

# Concept Paper



UNITED NATIONS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT—PHILIPPINE RESEARCH TEAM (UNRISD-PRT) AND UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES THIRD WORLD STUDIES CENTER

## INTRODUCTION

The research project “Global Civil-Society Movements: Dynamics in International Campaigns and National Implementation (The Philippine Case)” of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the Philippine Research Team (UNRISD-PRT) seeks to understand two key aspects of contemporary movements: 1) their structure, institutional values, and practices, and how these affected the emergence of robust transnational movements of citizens and civil-society organizations; and 2) their outcomes and impact in national and local contexts. The project’s interest is not merely to illustrate the success or failure of the global movements in question. It also seeks to explain why different trajectories lead to different results, despite the fact that many of these movements enjoy considerable popular legitimacy. Another key area of interest is the economic and political implications of their proposals. In this project, the following are examined: campaigns for debt relief, movement to change international trade rules and barriers, global taxation initiative, international anti-corruption movement, and movement on fair trade.

As pointed out in the UNRISD research project proposal,

research on these issues is timely, not because there is increasing viability of civil-society activism at the international level, but because civil-society movements and networks are increasingly combining their protestations and advocacy campaigns with distinct alternative proposals and initiations to existing patterns of socioeconomic inequalities and deprivation.

The negative impact of globalization processes has slowly moved social movements “toward putting forward many concrete propositions to deal with the consequences of neoliberal economic policies, with sustainable communities, dignified work, and a healthy environment.” In short, because of globalization, social movements have “attempted to demonstrate that a different world, one that places high emphasis on social justice and the economic well-being of ordinary people, is possible.”

For the Philippines, therefore, it is of utmost significance to examine how social movements have been further strengthened by the linkage of local and transnational activism, and how they oppose and cooperate with the state as well as confront the danger of co-optation. Important players in social movements have to be recognized. Among them are academics, who are not only the movements’ theoreticians but also the fierce critics of their proposed alternative paradigms and strategies. The advent of globalization has also brought about the potent role of the media in highlighting the advocacies of social movements.

Despite the increasing role of other actors and institutions, the challenge remains for social movements to frame their issues and concerns that grip the very heart of society’s problems. The ability to present and sustain feasible alternatives—against all odds—is, ultimately, the litmus test of their success.

Equally important is the dissemination of research findings to stakeholders—the beneficiaries or potential end users of the case studies—to further validate the results of the project. This exercise will provide the stakeholders a venue to collectively discuss the emergence, discourses, strategies, outcomes, and trajectories of the movements. It is in this context that a national stakeholders’ conference entitled “Global Civil-Society Movements in the Search for Alternatives: Issues, Challenges, and Prospects in the Philippines” is being organized to fully utilize the information generated through research efforts.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To share experiences of five selected movements, including successes and failures, and to develop civil-society capacity to plan, develop, and implement concrete activities
2. To present the issues of global socioeconomic and political problems at stake, major civil-society debates and proposals, and areas of common interest between the government and civil-society movements
3. To try to integrate the evolving civil-society sector and its work in university courses and academic research
4. To diffuse research results and give more space for civil-society expression

## FORMAT

The two-day conference consists of five thematic panels and one plenary session. While each panel is structured based on a set of guide questions, the focal point is the sharing of experiences and insights among the participants. The main speakers are the UNRISD-PRT researchers, who will present their analyses derived from the research findings. The reactors are representatives from the various stakeholders (civil society, government, academe, and the media) who will not only respond to

the points raised by the researchers but also offer their own perspectives on the issues based on their experiences. Each panel will have a moderator and a rapporteur.

## PARTICIPANTS

The conference is intended for a core group of stakeholders, which consists of fifty social-movement actors, government officials, academics, media practitioners, and representatives of international organizations dealing directly with the different issues or concerns covered by the study. Other participants who could in some way benefit from the discussions may choose to attend select panels.

## PANELS AND THEMES

### Panel 1: The Transnational Dimension of Philippine Social Movements

This session provides an overview of the nature, dimensions, and “connectivity” of social movements in the Philippines. Specifically, it attempts to explain how the transnational connection between a local campaign and a global movement came about, how it operates especially in confronting opportunities and challenges that go beyond national borders, and how such local-global nexus affects the repertoires of collective action.

#### *Guide Questions:*

1. Why do civil-society organizations pursue transnational linkages?
2. How are these linkages formed?
3. How can these linkages be characterized?
4. How do specific forms of transnational linkages affect civil-society organizations and the institutions or states that are the focus of the civil-society organizations’ advocacies?

#### *Main Presenter:*

Joel F. Ariate Jr., case study researcher-writer for the movement on debt relief, UNRISD-PRT/university research associate, Third World Studies Center

#### *Reactors:*

Josefa “Gigi” Francisco, member, steering committee, International Gender and Trade Network

Maria Teresa Diokno Pascual, former president, Freedom from Debt Coalition

Eduardo Tadem, former executive director, Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives

#### *Moderator:*

Ruth Lusterio Rico, associate professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines-Diliman

**Panel 2: State-Movement Dynamics: Opposition, Cooperation, and Co-optation**

This session focuses on the experiences of social movements in engaging official state agencies in the Philippines through various formal and informal strategies of dialogue, negotiation, and bargaining. It discusses the form and substance of the policy outcomes of these relations in an era of rapid integration into the global economy and dominance of neoliberalism in the Philippine polity. Likewise, it assesses the dynamics between state and movements both as a means (the context in which policy is negotiated, shaped, and set) and as an end (the implementation, monitoring, and adoption of more effective policy).

