nature of Job</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2014</i>
<i>Temporary</i>	18.4	20.8	21.9	24
<i>Regular</i>	74.5	74.8	74.2	69.6
<i>Others</i>	7.1	4.4	3.9	6.4

Source of basic data: Labor Force Survey (LFS) October 2014 Series.
Consumer Price Index (CPI) deflator is used.

Other related literature also shows various ways on how contractualization could be practiced. On one side there is that of which is allowed by the law (as stipulated among the types of employment) and there are also those which are bordering to exploitation of employees by the employers who try to circumvent the law. One of which is the “5-5-5” hiring which has already seeped through the vernacular of Filipinos. It happens when “workers can only work for five months at a time, renewable for another two 5-month contracts, after which they can work as open contract workers (Malalis & Balagsa, 2014 as cited in Cristobal & Resurreccion, 2014).” The cap given by the employers to its workers is at five months precisely because under the Labor Code, after six months of probationary period (temporary employment), an employee shall already be considered a regular employee and entitled to the rights and benefits accorded such workers (see labor code article 287). Aside from this, companies could also practice 5-5-5 hiring through agency-hiring. In the same way, when a worker’s five-month contract lapses, he signs a new contract with the other agency with the same set of working conditions (Olea & Ellao, 2014 as cited by Cristobal & Resurreccion, 2014). In these instances, it seems pretty clear how employees are truly undermined in contractualization. The only ways Filipino workers could therefore cope up with this problem are: quit employment and seek other jobs, which is truly challenging in the case of the Philippines; join a union and “acquire collective voice”, and lastly, suffer in silence rather than suffer the possibility of unemployment (Cristobal & Resurreccion, 2014). In these unfortunate cases, a Filipino worker suffers in the areas pointed out by Wilson (2012), control over employment, job security, benefits, decent wages and support and flexibility.

Given all these things, it comes as no surprise that many labor groups especially during the 2016 elections have long been expressing their fight against all forms of contractualization. Not only are the workers undermined in the sense that they are less or inadequately protected by the law, but also because contractual employment – legitimate or not still reduces the formation of unions, hence, limiting again the bargaining power of the workers as compared to the business operators. In other words, labor unions

would become more and more irrelevant if contractual set-ups continue to grow in the country. Thereby truly making contractualization as a public policy problem in this sense.

At the same time, one could also disregard how the government has always recognized contractualization as a public problem. In fact, as it claims to have done and continuously do, the government has not failed to create several bills to address the issue. Some bills filed since the 13th Congress have ranged from an “improved regulation to the abolition of contractualization as an employment regime. However, to date, these amendments to the Labor Code have not been adopted by Congress.” While these department orders are used by the government as a policy instrument to immediately address such complicated issue, this kind of band-aid solutions still poses additional problems since these issuances are often subject to changes from one administration to the next which eventually becomes unsustainable. At the same time, for labor groups, these department orders do not anyway strike down contractualization but only reiterates the need for regulation (Adonis, 2017). Hence again explaining another factor for the growing unrest or dissatisfaction of these labor groups against such policy responses on the issue, and further asserting the need on how to resolve the problem of contractualization now.

Worker Co-operatives and the Issue of Contractualization

While worker co-operatives have been in existence for about two decades starting from “Kaakbay Entre-Workers Co-operative” in 1996 and Asiapro in 1999, the sector was just recently given formal recognition by virtue of Republic Act No. 9520, otherwise known as the Philippine Co-operative Code of 2008 (Parma, Lukban, Nito, & Castillo). In Article 23 (t) of this legislation, a worker co-operative is defined as “one organized by workers, including the self-employed, who are at the same time the members and owners of the enterprise. Its principal purpose is to provide employment and business opportunities to its members and manage it in accordance with co-operative principles.” This is a more

detailed definition to what has been generally laid out in the “Handbook on Co-operatives for use by Workers’ Organizations” of ILO.

In the recent data released by the Co-operative Development Authority on labor services and worker co-operatives statistics during the sectoral congress at the Skylight Convention in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan last May 21-22, 2015, the agency showed that as of that year, 200, 167 workers are already members of such co-operatives – 63.08% of whom are males and 36.92% are females. With 118, 791 employees, the sector’s gross revenue reaches to P5.3 billion and assets of P5.46 billion. Moreover, NCR (35.1%) continues to be the seat of activities for these labor services and worker co-operatives while region 4 (19.3%) and region 11 (15.1%) follow respectively (CDA, 2014). Nevertheless, according to Alejandro Lukban, Founder and Chairman of Global Pro worker co-operative, about 100,000 workers are just part of the worker co-operative movement in the country. Hence, while there is an emerging trend toward worker co-operatives, there is still much to do in this sector to be able to really make a dent in Philippine society (Lukban, 2017).

