Defining the Nonprofit Sector:
The Philippines

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Preface

This is one in a series of working papers produced under the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (CNP), a collaborative effort by scholars around the world to understand the scope, structure, and role of the nonprofit sector using a common framework and approach. Begun in 1989 in 13 countries, the Project continues to expand, currently encompassing about 40 countries.

The working papers provide a vehicle for the initial dissemination of the work of the Project to an international audience of scholars, practitioners and policy analysts interested in the social and economic role played by nonprofit organizations in different countries, and in the comparative analysis of these important, but often neglected, institutions.

Working papers are intermediary products, and they are released in the interest of timely distribution of Project results to stimulate scholarly discussion and inform policy debates. A full list of these papers is provided inside the back cover.

The production of these working papers owes much to the devoted efforts of our project staff. The present paper benefited greatly from the editorial work of Regina List, the project manager; Mimi Bilzor, communications associate; Brittany Anuszkiewicz, project assistant; and Marcy Shackelford, administrative secretary. On behalf of the project’s core staff, I also want to express our deep gratitude to our project colleagues around the world, to the International Advisory Committee that is helping to guide our work, and to the many sponsors of the project listed at the end of this paper.

The views and opinions expressed in these papers are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the institutions with which they are affiliated, The Johns Hopkins University, its Institute for Policy Studies, the Center for Civil Society Studies, or any of their officers or supporters.

We are delighted to be able to make the early results of this project available in this form and welcome comments and inquiries either about this paper or the project as a whole.

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Defining the Nonprofit Sector: The Philippines

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Introduction

The space between the state and the market is occupied in the Philippines by groups answering to various names—nongovernmental organizations, independent people’s organizations, civil society, voluntary sector, and non-stock corporations. Only the last, like the term “nonprofit sector,” has a clear role vis-à-vis the market. The other terms connote organizations oriented mainly to the state—as its critics and competitors, or as its complements and collaborators. If there is an institution that rivals the state as the point of orientation, it will be the Catholic Church. Thus the roles of the state and church in the creation, development, and growth of this sector are crucial to understanding their scope and dynamics in this country.

This paper will first explicate the meanings assigned to the terms introduced above because, although they are often used interchangeably, each underscores different qualities that distinguish it from the others. Whichever term is used, there is little problem in accepting the five components of the structural-operational definition offered by the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, and thus, for convenience, throughout this paper the term “nonprofit sector” will be used to refer to the sector unless the aforesaid special quality is the subject of discussion. That quality is usually an add-on such as, for instance, the social development purposes implied in the terms “nongovernmental organizations” or “civil society.”

The next section will discuss the nonprofit sector through various periods of the country’s history. It starts with the values of the pre-colonial period that nurtured the cooperation and mutual aid that became the functions of later organizations. In the Spanish colonial era, the state and the church were intertwined, but non-state organizations arose out of the charitable functions of the church, on the one hand, and as a counterpoise to the abuses of church and state on the other. These groups were too disparate to be lumped together in one sector.

During the American colonial period, a real sector oriented to (and hardly against) the state emerged, and the church influence was more muted. Nevertheless, the same grievances that fueled the establishment of organizations from the Spanish era onward continued to surface. This persisted through the early Independence period until the mid-1960s with the emergence of Ferdinand E. Marcos. The period of the dictatorship saw the strengthening of the sector as self-proclaimed mechanisms for social development. Many of these organizations were critics of the state. Some of them grew out of social action movements of the churches and were a far cry from

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the church-influenced organizations of the colonial periods. Since the ouster of Marcos, the sector has attempted to continue its militancy even as it now deals with the openly organization-friendly state and church.

The third part of the paper will describe the current situation of the nonprofit sector. It will present the sector using three typologies. The first distinguishes the organizations by using historical and ideological factors, the second by their structure, and the third by their functional classification.

The last part of the paper will analyze the nonprofit sector as a vital element in the political economy of Philippine society. Here, its role relative to the state, market, and church will be put into sharper focus. In addition, the issues of development—political, economic and social—which propel the creation and continued existence of the organizations in this sector, will also be highlighted. It will also try to bring forth the theoretical significance of this exercise in defining the nonprofit sector.

Defining the Nonprofit Sector

This section will first discuss the Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project’s common definition of the nonprofit sector as applied to the Philippines. It will then discuss alternative ways of referring to the sector that are in common use there.

THE STRUCTURAL-OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

According to the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project’s structural-operational definition, an organization must meet five criteria to be considered part of the nonprofit sector. These criteria are: organized, private, self-governing, nonprofit-distributing, and voluntary. As already stated above, however the sector is called, these five crucial characteristics will probably be acceptable for its core membership. Nevertheless, some points of clarification in applying them to the Philippine context are required for each component. They are discussed below, with the JHU definition of each characteristic given first.

- “Organized,” i.e., existing as a separate entity, usually with its own set of officers, describes most nonprofits. Being organized in this minimal sense is sufficient for any association (except cooperatives) to transact business with any other organization, public or private, since there is no requirement for registration in the country. Nevertheless, many organizations deem it prudent to register with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a non-stock corporation or seek accreditation from the Philippine Council for NGO Certification or the government agency in charge of their sector of activity so that they may be exempt from taxation, receive funding from government or private donor agencies, and/or participate in planning and development councils at the local, regional or national level.

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2 An organization seeking recognition as a cooperative must register with the Cooperatives Development Authority.
3 The Council, known by its initials PCNC, is a nonprofit organization to which the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the government agency collecting income and other taxes, has delegated the authority to determine whether or not a nongovernmental organization should be exempt from taxation.
• “Private,” i.e., prudently defined as institutionally separate from government, allows for the inclusion of many organizations which have been created by government agencies or their officials, and/or which draw their sustenance from state grants or contracts. With the increasing number of laws that require representation of the sector in various government bodies, the specter of cooptation may further blur the boundary of public and private, even though associations remain institutionally identifiable from government.

• “Self-governing,” i.e., equipped to control their own activities, would be signified by the operation of boards of directors. However, this characteristic may be vitiated as the public-private distinction becomes blurred.