*Guide Questions:*

1. What are the means of intervention used by social movements in engaging the state? Why do they use these and under what circumstances?
2. How integral is the involvement of social movements to processes of policy-agenda setting, formulation, implementation, and monitoring?
3. Along a spectrum of engagement—from inclusion through accommodation to exclusion—how does the state respond to social movements? What accounts for the prevailing relationship?
4. What factors would explain the success or failure of social movements' interaction with the state in terms of policy outcomes?

*Main Presenter:*

Ma. Glenda S. Lopez Wui, case study researcher-writer for the anti-corruption movement, UNRISD-PRT/assistant professor, University of the Philippines Open University

*Reactors:*

Joel Rocamora, executive director, Institute for Popular Democracy

Alex Brillantes Jr., dean, National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines-Diliman

Jorge Tigno, associate professor Department of Political Science, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines-Diliman

*Moderator:*

Dennis Quilala, assistant professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines-Diliman

**Panel 3: The Academe and Social Movements: Enriching Theory and Practice**

Social-movement practices have created interest in many areas and disciplines. They have enriched the teaching and research conducted by academics, a number of whom are active movement participants themselves. At the same time, academics have played a significant role in influencing social movements' repertoires of collective action. Indeed, in the analysis and critique of social movements, academics have been crucial in determining the strategies used and direction taken by movements.

*Guide Questions:*

1. What role do academics play in the advocacies of social movements?
2. How are the links established between academics and social-movement actors, particularly in engaging official state agencies, supranational institutions, and the media?
3. How do the advocacies of academics strengthen the teaching and research on social movements in the Philippines?

*Main Presenter:*

Ronald Molmisa, case study researcher-writer for the global taxation initiative, UNRISD-PRT/research fellow, Third World Studies Center

*Reactors:*

- Jose C.J. Magadia, SJ, assistant professor, Department of Political Science, Ateneo de Manila University
- Francisco Magno, associate professor, Institute of Governance, De La Salle University
- Maureen Pagaduan, assistant professor, College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines-Diliman

*Moderator:*

Ma. Ela Atienza, associate professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines-Diliman

**Panel 4: Media Framing and Coverage: Competing Images and Collective Action**

This session tries to discuss the complex interaction between movement activists and media producers in the construction of news about the former, making the latter actors in the social struggles themselves. Furthermore, it discusses important issues in the relationship between social movements and the news media: how a movement gets media attention, what determines the way it is publicly represented, and whether the attention serves the movement's goals.

*Guide Questions:*

1. How does the movement project itself to the media? What media strategies does it employ?
2. How do the media frame or portray the movement and the problem or issues that the movement is trying to resolve? What accounts for this?
3. Does the movement receive media coverage that highlights the issues about which it is concerned? Does coverage focus more on form rather than substance?

*Main Presenter:*

Sharon M. Quinsaat, case study researcher-writer for the movement to change international trade rules and barriers, UNRISD-PRT/university researcher, Third World Studies Center

*Reactors:*

Glenda Gloria, managing editor, *Newsbreak*

Iris Cecilia Gonzales, senior reporter, *BusinessWorld*

Maria Lourdes Mangahas, vice-president for research and content development, GMA Network Inc.

Moderator: Rolando Fernando, assistant professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines-Diliman

**Panel 5: The Role of Social Movements in the Quest for Alternatives**

One of the criticisms being leveled against social movements is their failure to propose solutions to problems or alternatives to predominant thinking and practice. If they do, these so-called alternatives are often disparaged by their opponents as utopian visions. Even social-movement participants themselves recognize that in order to discredit the “there is no alternative” mantra of the neoliberals, they need to craft genuine and feasible alternatives. This session will focus on this particular challenge of social movements.

*Guide Questions:*

1. What are the alternatives that social movements are proposing?
2. Do these articulate the interests of the stakeholders that social movements claim to represent? How receptive are states, supranational institutions, and the general public to these?
3. What actions or strategies are being pursued by social movements to bring to fruition such alternatives?

*Main Presenter:*

Zuraida Mae D. Cabilo, case study researcher-writer, movement on fair trade/ university research associate, Third World Studies Center

*Reactors:*

Mario Aguja, party-list representative, Akbayan! Citizens Action Party

Isagani Serrano, senior vice president, Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement

Filomeno Sta. Ana III, coordinator, Action for Economic Reforms

*Moderator:*

Aries Arugay, assistant professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines-Diliman

## PROGRAM

### Day 1

- 9:00-9:15 Welcome Remarks and Objectives of the Conference  
Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem
- 9:15-9:30 Project Overview  
Josephine C. Dionisio
- 9:30-11:00 Panel 1: The Transnational Dimension of Philippine Social Movements
- 11:00-1:00 Lunch Break
- 1:00-2:30 Panel 2: State-Movement Dynamics: Opposition, Cooperation, and Co-optation
- 2:30-3:00 Break
- 3:00-4:30 Panel 3: The Academe and Social Movements: Enriching Theory and Practice

### Day 2

- 9:00-10:30 Panel 4: Media Framing and Coverage: Competing Images and Collective Action
- 10:30-11:00 Break
- 11:00-12:30 Panel 5: The Role of Social Movements in the Quest for Alternatives
- 12:00-1:30 Lunch
- 1:30-2:30 Synthesis  
Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem
- 2:30-3:00 Closing Activities