In fact, understanding and acceptance of the concept alone of worker co-operatives in the Philippines have already been plagued with many challenges and even resistance – mostly legal in nature. Contentions continue to arise with regard to the nature of worker co-operatives in the Philippines especially with the current issue of “endo” or end-of-contract practice. What was thought to be a state recognition of worker co-operatives through R.A 9520 did not immediately translate into government acceptance (Parma, Lukban, Nito, & Castillo). This is mainly due to the fact that the worker co-operative model, with its unique characteristics, involves a different labor structure as compared to the traditional employer-employee relationship, which is still the one widely understood and practiced nowadays in the country. Most government agencies like DOLE, the BIR, the SSS, and to a certain extent the CDA could not, and would not reconcile, the idea of worker ownership wherein the workers own the enterprise and therefore considered “self-employed (Parma, Lukban, Nito, & Castillo).” This, despite several international agreements to which the Philippines is a signatory, such as: the ILO Recommendation

193/2002 on the promotion of co-operatives wherein it states worker co-operatives as a “a major mechanism for job creation and income generation and, as a consequence, for the struggle against poverty”; and the CICOPA “World Declaration on Worker Co-operatives” which provide among others that “members of a co-operative have a different working relationship with the co-operative than either workers in a conventionally managed business or the self-employed contractor (Parma, Lukban, Nito, & Castillo).” For the same reason that the worker co-operative movement in the country is also often misunderstood to be pro-contractualization or in the business of contractualization, which labor groups frown upon. However, a closer look into the context of the worker co-operative movement in the country reveals layers and layers of issues associated with such misconceptions.

At present, two types of co-operatives are recognized to be involved in this issue primarily because of their respective engagement in job-contracting – the labor service and worker co-operatives. While the labor service type of co-operative is not initially found in the Co-operative Code of 2008 nor in any other international co-operative framework, it, in the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of CDA promulgated on March 18, 2015, it gained an identity and differentiated in Section 4, Rule VIII of the document from worker co-operatives based on two factors:

	Labor Service Co-operative	Workers Co-operative
<i>As to nature of activities</i>	Engaged in contracting and sub-contracting arrangements as defined by law	May engage in labor and production, including contracting and subcontracting arrangements in support of its main activity as defined by law
<i>As to existence of employer employee relationship</i>	Existence of employer employee relationship is at all times observed in contracting and subcontracting arrangements during the deployment of the member. Trilateral relationship exists between	Self-employed individual is allowed by the co-operative in regard to its enterprise.

and among the principal, contractor, and the member employees	
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Source: (Cooperative Development Authority, 2015)

Furthermore, as argued by Nito (2017), if in any case the labor service co-operatives found its link to a Service co-operative which, unlike the Labor Service Co-operative, is clearly defined in the Co-operative Code of 2008, its legitimacy could still be questioned as international co-operative framework defines a service co-operative to be more like consumer co-operatives one which provides goods or services such medical, insurance, transport, etc. primarily to its members. In ILO's Handbook for Co-operatives, a service co-operative is under the classification of co-operatives offering service to members and not to external entities like how labor is in service to client-partners in the case of labor service co-operatives. "Financial co-operatives, consumer co-operatives, housing co-operatives, producer co-operatives and marketing co-operatives are a few examples of service co-operatives (ILO, 2007)." Meanwhile, it is only the concept of worker co-operatives which has an international legal framework as either producer or labor worker co-operatives (ILO, 2007). However, in the case of the Philippine legal framework, labor service coop is differentiated from a worker coop when in fact the former is under the latter and so must in no way be of the same traditional employer-employee labor structure since all members are owners. That is why confusions arise not only to the side of other government agencies, even among the business partners and the workers themselves in terms of adherence to law and regulations (Nito, 2017).

While these co-operatives are already emphasized in paper as distinct from one another, for most labor groups and to a certain extent, certain government agencies, still perceive them as one and the same. Even those who are radically against any form of contractualization, view both of these entities as exploitative of labor through their business of contractualization. However, in defense of those in the Union of Worker Co-operatives, also known as "Co-op Works!" the nature of worker co-operatives, as composed of self-employed individuals, is one which is faithful to the co-operative principles primarily

of member ownership. “We are not in the business of contractualization. In fact, we act as a springboard towards decent work or provide an alternative or support for those contractual employees who, for the mean time could not find regular employment (Parma, Interview on the Genuine Worker Co-op model, 2017).”

Moreover, the group adds that for a “co-operative” to declare itself to have the same traditional labor structure of employer-employee relationship among its member-owners undermines the “democracy” which is supposed to exist in a co-operative since tagging members as either employers or employees would essentially have different responsibilities, benefits, etc., as compared to a genuinely member-owner. For instance, ideally, the government could not issue the same minimum capitalization for both co-operatives and other purely business enterprises like in this case, a manpower agency, to provide as a back-up in case the client-partner could not pay the employees precisely because that would be redundant and illogical for owners to pool their own money and use the same money to pay themselves (Parma, Interview on the Genuine Worker Co-op model, 2017). In fact, sticking to this employer-employee relationship may end up breed for another hierarchical labor structure which is different from the worker co-operative model (Union of Worker Co-operatives, 2017). In this case, worker co-operatives would only defeat its purpose of addressing the employer-employee issues presented in Ellerman’s studies. In fact, from the interviews of key informants representing the worker co-operatives in this study, such political environment in the Philippines is also identified as the main external challenge for the development of worker co-operatives in the country.