• “Nonprofit-distributing,” i.e., not returning profits generated to their owners or directors, is a key problem in the inclusion of cooperatives, which are accepted as important members of the sector in the Philippines. But a bigger problem related to this is the practice in some non-stock corporations to give high honoraria to their members for services rendered, effectively paying them for sitting in the board. This not only increases expenses and limits the profit that can be plowed back to the organization but may also make board voluntarism of merely token value.

• “Voluntary,” i.e., non-compulsory membership in an organization as well as some meaningful degree of voluntary participation, either in the conduct of the agency’s activities or in the management of its affairs, probably describes most of the organizations. However, for many organizations whose work is done by paid staff and for whom the board, not paid a salary but perhaps receiving a high stipend for attending meetings, is just a remote entity, it does not seem to be a major quality.

This set of five characteristics seems to be acceptable whether the sector is called “nonprofit” or some other name. There are certain nuances, however, which differentiate the term “nonprofit sector” from other terms commonly used in the Philippines.

**LEGALLY RECOGNIZED TERMS**

Three terms have legal validity in the country: “non-stock corporations,” “independent people’s organizations,” and “nongovernmental, community-based or sectoral organizations.”

*Figure 1. Coverage of Non-stock Corporations/Foundations*
A “non-stock corporation” is defined in the Corporation Code as “an organization … where no part of its income is distributable as dividends to its members, trustees, or officers…. (Sec.87). It is “formed or organized for charitable, religious, educational, professional, cultural, fraternal, literary, scientific, social, civic service or similar purposes like trade, industry, agricultural and like chambers, or any combination thereof” (Sec. 88).

Many NPOs, particularly those based in cities and organized by middle or upper class persons, register with the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission as non-stock corporations. However, nonprofits and non-stock corporations share only three characteristics. The characteristic “non-profit-distributing” is explicit in the Corporation Code. The qualities of formality and self-government may be implied by their designation as corporations and the reference to trustees, officers, and members. However, the characteristics “private” and “voluntary” are not. Their absence distinguishes non-stock corporations from nonprofit organizations: some public enterprises have subsidiaries created not by law but by registration as non-stocks. Because they are created by a government entity, they are treated as governmental and not private by the Commission on Audit, the general auditing office of the Philippine government. Boards of these corporations may or may not serve on a pro bono basis.

“Independent people’s organizations” and “nongovernmental, community-based, or sectoral organizations” are terms appearing in the Philippine Constitution of 1987, the basic law promulgated after the People Power Revolution toppled the dictatorship of Ferdinand E. Marcos. These seem to be regarded as interchangeable terms in the Constitution, which also refers to them more generically as “the people and their organizations.”

“Independent people’s organizations” are “bonafide associations of citizens with demonstrated capacity to promote the public interest and with identifiable leadership, membership and structure” (Art. XIII, Sec. 15). The Constitution clearly requires that the organizations be formal, private and self-governing; the reference to citizens and public purpose suggests that voluntariness and nonprofit distribution would not vitiate its operations. However, unlike the term nonprofit sector, the independent people’s organization is expected not only to be oriented to the public interest, but to have demonstrated capacity to promote it. The inclusion of public purpose in the definition will recur in other terms used in the Philippines.

Article II, Sec. 23 of the Constitution of 1987 declares, “The State shall encourage nongovernmental, community-based or sectoral organizations that promote the welfare of the nation.” Thus, although some NGOs may conceivably not have a public purpose, the

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4 The passage in Article XIII reads as follows: “The right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political and economic decision making shall not be abridged. The state shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms.”
5 The term “independent” occurs only in the Constitution perhaps to signify the organizations’ separation from government. It is not used by organizations as a label for themselves, or by the general society to refer to them. As constitutionally defined, however, it seems to encompass a broader scope than is subsumed under the commonly used term “people’s organizations.”
6 They will be referred to as “nongovernmental organizations” or NGOs throughout this chapter since the term encompasses organizations that may call themselves “community-based” or “sectoral.” “Community-based” is an adjective attached to some NGOs or people’s organizations to signify that it is oriented to the people to be served; it was first used for health programs and has also described environmental organizations. “Sectoral” refers to NGOs focused on different program areas, which are called “sectors” in the Philippines, e.g., health, agriculture, social
The constitutional ideal is that they should seek to promote the general welfare. Fourteen of the
eighteen articles and documents surveyed for this study include engagement in some kind of
development work as a defining characteristic of NGOs. It is for this reason that most NGOs are
also referred to as NGDOs—nongovernmental development organizations. The other frequently
mentioned characteristics are private (15 mentions), nonprofit (15), voluntary (8), and registered
or formally organized (5).

In practice, nongovernmental organizations and people’s organizations (POs) are
increasingly being differentiated in the Philippines according to function and membership. NGOs
are intermediary organizations between the people and the state, and they speak for or on behalf
of the poor and disadvantaged without being from among them. By contrast, the members of
people’s organizations come from the poor and disadvantaged sectors; thus, they represent
themselves.

NGO and PO as commonly understood in the Philippines are of recent vintage. It may be
recalled that the term nongovernmental organization gained international currency only in the
1950s when the United Nations coined it. It did not become an identifying label in the
Philippines until the 1970s. Thus, many older associations that are not created by government do
not call themselves NGOs nor are they usually included in NGO federations and conferences.
Also, since “organization” implies membership, non-membership entities such as
nongovernmental and nonprofit schools and hospitals also do not belong.

Figure 2. Coverage of Nongovernmental Organizations and People’s Organizations

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welfare, as well as other functional areas used in the ICNPO. “Sectoral” gains importance when the law (national) or
ordinance (local) specifies the program area of the organizations that may be represented in a particular
governmental body.

See Appendix A: “Defining/Basic Characteristics of the Term NGO” showing definitions given by 18 Philippine
sources.
The term “voluntary sector” became the preference of the National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines as it searched for an appropriate term for its new management program. It is a positive label (rather than one with the prefix “non”) that is neutral with respect to the other two domains, the state and the market. Such neutrality eschews the orientation for or against either domain that is forced upon us by the use of the terms “nongovernmental” or “nonprofit.” At the same time, it recognizes the relative autonomy and distance of these organizations from both domains.

