

協同組合による貧困削減の可能性についての研究

～フィリピン共和国ボホール州の事例から～

Possibility of Poverty Reduction with Cooperatives: Case studies from Bohol, the Philippines

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1. Objectives of research

As the Laidlaw report pointed out, cooperatives are expected to improve rural life through the mutual help. In the Philippines, the cooperatives have been promoted since the end of the 19th century in order to improve rural life. During the 20th century, governments as well as NGOs struggled to empower rural people through cooperatives. Especially, People Power in 1984 fueled cooperative movement; cooperatives then largely supported the EDSA revolution, and, after the revolution, they showed a significant development. However, the balance sheet of cooperative development, during more than one century, is not always positive, in spite of continuous efforts of government as well as social movement. CDA reports that 60 % of the registered cooperatives in the country are currently inactive, and most rural cooperatives suffer difficult financial situation. The same can be said to cooperatives in the Province of Bohol; most rural cooperatives are not successful.

Our study aims to identify the causes that prevent the successful cooperative development, and to seek possible ways for the poverty alleviation with rural cooperatives. By combining statistical analysis and ethnographic analysis, we find structural factors that make the cooperative development difficult.

2. Results of statistical analysis

Our statistical analysis covering 1500 respondents from various cooperatives in Bohol revealed some significant nature of cooperative development in Bohol.

First, most important motives for creating cooperatives are to improve rural economic life through credit and loans. Second, there is an inconsistency in their perception and attitude. While respondents positively estimate cooperatives, they are passive in organizing cooperatives and participating in the decision-making process. members even commit frequently delinquency. Third, respondents find problems that cooperatives encounter mainly come from three factors closely interrelated: government policies, leaders' inadequate conduct, and members' delinquency. Here, Boholano convivial culture plays an ambiguous role. The cross tabulation analysis demonstrates that perception does not necessarily stimulate participation, and only participation in economic transaction improves people's estimation. Furthermore, members expect not the continuous benefit in the cooperative business, but the usefulness for the temporary and urgent needs.

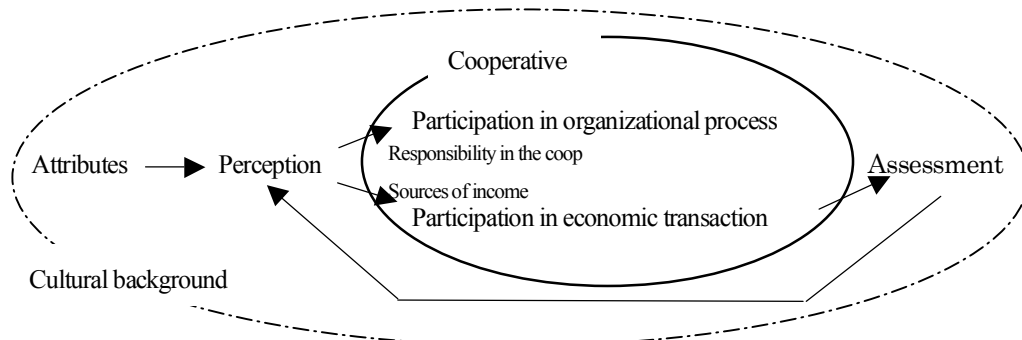


Fig. 1. Reality of Cooperative Business in Bohol

Therefore, lack of linkage between perceptions, participation to decision-making, and participation to economic transaction, would be the principle cause of lack of sustainability among cooperatives in Bohol.

3. Results of ethnographic analysis

The detailed analysis of the functioning of a multi-purpose cooperative (hereafter, the CMPC) and its relations with household strategy of members showed the mechanism and social background of people's cooperation in the cooperative. It revealed that the cooperative plays a role of a conduit that brings government money to local people. Here, the cooperative appears to be an organization where members are only clients and don't need any mutual relationship among them in order to have economic profit. Furthermore, cooperative's economic objective is deeply different from that of farmers' families. In this situation, as long as the risk in the daily production is high, farmers rationally commit delinquency, because the cooperation does not bring them enough merit. The problems we found in the CMPC are also problems of many cooperatives in Bohol.

Farmers' behavior can also be understood in the historical perspective, because the cooperative's functioning is similar to that of local communities in past time. However, in order to survive in the modern society, local leaders become aware of the importance of the market economy. However, when the cooperative fails to articulate the cooperative's strategy based on the market principle with the household strategy based on family life, cooperative development cannot encourage poor farmers to reduce the risks they are actually facing.

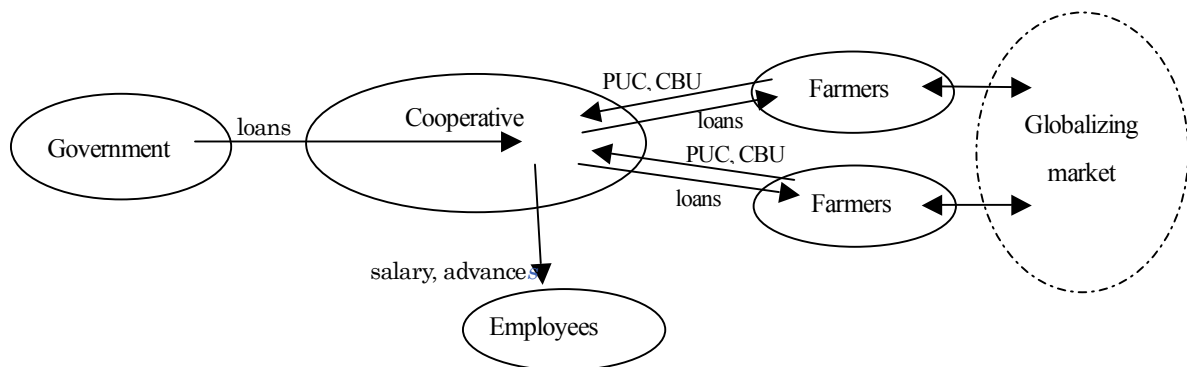


Fig. 2. Functioning Mechanism of the CMPC

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Because of its structural nature, members' participation in the collective decision-making cannot improve the profit they receive from the cooperative. In this situation, cooperatives are for members just the same as the private stores, and cannot develop "ourness" in the association in spite of people's preference to the cohesiveness. In order to realize the cooperatives goal, cooperatives should change their organizational structure, and become real association based on mutual help with the shared capital. The microfinance project through cooperatives will be difficult in Bohol, unless people trust the cooperatives. The other way to make successful cooperative with the shared capital is to make cooperatives of trading or production, combining cooperative economic system with family production system, based on shared capital as means of economic activities. If farmers have a better profit when they use cooperative system than they do only with their own family, people will naturally participate in the cooperative. For all of these changes, the leaders' role will be important as a model of social behavior.