Amidst all these concerns, what is so far clear is that the Philippine legal framework, still allows for the existence of such co-operatives engaged in various enterprises – be it in providing services or labor (contracting or sub-contracting) to some operations of the principal company insofar as they adhere to the law (Articles 106-109 of the Labor Code, other amendments and existing circular orders from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) – the most recent of which is the Department Order 174).

Stakeholders' Analysis

The common narrative among the respondents in the case studies of four worker co-operatives in the Philippines highlights the impact of worker co-operative membership to three focal areas of participation, decent wages, benefits and job security. At the same time, based on the interviews conducted with four key informants who are also part of the management staff of these worker co-operatives, information regarding the worker co-operatives' other activities towards the community and the challenges within and outside the co-operative were captured.

The four worker co-operatives in this study all operate nationwide and have been established or in existence for at least 10 years. Except for Worker Co-operative A which also produce its own products specifically fiber glass boats, all worker co-operatives focus on providing labor services to companies in various industries (mostly in the processing and service industries) through contractual employment given the market demand for such labor service. A total of 80 survey respondents from four worker co-operatives were involved in the study (20 participants for each co-operative).

Benefits

Responses from the survey show that the benefits of belonging in worker co-operatives are the most often cited factor which really induce the worker-members to stay in worker co-operative set-up rather than in other contractual arrangements. When asked to compare their overall socio-economic conditions before and now being in a worker co-operative, almost 99% have affirmed that they prefer to be in the worker co-operative due to the benefits they receive. As the survey results affirm, the respondents come from different work experiences before joining the co-operative. Roughly 41.79% of those who answered the survey mentioned that they previously worked under a manpower agency, 28.36% were unemployed, and 25.73% were directly-hired by a company for a contractual job. The remaining less than 5% accounted for either those were students or even regular employees. Hence, such

background of the respondents provides enough grounds for them to be able to assess and compare their conditions in various contractual arrangements.

Table 3. Benefits of Worker co-operative members

Benefits	Worker Coop A (%)	Worker Coop B (%)	Worker Coop C (%)	Worker Coop D (%)	Total Average (%)
Mandatory Benefits (from Labor Code)					
<i>SSS</i>	100	100	100	100	100
<i>PhilHealth</i>	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Pag-ibig/ Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF)</i>	100	100	100	100	100
<i>13th Month</i>	100	100	100	100	100
Total Average (%)	100	100	100	100	
Co-operative Benefits					
<i>Interest on share capital/dividends</i>	50	67	71	100	72
<i>Patronage/ Productivity funds</i>	5.0	74	50	85	53
<i>Skills training</i>	10	15	50	30	26
<i>Hospitalization Insurance</i>	45	74	43	95	64
<i>Provident funds/loans</i>	50	33	7.0	25	29
Total Average (%)	32	53	44	67	

* Values rounded up to the nearest tens place.

The benefits covered in the questionnaire found in appendix A include a checklist of those declared as mandatory by the law: *SSS (social security system)*, *PhilHealth (medical assistance)*, *Pag-ibig (Home Development Mutual Fund)*, *13th month pay* and those considered as co-operative benefits: *Shared capital or dividends*, *patronage funds*, *Skills training*, *Hospitalization insurance*, *Provident funds or Loans*. Based on the total survey responses, all respondents affirmed that they receive the mandatory benefits stipulated by the Labor Code. Meanwhile, an average of 48.97% respondents from the four worker co-operatives noted that they received all the other additional benefits of being in a worker co-operative. This implies that at the very least, the worker co-operative membership, to a certain extent,

still provides an additional income for the worker-members. Among these non-contributory or co-operative benefits, the interest on share capital or dividend has been identified as one which is received by most respondents. This is followed by the hospitalization insurance (64%), patronage or productivity funds (53%), provident funds (29%) and skills training benefits (26%) respectively. When the key informants were interviewed regarding the skills training provided in their respective co-operatives, they affirmed that this aspect is not consistently practiced throughout all the areas of operation of the worker co-operative they belong due to financial and managerial constraints. However, for at once the resources are available, they would really take advantage of holding such education and training programs which, at the very least, include values formation, leadership and skills training seminars and co-operative work-values orientations. In fact, among those who answered the question on the type and frequency of the skills training provided, most respondents especially from worker co-operative C and D noted as examples leadership seminars usually for 4-5 times a year, customer care services training for 2-3 times a year, basic manufacturing training, accounting for non-Accountants workshops, Red Cross: first aid training, and use of spreadsheet (excel) training.