“Voluntary sector” highlights the organizations’ voluntary nature, which is a recognized characteristic of organizations in this public space. The term could accommodate the Johns Hopkins Project’s four other defining characteristics of nonprofits (formal, self-governing, private, and non-profit-distributing). It is also more inclusive than even the combination of nongovernmental organizations and people’s organizations (NGO-PO) as it covers entities established before the rise of NGOs in the 1970s. As such, it includes established membership associations more commonly called socio-civic associations in the Philippines (e.g., Lions, Rotary Clubs), as well as traditional welfare organizations (orphanages, religious groups [e.g., Holy Name Society, Knights of Columbus]) and fraternities (e.g., Masonic lodges), charitable bureaucracies (e.g., Philippine National Red Cross, family foundations) and well-established nonprofit institutions (e.g., Ateneo de Manila University, Mary Johnston Hospital).

Like the term “nonprofit,” “voluntary sector” does not include development as an element of its definition in the Philippines. However, it is not a value-neutral term since, as in Ireland, it implies “active citizenship” and shows a society’s “caring tradition” (Powell and Guerin 1997: 22, 96).

**Figure 3. Coverage of Voluntary Sector**

![Voluntary Sector Diagram]

**CIVIL SOCIETY**

The term “civil society” has been in use in the Philippines since the 1980s. The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan recognizes it as one of the three societal domains—a sphere distinct from but interacting with the state and the market (National Economic and Development Authority 1998). Under this definition, civil society can embody all the five characteristics of the nonprofit sector.

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8 See survey of NGO characteristics referred to above. Moreover, “voluntary organizations” was the term applied to all nongovernmental organizations prior to the 1970s.
However, Philippine usage is more complex than that. The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) also uses a triadic paradigm that assigns roles to each domain: public action for public good on the part of the state, private action for private good on the part of the market, and private action for public good on the part of civil society. This puts public purpose as part of the definition of civil society. It also clearly makes the state its sphere of orientation. Thus, Isagani Serrano explicates the concept in two ways. The first “looks at civil society as an aggregate of civil institutions distinct from state structures. Another views civil society as a set of entitlements that would equate this concept with the notion of citizenship in a democracy” (1994). For Edna Co (1996), the state is also the major institution: “One profound characteristic of civil society is its autonomy and independence from the state, but it inevitably has to deal with the state because it secures its own power only as it negotiates and transacts with the state” (192).

Aside from the triadic paradigm, civil society is viewed from two other perspectives. First is an inclusive view which from one angle may include the market, and from another, the state. The basic definition seems simple enough: “Civil society is a public sphere where autonomous groups and individuals interact with each other on matters of collective concern…” (Ferrer 1997: 13). Ferrer adds that the concept is not inherently positive as it may include reactionary groups, and conservative and reformist individuals (Ferrer 1997: 12). She then lists what groups it may include: “NGOs, POs, religious institutions, the academe, the media, business, political and social movements and parties, and basic communities including families and clans” (Ferrer 1997: 13, italics supplied). Note that families and clans are usually regarded as private entities not entering the public sphere. In national income accounts, households are separate from government, private sector, and nonprofit institutions. The inclusion of business is not further explained; we may infer that it is included because it may indeed interact with other groups on common concerns.

A variant of this inclusive view lumps the state and civil society together. It stems from the belief that to separate civil society from the state is to unnecessarily isolate the political dimensions of society and to forget that the social space encompasses broad activities of the state. Doronila, for example, asserts that civil society covers all institutions and groups that engage each other in the democratization process towards an ethical and pluralistic culture, and these groups even include the bureaucracy, the legislature, and politicians (as cited in Ferrer 1997). Ferrer further maintains that this separation of state and civil society may also be impossible in Islamic countries that do not distinguish between these two domains and where both state and civil society act as instruments for promoting Islamic values and goals.

At the other extreme is the exclusionary view of civil society, represented by the following definition:

All the organizations that intersect with the domain of the state but are not part of the state apparatus are civil society entities. While they operate within the existing cultural and economic structures, the basic thrust can be found in the fact that they contest power, individually or in concert, by attempting to transform unequal power relations in six interrelated spheres: country and class, sector and species, generation and gender (Constantino-David 1997: 22).
For Serrano, the contest extends beyond the state as he views “civil society (as a) dynamic factor for challenging and countervailing state and market hegemony as well as a force for creative disintegration and transition to a desired social order” (1994: 13, italics supplied). This view has no use for conservative and charity-oriented civic groups that affirm the status quo rather than challenge it.

As with the other terms, the term “civil society” is more often than not layered with purpose instead of being value-neutral. Both the exclusionary view and part of the inclusive view connote a left-of-center perspective, with organizations seen as a means to change towards equality and empowerment of the poor and as a challenge to the status quo which is dominated by both the market and the state. There is an occasional bow to the fact that there are organizations on the other side of the spectrum, but their inclusion in the sector is embodied in the official line and does not seem to be the dominant description of civil society.

**Historical Background**

The stages in the development of the formal nonprofit sector roughly coincide with the major periods of Philippine history. Spain occupied the islands from 1521 to 1898. Rather than surrendering to the victorious Filipino army of liberation, Spain negotiated with the natives’ erstwhile ally, the United States, and turned over the colony to them in December 1898, six months after the Filipinos had declared their independence. The United States, in turn, recognized Philippine independence only in 1946, after putting down the second phase of the Philippine Revolution and then facing a parliamentary struggle of almost half a century. Ferdinand E. Marcos cut short democratic succession of governments in 1972 when he declared martial law. His dictatorship was finally ended by a bloodless four-day People Power Revolution in 1986. The redemocratization period that started persists to this day.
THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD (to 1521)

The islands now called the Philippines were separate settlements and small kingdoms at the time of the Spanish Conquest in the 16th century. They were fused societies, mainly a combination of families and clans, with no separate organizations for politics, commerce, or philanthropy. Religious values and rituals underlying the conduct of these functions are evident to this day.9

Psychologists identify the Filipino core value as *pakikipagkapwa* (holistic interaction with others), the root word of which is *kapwa*, or shared inner self. Other people are thus not altogether apart from someone, as *pakikipagkapwa* recognizes them as “persons who share my humanity.” It is from this that structures of cooperation were developed: *bayanihan* (mutual assistance among equals in day-to-day life and economic, especially agricultural, pursuits), *damayan* (assistance of peers in periods of death or crisis), and *pagtutulungan* (mutual self-help). Sociologist Cora Veneracion says that “*pagtutulungan*” implies a relationship among equals and is more attuned to indigenous notions of people helping each other. This is in contrast to professional notions of charity introduced by the West, which connote unequal status between the person offering help and the recipient of that assistance (Veneracion 1998: 206). A notion of assistance to unequals is, however, embodied in the indigenous Tagalog term, *kawanggawa* (charity), and the Cebuano word, *pahinungod*, which now refers to volunteers but originally referred to offering of self to others. Whether these are notions only later introduced by Catholicism awaits further study. Note however that what is highlighted in these concepts is the value of common humanity of both giver and recipient rather than their status, equal or unequal though they may be.

These indigenous cultural traits arose out of situations marked by subsistence production as well as inter-community relations of trade and war. In this context, a sense of responsibility towards one’s community was necessary for the community’s survival. The origins of present attitudes of giving and voluntarism harken to these sources and may explain why giving and volunteering still put a premium on helping one’s kin and on ensuring the welfare of one’s immediate neighborhood.

THE SPANISH COLONIAL PERIOD (1521-1898)

The Spanish administration of the Philippines reflected the double nature of its colonial enterprise: a business venture that sought to recoup the capital invested and generate substantial profits for its backers and a religious mission designed to garner souls for heaven.

Aside from the obvious religious hegemony it established, the Roman Catholic Church could be credited with the establishment of the first organizations of the nonprofit sector in the islands. Religious orders established the first hospitals, asylums, orphanages, and other welfare institutions. The Franciscans established Manila’s first hospital in 1578 that would later evolve into the San Juan de Dios Hospital (still existing as a Catholic hospital) and the San Lazaro

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9 The behavior of indigenous peoples who occupied the highlands and Muslim communities in Mindanao and Sulu, both of whom never completely accepted Spanish hegemony, may mirror the early Filipinos more than the majority who have been called "lowland Christian Filipinos."
Hospital (now a government hospital) (Zaide 1953: 86). Spain, however, limited the number of hospitals to a half-dozen and limited admission to these places to Spaniards and a few of the local elite. By contrast, the health care prescribed for the natives commonly consisted of prayers to the saints (Kwantes 1989:77).

The first schools in the country were parochial schools. Despite the Crown’s instructions to colonial officials to promote general education among the natives, the parochial school system accommodated only a limited, elite clientele (Ileto 1998: 81). The Church also sponsored the formation of groups and associations as part of its proselytizing strategy. These religious associations, such as cofradias (brotherhoods) and guardias de honor (guardians of honor), acted as a moral police force, keeping the Indios\(^\text{10}\) from drinking and gossiping (a rebellious act if it involved the airing of grievances against the local Spanish authorities) while encouraging neighborly behavior such as visiting the sick and helping out with the town fiesta preparations.

Formal philanthropy also saw its beginnings during the Spanish occupation as the Church directed a share of personal fortunes to its charities or obras pias (literally, pious works). For the most part, Spanish acts of charity and mercy were reserved for the Spaniards and their local allies. Among the biggest obras pias was the Hermanidad de la Misericordia (Brotherhood of Mercy) established in the late 16\(^{th}\) century by a Jesuit. Over the course of its century-and-a-half of existence, the Misericordia was supposed to have given away 5 million pesos in grants to various causes (Bernad 1972 as cited in Faustino 1997: 2).

In 1781, Jose de Basco y Vargas, the first governor general to seek to make the colony economically independent of Mexico,\(^\text{11}\) organized the Economic Society of Friends of the Country. The Society sought contributions from Manila business and other prominent people in order to support various economic projects such as the cultivation of exportable agricultural produce (the original “high-value” crops), for example, indigo, cotton, cinnamon, pepper, silk, and tea. It also provided scholarships for the study of dyeing and mechanics and became a spur for the establishment of vocational schools to produce the skilled labor demanded by new industries. The Society was one of the few nonprofit and philanthropic organizations independent of the Church during the Spanish period (Zaide 1953: 27-28).

The economic progress that Basco initiated in the late 18\(^{th}\) century bore native fruit by the 1830s. It was this relative prosperity that enabled the children of the principalia (the native elite) to study and expose themselves to the liberal ideas then sweeping Europe. They became part of the ilustrados (intelligentsia) that would later demand reforms and foment the revolution against Spain.

\(^{10}\) “Indios,” signifying their unsuccessful search for India, was the term the Spanish used to refer to all the natives. The term “Filipinos” was reserved for Spaniards born in the colony. It was left to the heroes of the Philippine Revolution to claim the name as their own.  

\(^{11}\) The Spanish Crown ruled Filipinas, its only major colony outside Latin America, through the Viceroy of Mexico from the beginning of the Spanish conquest.
RESISTANCE AGAINST SPAIN

For most of the period of foreign occupation, resistance took the form of small peasant revolts against specific local abuses by the curate or the guardias civiles (Spanish soldiers assigned to local areas). Five major rebellions involving several thousand insurgents broke out before 1762 in different areas of Luzon and the Visayas. The Spaniards fought them off by pitting one ethnic group against another. The fact that there were not more uprisings against the Spaniards has been attributed “to the appeal and authority the religious exercised over their parishioners” (Phelan 1959: 149).

The initial stirrings of organized resistance against the Spanish authorities often took the form of cofradias, which the Church had propagated. They also invariably prophesied a return to a paradise without foreign oppression. One such rebellion was that of the Cofradia de San Jose led by Apolinario de la Cruz, known as Hermano (Brother) Pule in 1841. This brotherhood attracted many members in the Southern Tagalog area who paid regular contributions to the organization for its operations and upkeep. When the Church authorities refused to recognize the association and even demanded its dissolution, Pule led his members in an outright uprising against the Spaniards (Constantino 1975: 140). An army sent by the central government finally scattered the rebels and executed its leaders.