Table 4. Perception of Worker Co-operative Members on their Socio-economic conditions:

Socio-Economic Conditions	Worker Coop A	Worker Coop B	Worker Coop C	Worker Coop D	Total Average/ Indicator
Human Conditions					
<i>Medical Benefits</i>	4.15	4.26	3.21	4.5	4.03 (Agree)
<i>Skills Development</i>	3.95	4.19	3.79	4.65	4.15 (Agree)
<i>Sense of Worker Co-operative Ownership</i>	4.15	4.19	3.50	4.7	4.14 (Agree)
Total Average/ Worker Co-operative	4.08 (Agree)	4.21 (Agree)	3.50 (Neutral)	4.62 (Strongly Agree)	
Economic Conditions					
<i>Salary</i>	3.30	3.63	3.21	3.85	3.50 (Neutral)
<i>Other sources of income</i>	3.25	3.63	3.79	4.00	3.67 (Agree)
<i>Job security</i>	3.85	4.11	3.50	4.35	3.95 (Agree)

Total Average/ Worker Co- operative	3.47 (Neutral)	3.79 (Agree)	3.5 (Neutral)	4.07 (Agree)	
Social Conditions					
<i>Voting Rights</i>	3.70	3.93	3.64	4.55	3.96 (Agree)
<i>Expression of ideas/opinions</i>	3.85	3.93	3.93	4.35	4.01 (Agree)
<i>Transparency of Worker Co- operative documents</i>	3.65	3.70	3.07	4.30	3.68 (Agree)
<i>Opportunities to represent Worker Co-operative outside</i>	3.6	3.78	3.50	3.75	3.66 (Agree)
<i>Support from Colleagues</i>	4.1	4.19	4.21	4.60	4.23 (Agree)
<i>Job ladder</i>	3.5	3.78	3.79	3.60	3.67 (Agree)
Total Average/ Worker Co- operative	3.73 (Agree)	3.89 (Agree)	3.69 (Agree)	4.19 (Agree)	

* Values rounded up to the nearest hundredths place.

Human and Economic Security

Job security is an important aspect which most, if not contractual workers and all the more who were subjected to precarious work in their previous work always aspire for. The questionnaire was structured in such a way that the worker-members of each co-operative would be able to quantify to what extent are they better off in their socio-economic conditions now as compared to before they joined the co-operative. Based on table 4 above, it could be read that an overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed to the statements provided in the questionnaire. These statements include affirmations of the satisfaction in their current socio-economic conditions through the worker co-operatives. A list of such statements is provided in appendix B. This then implies that the respondents are secured in terms of their socio-economic conditions and that they are no longer put in an insecure state of not knowing whether in the next coming days they would still have a job. As mentioned by one of the key informants who is also a general manager of one of the worker co-operatives in this study, the main advantage which belonging to a worker co-operative really provides is the security of job – meaning a continuous source

of income for many of these workers. That is why it also comes as no surprise that a common narrative shared by respondents in the open-ended question posted in the questionnaire of “Why they would rather stay in the worker co-operative rather than in any other employment set-ups” is that there is more stability in terms of work and additional income from the co-operative benefits (see list of narratives for the last question from the respondents on appendix B).

At the same time, as observed from table 4, the only statement which they perceived to be “neutral” – meaning they neither agree nor disagree relates with their current salary in the worker co-operative. This means that by far, most, if not all, respondents thought they receive the minimum wages mandated by law could not necessarily sustain their respective families with such salary. Such information may be quite vague and misleading. Hence, additional information with regard to the background of these respondents and answers to the qualitative questions in the survey could provide more insights to this. Based on the survey, 56% of the respondents have, on average, 2-3 children to support. That is why, a minimum wage with added-value benefits from the co-operative may indeed not always be enough to meet the daily needs of the family. However, a closer look again into the qualitative answers of the respondents would show that most of the respondents are already quite satisfied with this income given their previous socio-economic conditions. At the very least, they would cite that belonging in a worker co-operative allows them the security to be able to meet the daily subsistence of their families. In fact, there are some respondents who would also mention in their answers the extent of help which worker co-operatives provide in times of dire need. Given that at least there are some respondents (29%) and key informants who affirmed the existence of provident funds or loans in the co-operative is also a proof of this feedback. Some respondents and key informants were also able to note that the payment scheme for the loan which a member takes from the co-operative is always dependent on the objective capacity to pay of the member and actual amount loaned out to him or her. Such flexibility allows for an immediate response to the needs of the worker-members.

Social Capital and Empowerment through Participation

Endowment of voting rights is one of the fundamental and unique characteristics of a co-operative. In fact, this is an important indicator to be able to assess the extent of participation which each co-operative member contributes and so also reflect their respective sense of ownership. In the Philippines, the co-operative framework allows for varying degrees of participation among its members – Regular or Associate members. These associate members, being new members in the co-operative, are not yet given such rights or even the privileges of representing the co-operative in its external engagements. However, once two years have elapsed, they may opt to already become regular members with higher shared capital cap and voting rights. Respondents in this study are not necessarily classified according to such types of membership. That is why, it is understandable that indicators such as voting rights and representation outside the co-operative, which could have been affected due to this classification has resulted to nearly Neutral value (equal to or less than 3.5).