The government referred to these rebel groups as asociaciones ilicitas (illegal organizations). Some took on the form of alternative churches with their leaders being ascribed spiritual powers of protection (anting-anting or amulets), being able to cure the sick, and communicating with the dead (Ileto 1998: 85-86).

In contrast to these peasant organizations, the 19th century Propaganda Movement consisted of the efforts of the ilustrados, i.e., the native intelligentsia, to seek reforms and assert equal rights for the Philippines. Many of the ilustrados were in Europe as students. While there, they sought to represent Filipino interests in the Spanish Cortes (parliament). The reformers found sympathizers among masons and used their lodges to advance their political agenda.

Given this experience, the reformers proceeded to organize Masonic lodges for Filipinos in the Philippines as a way of spreading propaganda ideals and educating their people in collective action. The first Masonic lodge was established in 1892. By 1893 the masons had formed 35 lodges nationwide, with some including women as members. The lodges were also centers for raising funds for the movement. Masonry itself, however, was not a political, much less a revolutionary, organization (Schumacher 1997). For that, the Filipinos had to find more appropriate forms of organizations.

La Liga Filipina (The Filipino League), a “mutual aid and self-help society dispensing scholarship funds and legal aid, loaning capital, and setting up cooperatives,” was established by Jose Rizal and friends in 1892. It split later in the same year into the reformist Cuerpo de Compromisarios and the militant Katipunan (Constantino 1975: 158; Mahajani 1971: 60-61).

12 We use this term now in the modern sense to describe people indigenous to the colony as well as any Spaniard born in the Philippines who cast their lot with them and regarded Filipinas as the focus of their patriotic loyalty in the Philippines.
The Katipunan eschewed reforms and chose to wage a popular revolution to win total independence from Spain. It also departed from the pattern set by the cofradías and other millenarian groups in its secular and even anti-religious sentiments. The Katipunan was formally organized with a governing Supreme Council overseeing the organization, popular councils in every province, and a section or branch in every town (Agoncillo 1956). On the eve of the revolution against Spain, the Katipunan had spread as far south as Mindanao and counted thousands as members (Constantino 1975: 175). On June 12, 1898, the Philippine Revolutionary Government declared Philippine independence, the first in Asia against a European power.

Unfortunately, the first Philippine republic would be short-lived. Although the Philippine revolutionaries had the Spanish forces in retreat, Spain surrendered instead to its antagonist in the Spanish-American War and ceded its Asian colony to the United States in the Treaty of Paris of 1898. Thus began the second phase of the revolution, this time against the new colonial masters. Hostilities did not end until well into the second decade of the 20th century.

The legacy of the Katipunan has remained strong among Filipinos who still feel encumbered by colonial or neo-colonial dictat. Many organizations that sprouted in the early 1960s and 1970s during the heyday of student activism competed in trying to establish their nationalist lineage back to it.

AMERICAN COLONIAL RULE (1898-1946)

The United States announced a policy of “benevolent assimilation” and pledged to keep the Philippines only as long as it took them “to learn the art of self-government,” words meant more to placate the anti-imperialists at home than to describe the situation of a people that had just successfully waged the first war of liberation in Asia. As peace was consolidated in Manila, the new colonial masters instituted the separation of Church and state, a feature taken for granted in American democracy, but one that cut off the anti-clerical sentiment of the Philippine society at that time from its intertwining with the colonial state. It also had tremendous repercussions for the development of the nonprofit sector in the Philippines. In effect, the Americans delineated the boundaries among the different spheres of welfare and charity, i.e., the sphere of the state and the provision for the common good, the sphere of religion and religious-based notions of charity, and the sphere of private action for public good or philanthropy.

The Philippine Corporation Law of 1906 officially recognized private nonprofit organizations. This allowed for tax exemption of those recognized as non-stock corporations, encouraging local private philanthropy. To compensate for the reduced capacity of the Catholic Church to deliver services and encourage other private initiatives in providing public goods, the colonial government subsidized the operations of charitable and welfare institutions.

American charitable organizations, such as the American Red Cross and the Anti-Tuberculosis Society, began to set up branches in the new colony. Welfare institutions from the Spanish period, such as asylums and orphanages, and newly organized ones, such as the Asociación de Damas Filipinas (Organization of Filipino Women) and the Catholic Women’s Federation among them, provided welfare services as well. American Protestant churches divided up the colony into geographic mission areas where different denominations built
hospitals, established schools and undertook welfare activities as part of their mission of evangelization. In Manila, the Church of England built St. Luke’s Hospital and the Methodists built the Mary Johnston Hospital, two institutions that survive to the present.

In 1917, the Associated Charities of Manila were set up to centralize and simplify public fundraising for various charitable institutions and hospitals in the city (Faustino 1997: 5). In the span of a couple of decades of secular rule, philanthropy had lost its religious sense of obligation linked to the salvation of one’s soul and become a purely humanitarian endeavor.

One area of profound American impact was in education. What had once been the preserve of the Church was taken over by the state. The Americans established a public school system open to all and struck religion off the curriculum. However, the Church clung to its schools and operated a parallel educational system that rivaled the public one. This would eventually create a dichotomy between a public school system that provided access to education for the poor and a private educational system that was mostly for the rich and Catholic. Yet the Filipino hunger for education would not be filled by the public and sectarian schools alone. Thus there arose a third system, non-sectarian and not governmental, that eventually would become the biggest sector in higher education. The bulk of these institutions would be run by for-profit corporations, a scheme that is maintained to this day.

The new political environment of tolerance and openness to private nonprofit groups allowed for the formation of new groups. Political parties, labor organizations, peasant unions, women’s groups, and student and youth groups took root. Cooperatives and other mutual benefit groups were encouraged. Befitting a centralized system, more organizations in Manila formed chapters in the provinces, gradually becoming multi-layer organizations. The colonial government dealt severely with groups openly fomenting revolt against the American presence but allowed those advocating purely economic grievances some legal leeway, including the freedom to strike.

The most ideological group of labor leaders formed the Katipunan ng mga Anak Pawis ng Pilipinas (Organization of the Filipino Poor) that in 1930 organized the Communist Party of the Philippines (Constantino 1975: 363-368). They also gave the traditionally restless peasants an ideological raison d’etre and political direction in their struggle against what they termed as feudal oppression in the countryside. The communist movement and its multifarious front organizations would play a significant role throughout post-Spanish history and would pay the price for it in unabated state repression.

To counter the communist threat, the Catholic Church launched Catholic Action to signal its intent to pursue “social action for the poor and oppressed” (Fabros 1988: 16). In the Philippines, the seat of what would later be called “liberation theology” was in Ateneo de Manila University, run by the Society of Jesus. From it would emerge a wide network of organizations not only of students, but also of clergy, peasants, business people, the urban poor, and all other sectors of society. They would in turn create an ideological, political, and Christian social democratic movement that would spawn more grassroots and sectoral organizations after World War II and especially during the activist years of the 1960s and 1970s.
THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD (1946-65)

The most distinctive feature of the immediate postwar period was the continuing communist insurgency that had met with some success in establishing alternative local governments during the war of resistance against Japan in strongholds in the Central Luzon region. By 1950, the Communist Party and its labor federation, the Congress of Labor Organizations (CLO), would boast a combined membership of 100,000 (Fabros 1988:30). This unnerved both officials of the state and the Church who found they shared a common interest in halting and reversing the communist threat.

As the state employed its military and police powers against the communists while rebuilding its social welfare infrastructure, the Church expanded its social action agenda of direct engagement with workers and peasants. The Jesuits formed the Institute of Social Order in 1947 to train union leaders in Christian labor organizing and to serve as “a clearing house for ideas on social order” (Fabros 1988:32). As a direct foil against the CLO, they formed the Federation of Free Workers (FFW), a federation of anticomunist labor unions, and the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), an umbrella group for farmers and peasants.

The Protestant and other non-Catholic churches also decided that the religious and material welfare of their members were inextricably bound. They expanded their services to cover rural development, cooperatives and credit unions, and practical skills in agriculture. Joining together as the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, the mainstream Protestant churches, like the Catholic Church, committed themselves to a common comprehensive social action program.

The 1950s saw the establishment of the first “proper” NGOs, which are, as explained previously, nonprofit organizations that go beyond the concerns of personal or family welfare to encompass broader issues of development, rural reconstruction, urban poverty, economic exploitation, and the possibility of social change. In addition to those organizations closely associated with Catholic social action, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) was founded at this time, also in part to thwart the communists.

In the meantime, traditional welfare and civic organizations coalesced into a Council of Welfare Foundations, now the National Council of Social Development, the first NGO network of the Philippines. What Alegre calls the “incipient” NGO landscape (Alegre 1996: 7) in the 1960s was dominated by the traditional welfare and charitable institutions as well as by cooperatives that had by then become well-established. Meanwhile, Catholic social action had set up parish-based credit unions to help people get on their feet financially. The Church established the Asian Social Institute as a think-tank on social issues. Wealthy families and business corporations organized their own foundations through which they would channel their philanthropic contributions and showcase their “social responsibility.” This awakening was a prelude to the social upheavals of the late 1960s that would profoundly alter an important portion of the nonprofit sector.
THE MARCOS PERIOD (1966-1986) 13

As the Catholic Church lurched towards Vatican II and agitation for more radical social reform engulfed many traditional nonprofit institutions, the concern among both old and new institutions was how to be “socially relevant.” For many, this took the form of questioning traditional notions of charity and challenging the non-political and non-ideological nature of nonprofit groups. Political neutrality was perceived more and more as a barrier to having a real effect on people’s welfare and the nation’s development. It was becoming generally accepted that the country’s problems were deeply rooted, that political activism was inevitable, and that “radical” solutions were required.

The greater pace of urbanization after the war and the debilitating poverty of the countryside led to the emergence of an important new “sector,” the urban poor. The squalor in their communities bred resentment among residents that was harnessed to support anti-government causes. Thus, community organizing as a new form of nonprofit activity and a strategy for empowering people to fight for their own causes was born. One of the most formidable and militant urban poor organizations to emerge at this time was the Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO), which resisted government attempts to demolish their squatter community. Meanwhile, Basic Christian Communities were also being organized in the rural areas, combining evangelism and social concerns. Widespread community organizing work by all kinds of churches, secular organizations and even the government resulted in the formation of the Philippine Ecumenical Council for Community Organizing (PECCO). PECCO is billed as an ecumenical group, in both the religious and ideological senses, with a “vision in social transformation through popular organizing” (Alegre 1996: 10). Foreshadowing the problems of later umbrella organizations, it later split into the Community Organizing Philippine Enterprise (COPE) and the People’s Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (PEACE) because of ideological differences among its members.

A variety of militant organizations also emerged during these restless years, many of them student and youth groups. All the rival ideological forces were represented by their respective youth and student organizations both on campuses and in the communities. These groups came to be called the Second Propaganda Movement in allusion to the one that presaged the revolution against Spain. While claiming affinity to the past, these groups also constituted the local expression of the international youth movement that was then kindling conflagrations of protest throughout the world.

Amid this tumult, the moribund communist movement was to see a revival that eventually led to a schism. A faction of younger members, inspired by Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese communists, formed a “re-established” party in 1968. This Maoist party recruited heavily from the youth and student organizations and from the labor unions, peasant associations, and urban poor groups that were riding high on the waves of protest.

13 Ferdinand E. Marcos was elected democratically in 1965 and 1969. He declared martial law in 1972, hence technically the period of the dictatorship must be traced only to this period. However, for purposes of describing nonprofit sector development, one must recognize student, peasant and labor discontent from the mid-1960s, affected not only by Philippine developments but also by such international events as the Vietnam War, international student unrest, the Vatican Council, the rise of Liberation Theology, and even protest movements in the Eastern bloc.
Even the mainstream nonprofit groups were not spared from this frenzy. Seeking to remain relevant to the changing times, the Catholic Church formed its National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) in 1967 to signify its commitment to tackling broader social concerns. It inspired associations of business groups, including the Council for Economic Development, the Philippine Business Council, and the Association for Social Action, to transform themselves into the Philippine Business for Social Progress Foundation (PBSP) (Alegre 1996; Velmonte 1998). Velmonte characterized this expression of business philanthropy as “a pragmatic approach to the ‘pooling of corporate resources’ to show the rest of the Philippine society that Philippine business had a conscience and was prepared to make a contribution to help turn around a period of crisis” (Velmonte 1998: 47). The foundation’s members, some of the biggest business firms in the country, agreed to direct a portion of their annual profits to social development projects and to filling the gaps in basic services that the economic crisis and the government had created.