Nonetheless, participation inside and outside of the co-operative could still be manifested in various ways. According to the interviews with key informants, the co-operative along with both its regular and associate member are also active in terms of community development projects. Oftentimes, for at least once or twice a year, the worker co-operatives under study would hold various community projects like clean-up drives or donations of needed materials in their nearest barangay. For instance, Worker Co-operative A, being a producer of fiber glass boats also donates some to their local community given that it would greatly help the barangay especially with its limited disaster-risk reduction and management tools like boats in times of flood. In such concrete ways, one could get the sense of how worker co-operatives could not only take advantage of their respective social capital but also affect their local communities in various positive ways.

Besides, such activities all the more induce the camaraderie and support system of the worker members in the co-operative. As noted by some respondents and affirmed by key informants, the member-workers enjoy the “family spirit” which is present in the worker co-operative. As what could

be read in some narratives of the respondents, this even contributes to their willingness to stay in a worker co-operative set-up. The results also affirm previous studies which cite social capital as the very foundation of co-operatives (see Holgren, 2011).

Challenges

Most of the data gathered from the interviews with key informants point out that the most challenging problem which worker co-operatives in the Philippines face nowadays is no other than the overlapping regulations and policies over the issue of contractualization. As mentioned by the key informants, the worker co-operatives are often lumped together with those manpower agencies and even some co-operatives which are skirting the law or compromising the rights of their workers just to earn more profit. Precisely because there are still a lot of misunderstandings with regard to the nature of worker co-operatives on the part of the government, most of the policies especially in the department orders they issue tend to contract the capacity of worker co-operatives to expand its operations in various industries and at the same time, provide more benefits to their worker-members. In fact, as shared by a key informant from worker co-operative A of this study, their own co-operative had to let go of almost three-fourths of their worker-members operating in various parts of the country in 2016 just to avoid any further complications with the heated issue of contractualization. A particular issue mentioned was the often-contradictory decisions of regional directors of the Department of Labor and Employment with national policies. This is especially after the release of Department Order 174 of the Department of Labor and Employment which imposed more regulations to various organizations (manpower agencies and co-operatives alike) and private companies engaged in contractual employment. Aside from these, the worker co-operatives also encounter internal challenges which contribute to the further delimiting of the capacities of worker co-operatives. One often cited problem is the lack of managerial experts who could also improve the operations in worker co-operatives especially those operating across the country.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Despite the various internal and external challenges encountered by worker co-operatives, the model continues to empirically show, as in the four cases of the worker co-operatives in this study, how it is able to address precarious work which could possibly accompany contractual employment especially if not regulated well. The worker co-operative model may not necessarily be a panacea for all socio-economic problems in society. However, at the very least, worker co-operatives especially in areas of human and economic security, social capital and empowerment through co-operative participation, provide the necessary conditions for Filipino workers to struggle against unemployment and poverty. Given the backdrop of excess labor supply in the country and low job opportunities which put many in the labor force in a vulnerable state, the role of worker co-operatives based on the data gathered in this study is no other than that of being a safety net. Worker co-operatives do not operate on the often-conceived notion of contractualization or temporary employment. In fact, they secure worker-members of continuous work which may not necessarily mean the same type of work in the same client-company. Rather, a permanent assurance such as those given to regular employees that they would have a stable source of income from the employment contracted by worker co-operatives with client-companies in a per project-basis.

Thereby, there is a need for those involved in the tripartite governance – private sector, government and civil society to openly have a dialogue on the potentials of such model, support and conduct further studies on worker co-operatives in the country to confirm its effects to both labor and business before forwarding restrictive policies that rather than strengthening worker co-operatives, actually only burden them. While the Philippines has not yet reached that point of being able to gain enough capital which could induce low unemployment rate in the country, worker co-operatives, which enable those unemployed, suffered from or still vulnerable to precarious work gain a notch higher in terms of socio-economic conditions, must indeed be empowered. Besides, this study is only one among

the many related literature citing the worker co-operative model's contribution in the world of work today.

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APPENDIX A
(Member-worker questionnaire)

I. Demographic Profile:

- Name (Pangalan) (*optional*): _____
- Age (Edad): _____
- Sex (Kasarian): Female Male:
- Civil Status: Single Married Widow/er Legally separated Annulled
- If applicable, number of children (bilang ng anak): _____
- Estimated total household income per month: _____
(*kabuuang kita ng pamilya sa isang buwan*)
- Estimated total household expenditure per month: _____
(*kabuuang gastos ng pamilya sa isang buwan*)
- Educational attainment: Elementary Secondary/High School Tertiary/College
(*Natapos na edukasyon*)
- Name of worker co-operative you belong: _____
(*Pangalan ng kooperatibang kinabibilangan*)
- How long have you been a worker-member of the cooperative? Please specify: _____
(*Ilang taon na kayong miyembro ng kooperatiba*)
- What is your source of income before being a member of the cooperative? (*Ano ang iyong pangkabuhayan bago pa man nakabilang sa kooperatiba?*)
 - Unemployed Contractual employee (manpower agency) Contractual employee (directly-hired)

II. Work-related Questions:

1. In what services of the cooperative to its clients do you usually deployed as a worker?
(*Anong serbisyong binibigay ng inyong kooperatiba sa mga client-partners ang kadalasang kinabibilangan mo?*)
 - Labor services Warehousing IT System
 - Trucking Marketing Support Handling equipment
 - Accounting
 - Others, please specify: _____

2. Describe your job in your client company. *(Paki-detalye/larawan ng iyong trabaho sa ngayon)*

3. How much is your pay-out/salary per month in your current job? Please specify:

_____ *(Magkano ang iyong tinatanggap na pay-out o sweldo sa isang buwan sa trabaho mo ngayon?)*

4. How many hours per day is your work? _____

(Ilang oras sa isang araw ang kinakailangan ng iyong trabaho?)

5. On average, how long in a year are you engaged in such work? *(Sa isang taon, gaano kadalas ka nagkakaroon ng trabaho?)*

- All-year round
- Every six months
- Others, please specify: _____

6. What are other benefits/privileges – both contributory and non-contributory do you receive as belonging to the worker cooperative? Please check all that are present and write equivalent monetary value: *(Anu-ano ang mga kabilang sa mga benepisyo mo bilang worker-owner ng kooperatiba. Paki-tsek at lagay ng equivalent monetary value ang lahat ng naaangkop)*

- SSS: _____
- Philhealth: _____
- Pag-Ibig/ Housing Loan: _____
- 13th Month Pay: _____
- Interest on share capital/Dividends (average for the past 5 years): _____
- Patronage/Productivity Funds (annual net productivity income): _____
- Skills Training. Please specify: _____

How frequently? _____

- Hospitalization/Accident Insurance (aside from PhilHealth): _____
- Provident/Future Funds (maximum loan): _____

How much is the interest? *(Ano ang interest?)* _____

How long is the repayment scheme? 6 months 12 months beyond 1 year
(Hanggang kailan maaaring bayaran ang inutang?)

- Others, please specify: _____

7. Are there any difficulties which you encounter in belonging to the worker cooperative? (*May mga kahirapan ka bang narasan sa pagiging bahagi ng kooperatiba*)

YES

NO

If YES, what are these? Please specify. (*Kung OO, anu-ano ang mga ito?*)

8. Kindly express the effects of your worker cooperative membership to your well-being by encircling the number which state whether or not you agree with the following statements (*Mula bilang 1-5, kung saan 1 ay nagpapahayag ng matinding di-pagsang-ayon mo sa pahayag tungkol sa iyong buhay, ibahagi ang mga naidulot ng pagiging bahagi ng kooperatiba. Bilugan ang mga sagot na naaangkop sa iyong karanasan*):

Quality Job Characteristics (human aspects):					
a. The medical benefits (like PhilHealth or emergency fund) I receive is enough especially in times of need. (<i>Ang mga medical na benepisyo ng kooperatiba ay sapat at talgang nakakatulong lalo na kapag may mga emergency</i>)	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
b. The program/s on skill development in the worker cooperative enable me to improve in my craft or job or learn a variety of skill set I can use for the future. (<i>Nakakatulong sa paglinang ng aking kakayan bilang manggagawa ang mga skill development programs ng kooperatiba</i>)	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
c. I am motivated in my job knowing that I am a part-owner of this worker cooperative enterprise. (<i>Naeenganyo akong magtrabaho lalo't alam kong bahaging pagmamay-ari ko ang kooperatiba at ang maganda kong pagganap ng trabaho ay sa kakaunlad nito</i>)	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

Job Security/Stability (economic):					
a. My salary in my current job is enough for myself/my family's subsistence. (<i>Ang pay-out o sweldo ko ngayon ay sapat para sa akin at sa aking pamilya</i>)	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
b. I am assured that I will have other sources of income (e.g. future job prospect or livelihood) if ever my current job would end. (<i>Nakakasiguro</i>)	1	2	3	4	5

<i>akong magkakaroon ako ng iba pang pagkakakitaan sa pagiging bahagi ng kooperatiba.)</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. I am assured that the worker cooperative would aid me in facilitating my future work if ever my job with a client-partner already ends. <i>(Nakakasiguro akong magkakaroon ako ng tuloy-tuloy na pangkabuhayan o trabaho lalo na pagnatapos ang bawat kontrata ko sa isang client partner.)</i>	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