The Marcos dictatorship (1972-1986) brought the military’s iron hand on many activist and advocacy groups. Many groups, particularly the more radical ones, were forced to go underground or at least to change tactics. Others regarded Marcos’s promise of a “New Society” as presenting an opportunity to finally break the back of the traditional oligarchy and thus chose to cooperate with the regime. One popular tactic to avoid scrutiny by the security forces was to “institutionalize” development work within an academic setting or to join the churches’ expanding social action programs through NASSA (Catholic) and the Commission on Development Social Concerns (Protestant). These nurtured many volunteer organizations serving the poor and other “marginalized sectors” that first called themselves “social development agencies,” “cause-oriented organizations,” and later, simply NGOs. In time, and with the “New Society” unable to deliver on its promises, non-church-based NGOs began to sprout with such innocuous names as the Agency for Community Education Services (ACES), the Center for Community Services (CCS), the Organization for Training, Research, and Development (OTRADEV), the Service Bureau for Small Fisherfolk (SBSF), the Social Development Index (INDEX), the Binhi Agricultural Services Foundation (BINHI), and many others. The fields of social welfare and community development became fertile ground for these new organizations as well. What set them apart from the traditional welfare groups was what Alegre (1996: 15) calls their “politico-ideological color,” a reference to their thinly disguised opposition to the Marcos regime and an agenda that extended beyond traditional charity to empowering people.

In addition, NGO concerns broadened on many fronts. Labor education, preventive health care, alternative medicine, disaster relief, consumer advocacy, research, environment and gender, among others, emerged as “new” sectors of concern. Simultaneously, there was a

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14 The foremost women’s group was formed during the activist years and was called Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (Free Movement of New Women) or MAKIBAKA (literally, STRUGGLE). It led protests against beauty contests and other public displays of women and then joined the national democratic movement, arguing that women’s liberation was contingent on national liberation. This movement also established the Center for Women’s Resources and the Women’s Center for Women Trade Unionists. Some women, however, were dissatisfied at having to subsume gender politics under nationalist politics and formed unabashedly feminist groups, the Kilusan ng Kababaihang Pilipina (Movement of Filipino Women, FILIPINA) and the Katipunan ng Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan (Organization of Women for Freedom) or KALAYAAN (Freedom). In 1984, a broad coalition of women’s groups formed GABRIELA to spearhead the women’s anti-dictatorship campaign (Alegre, 1996:23).
geographic expansion as well with NGOs setting up shop from Northern Luzon to the Visayas and Mindanao. At the same time, with the growing international notoriety of Marcos’s regime and global developments such as the environmental and feminist movements, foreign sources of funds increased, much of which was given directly to the organizations or through the mediation of the churches rather than through government.

THE REDEMOCRATIZATION PERIOD (1986 to the present)

Marcos fled the country in February 1986 after millions of Filipinos massed at Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) to protect military mutineers against him and affirm that Corazon C. Aquino, and not he, had won the presidency in the Snap Elections held a few weeks earlier. Although many unaffiliated individuals and families joined the show of “People Power” at EDSA, at its core were members of nongovernmental organizations banded not only for political causes but also for religious and other purposes. Thus the EDSA revolution marked the culmination of many years of hard work by activists in both underground and legal groups to undermine the Marcos regime. It was in recognition of this role and in the realization that NGOs and POs represented an organized way for popular democratic participation that the new Philippine Constitution of 1987 included several provisions explicitly supporting the sector.15

Under the heavy-handed rule of the Marcoses, civil society had become effectively choked off. Public discussion and debate were limited to showcase venues such as the captive Parliament. Nongovernmental organizations were tolerated only so long as they seemed nonpolitical or if they supported Marcos’s “New Society.” The fall of that regime reestablished the democratic space that civil society needed to flourish. Despite right-wing threats of coups d’état, most groups were given free rein to pursue their respective agenda. Political prisoners were freed and the Communist Party was legalized. Faced with a looted economy, the new government encouraged NGOs to partner with it in the delivery of basic services and to sit in certain government advisory bodies and special commissions. NGO causes were embodied in several new pieces of legislation, namely, the Local Government Code, the Urban Development and Housing Act, the Women in Development and Nation Building Act, among others, some of which explicitly required consultation with and participation of these organizations. Government

15 These provisions were tested in 2001 when the citizenry forced the ouster of Joseph Ejercito Estrada from the presidency. The people ousted Estrada in a popular uprising that took place on January 16-20, 2001. This was the culmination of a round-the-clock nationwide protest rally that installed then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the constitutional successor, as the new President. Called EDSA II, or the second People Power Revolution, the spontaneous massing of thousands of people in the EDSA Shrine and other central places all over the country immediately after a crucial Senate vote was a victory of civil society. Citizens’ organizations first raised the whole issue of impeachment, submitted the charges to the House of Representatives (which adopted them in toto) and, simultaneous with a resignation movement, monitored the impeachment trial. When the Senate voted not to open an envelope submitted to the impeachment trial, the people took to the streets. (The people widely believed it contained vital evidence proving the then-President’s guilt in the impeachment charges of bribery, corruption, betrayal of the people’s trust and culpable violation of the Constitution.) All kinds of NPOs were in the rallies, each with their own streamer—old established organizations, business groups, new coalitions, new base-level organizations, and religious organizations never before involved in political movements. On the third day, heeding the voice of the people, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police withdrew support from Mr. Estrada, and more than half of his Cabinet resigned. Early the next day, the Supreme Court, meeting en banc, declared Mr. Estrada incapacitated to hold office, thus paving the way for the constitutional succession of Ms. Macapagal-Arroyo to the presidency.
line agencies opened NGO liaison offices. Government even allowed NGOs to negotiate directly with foreign governments to secure funding for projects as Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds came with the stipulations of NGO and People’s Organization (PO) participation in project implementation.