Participation within and beyond the worker cooperative or the community (social):					
a. I am able to exercise my voting rights within the worker cooperative in a wide range of matters (one member-one vote principle). <i>(Nagagamit ko ang aking karapatang makaboto sa mga desisyong gingawa ng kooperatiba)</i>	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
b. I am able to express my ideas and opinions during our general assemblies or meetings in the worker cooperative. <i>(Nababahagi ko ang aking mga ideya at opinion sa mga pangkalahatng pagpupulong ng kooperatiba)</i>	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
c. I can freely check on important documents about the worker cooperatives (ex. financial statements) and raise my concerns about it as a worker-owner. <i>(Maaari kong masiyasat at makita ang mga dokumento tungkol sa kooperatiba at makabigay ng suwasyon tungkol dito.)</i>	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
d. I am given opportunities to represent the worker cooperative in conferences, external assemblies, etc. <i>(Nabibigyan ako ng pagkakataong maging kinatawan ng kooperatiba sa iba't-ibang pagpupulong).</i>	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
e. I am satisfied with my job because I am able to lean on my fellow workers or even my employer for support or help when I need it. <i>(Kontento at masaya ako sa aking trabaho dahil naaasahan ko rin ang kapwa kong manggawa na kabilang sa kooperatiba)</i>	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
f. I am able to improve in my skills and later on manage to hold a position in the worker cooperative. <i>(Sa paglinang ng aking kakayahan, nagkaroon ako ng pagkakataong maiboto para sa mga posiyon sa kooperatiba)</i>	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

9. In your perspective, do you think you are better off in a worker cooperative set-up rather than employed from a manpower agency or directly-hired contractual employment? *(Sa tingin mo, sa pangkalahatan, mas nasa mabuting kalagayan ka ba ngayon kaysa sa dati mong sitwasyon o kung empleyado ka ng isang manpower agency o isang kompanya?)*

YES

NO

Why? *(Bakit?)*

MARAMING SALAMAT PO SA MASINSINANG PAGSAGOT!

APPENDIX B

**** All respondents except for two answered “YES” in the question: *In your perspective, do you think you are better off in a worker cooperative set-up rather than employed from a manpower agency or directly-hired contractual employment?***

The following narratives are the respondents’ answer to the follow-up question, “Why?”

I. Respondents from Worker Cooperative A

1. Para po sakín nasa mabuti naman pang kalagayan ang aking sitwasyon sa ngayon, bilang isang empleyado ng kooperatiba dahil nakakasahod po kami ng tama (minimum wage) kaysa dati ko pong trabaho na wala sa minimum
2. Because I have benefits to enjoy and I can use it in times of need
3. Bilang isang ina (solo parent), masasabi ko na nasa mabuting kalagayan ako bilang isang member-worker na may pagkakataong makapag-trabaho para masuportahan ang pangangailangan namin ng aking mag-anak sa araw-araw
4. Kasi kahit papano mas maayos ang kalagayan ko ngayon kaysa dati
5. Patuloy and trabaho mula noong umposa hanggang ngayon
6. Dahil ang aking noon sa Pinlan agency ay hindi sapat (P275/daily). Dito sa kooperatiba ay hindi lang malaki ang sweldo kundi completo pa sila sa benefits at taon-taon kami may dividendo, 5 day's incentives at 13th month pay at higit sa lahat walang endo. Basta maganda ang performance ng bawat miyembro
7. Sa ngayon ay nasa mabuting kalagayan ang aking sitwasyon bilang empleyado ng isang kooperatiba. Sa ganitong panahon ay mahirap talaga makahanap ng hanap-buhay o trabaho
8. Kasi ang daming kinakaltas na wala naman sa batas sa dating agency namin parang sila na lang ang pinaghahanapbuhay namin
9. Patuloy ang trabaho mula noong umpisa hanggang ngayon
10. Because there is security of tenure in worker cooperatives
11. Marami akong natutuhan na mga bagay lalo na nang makapagtrabaho ako sa kooperatiba at naibabahagi ko sa ibang tao
12. Kasi dati ay paputol-putol ang trabaho ko pero ngayon ay tuloy-tuloy na dahil nasa Gxxxx Pxx na ako
13. Sa kooperatiba, natuto ako ng maraming bagay tulad ng tumulong sa mga kamiyembro, unawain ang sitwasyon ng kasama at marami pa
14. sa kadahilanang may rabaho ako at nasusuntentuhan ko ang pangangailangan ng aking pamilya

II. Respondents from Worker Cooperative B:

1. Dahil dito masaya kaming pinagsisilhihan ng kanilang serbisyo at madali silang lapitan
2. Dahil ito ang nagbibigay ng kabuhayan sa akin araw-araw na pantulong sa aking pamilya
3. Dahil nasusuportahan ko family ko
4. I love and they are my second family. The staff is very nice and good service
5. The staff is very approachable and professional
6. Sa ngayon basta nag-eeenjoy ako sa bilang staff. Soon ko na lang explain kung bakit ba talaga kapag mas tumagal ako
7. Sa tingin ko ako nasa mabuting kalagayan dahil miyembro ako ng aming cooperative
8. Tuloy-tuloy work
9. There is continuity

III. Respondents from Worker Cooperative C:

1. We have job security in cooperative, continued job opportunities compare with the manpower agency with five months contract only
2. For me, cooperative set-up is very much better rather than in a manpower agency. Aside from continuous job opportunity, no "contractual," as long as you perform your task properly. Also there is 'dividends' on the net surplus of the coop
3. Dahil mas okay po yung mga benefits and salary kesa sa dating employer ko at parang pamilya ang turinan namin dito sa cooperative. Marami po akong natutunan sa mga ibang skills
4. We have continuous job here in the cooperative. We don't have 5 months contract unlike the agencies
5. Maganda po dahil sa maayos na pamamalakad sakín at sa mga benefits
6. Because Yxxxxxxx gives its members opportunity aside from the regular payout. We also find security in our job
7. Opo kasi andito pa rin ako hanggang ngayon. Naeenjoy ko ang trabaho ko at magagwa ko naman lahat ng aking trabaho
8. Noong sa manpower agency po ako 6 months contract, walang sure kung pagkatapos nun kung may trabaho ka. Ngayong sa coop po, ako sure ako may trabaho para suportahan pamilya ko
9. Dahil nakukuha ko ang sapat na panganagilangan ko lalo na sa mga benepisyo at nakakasahod ako ng tama at hindi delayed
10. More stability and additional income due to interest on shared capital
11. Kasi po maganda ang aking benepisyo ng aking cooperative kumikita po ako
12. Hindi rin po kasi ako sigurado sa trabaho ko ngayon
13. Opo kasi marami naman kming mga benepisyo at nadadagdagan ang aming share capital
14. I think I am better working in a cooperative set-up as I disagree nothing about working under a cooperative. It's just that in my post as of this time, the work load I have is I guess not compensated enough. I've learned a lot with my current post and still learning on it. On the other hand, as an employee, I still aim to work as direct-hired employee in a company which I can enjoy more benefits and higher salary

IV. Respondents from Worker Cooperative D:

1. Sa bago po naming cooperative mas maganda kalagayan at sa tingin ko mas panatag po
2. Maganda magpalakad ang Txxxxxx
3. Nakukuha namin ang benepisyo ng maaga
4. Naibibigay sa amin ang mga benepisyo na nararapat para sa amin. Tama ang pasahod para sa mga tao. Higit sa lahat bukas para sa lahat ng miyembro na tumulong, madaling lapitan at nakakaunawa
5. Oo dahil kumpleto ang benepisyo at tama ang pasahod nila at maganda ang pamamalakad ng Txxxxxx
6. Opo dahil may nakasisiguro akong trabaho at walang kontraktwalisasyon sa aming kooperatiba at tuloy tuloy po ang aking iskedyol sa pagpasok di gaya ng ahensya
7. Opo dahil nagpoprovide talaga sila ng tamang benepisyo sa lahat at nagcoconduct din sila ng mga trining para maiangat pa ang aking skills at maging motivated sa lahat ng aking ginagawa
8. Yes, aside from being assured of having a job without any short-term contract, I have other benefits which other contractual agencies can't provide, such as health card benefits, retirement benefits and others
9. Opo dahil ina-aksyonan agad ang aking pangngailangan lalo na kapag ako ay magloloan alerto din sila para ako a i-assist
10. Maganda ang pangangalakad ng kooperatiba

APPENDIX C

(guide questions for interview with management staff of worker cooperatives)

Main Research Question/ Purpose of Interview	
Background of the Interviewee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you please elaborate on the nature of your current position? What are your main tasks and responsibilities? 2. How long have you been in your position? 3. Can you please share a brief background of your work experience with worker cooperatives in the Philippines?
Issues in the Philippine Labor Market (particularly about contractualization)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In general, how do you assess Philippine labor market in terms of efficiency, productivity, quality of jobs among others? 2. One of the issues facing the Philippine Labor market is contractualization - temporary or contractual employment. What is your take with regard to the clamor of the labor groups against total ban of contractualization? 3. What are your proposals in terms of developing the labor market of the Philippines?
Dynamics and effects of a Worker Cooperative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the worker cooperative you belong to usually operate in terms of management, member ownership, participation of worker-owner members, and deployment of labor? 2. How does the worker co-operative model differ from the other forms of contractual employment especially the outsourcing agencies? 3. How does the Philippine legal framework characterize worker cooperatives? 4. Would you say that worker co-operatives yield more sustainable productivity for workers and client-partners as compared to other forms of contractual employment? How is this so or in what ways? Can you give concrete example citing the specific case of a client-partner of a worker cooperative?
History and current state of the Worker Cooperative (Challenges and Opportunities)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did the worker cooperatives' you belong to begin and develop? 2. What do you think are the challenges faced by worker cooperatives nowadays? 3. What are the opportunities you envision with the worker cooperative movement?