With all the official attention and resources being directed towards NGOs, many more organizations appeared. As they proliferated, NGOs were soon perceived to constitute another “racket,” that is, a way for unscrupulous persons to “make a quick buck.” It became so bad that developmental NGOs tried to distance themselves from those that were (or seemed to be) merely in it for the money (Alegre 1996: 27). It is in this context that NGOs launched the Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNC) in 1999. This marked the formal turnover of the authority to grant “donee institution” status from government to the private, nonprofit sector. Certifying an NGO as a donee institution means that all local contributions to that organization become eligible as deductions for income tax purposes. While the measure ostensibly seeks only to encourage local charitable giving, the PCNC has been using it to encourage legitimate NGOs to be more transparent in their operations and finances (in order to obtain certification) and to weed out dubious organizations that exist without a clear social or charitable purpose.

The new, more democratic regime offers opportunities for NGOs and other nonprofit groups to collaborate with government. Many welcome this policy even though they continue to be wary of the state and fear the loss of militancy and potency in an NGO-friendly government. However, they find they also need this partnership to allow their ideas to gain entry into policy bodies, which by law require the presence of non-state organizations.

One implication of working formally with government and gaining “legitimacy” is the need for NGOs and POs to become more formal institutions, register with the Securities and Exchange Commission as formal non-stock corporations, enlist for accreditation with the relevant government department, and “professionalize” their staff and methods of work. It remains to be seen how these relatively new formations of voluntary organizations would cope with the new demands of becoming “institutionalized” and legitimizing NGO work as a viable career choice in the face of reductions in traditional sources of funding support.

Major Types of Organizations

The nonprofit sector in the Philippines includes thousands of organizations and it increases tremendously year by year. Miralao and Bautista (1993) report that between 1980 and 1993, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registered a total of 58,927 non-stock corporations. SEC records as of October 1996 yield as many as 95,820 domestic and 154 foreign-registered non-stock corporations (Lerma and Los Baños 1998). This represents an increase of 38 percent in just three years, or over 12,000 new organizations added each year.

The figure of almost 96,000 is much higher than estimates earlier made by academics who are also active participants in the nonprofit sector, even giving allowance to our estimate of their annual increase. Brillantes (1992), for example, notes that in 1991, the number of NGOs ranged between 15,000 to 30,000 depending on the specialization and thrust of the organization
Aldaba (1993) estimates that the sector is comprised of as many as 20,000 organizations. Even Garde and Navarro’s report of 60,000 in 1995, itself based on the Commission’s records, is somewhat off the mark.

A quick explanation of the underestimate is that SEC includes all organizations that have registered since 1905, unless they report their dissolution, which very few of them have ever done. Meanwhile, persons working within the sector may be providing their “feel” of the number of active organizations.¹⁶

On the other hand, one must not be lulled into thinking that the SEC provides the upper limit on the number of organizations between the market and the state. For one, it does not include cooperatives since they register with the Cooperatives Development Authority. As of 1996, cooperatives are estimated to be around 35,000 (Lerma and Los Baños 1998). Like SEC, CDA includes all cooperatives registered with it from the list’s inception and does not weed out from its list those that have been dissolved. Unlike SEC, however, CDA includes in its inventory all cooperatives that have ever existed, since registration with CDA is a requirement of law.

This leads us to the second source of possible underestimation: only those organizations that identify themselves as non-stock and that put “Inc.” after their names register with SEC. Non-stock corporations are juridical persons separate from the personalities of their members. Thus, they are those that expect to raise funds outside their membership and their immediate circle of friends and relatives, to be exempt from taxation, and to exist beyond the period of activeness of their founders—in short, those that expect to become institutions. We can therefore expect that those organizations that are local in nature, such as people's organizations and socio-civic organizations centered around particular localities, especially those existing away from the Metropolitan Manila area, may not bother to register with the SEC.

Third, there are alternative avenues for recognition besides SEC. These include national government departments like the Department of Social Welfare and Development or the Department of Agriculture, and local government units. Thus, the lists of organizations transacting business with these agencies do not necessarily overlap with the SEC list and could add to the actual number of operating NPOs.

These considerations, as well as the historical background provided earlier, are useful in classifying the nonprofit sector. While several types of categorization would be possible, we will limit ourselves to three: a historical-ideological classification, a structural classification, and a functional classification.

¹⁶ SEC does not run after those that do not comply with its requirements regarding not only cessation of operations, but also annual reports of activities. Based on this project’s survey of organizations, it appears that even federations may not have up-to-date information regarding the current state of activeness of their member organizations.
HISTORICAL-IDEOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION

In the Philippines, the term NGO, unqualified, connotes an organization committed to change and the alleviation, if not abolition, of class, gender, ethnic, and other distinctions in society. Within the left, organizations have been divided into SOCDEMS and NATDEMS. The former are social democratic types, most of which are identified with the Catholic and Protestant churches. NATDEMS stands for organizations related to the National Democratic Front, for years the aboveground spokesperson for the Communist Party. They include organizations created by, serving as fronts for, or flirting with communism and socialism, which in the Philippines has split into several factions. However, to classify NPOs only into SOCDEMS and NATDEMS would leave perhaps the majority in an unspecified “other” category. Constantino-David’s classification of seven types actually lumps the SOCDEMS and NATDEMS into only one type, the so-called DJANGOS (development, justice and advocacy NGOs).  

Thus, an organization’s location in the ideological divide is the first factor to be considered by those active in the sector. As Constantino-David states, the “ideological and organizational frameworks define not only their (NGOs) alternative vision, but also their responses to issues” (in Ferrer 1997). Organizations are often directly or indirectly affected by “alternative ideological paradigms such as communism, national democracy, popular democracy, socialism, democratic socialism, social democracy, Islamic nationalism, and liberal democracy” (Ferrer 1997). The presence of differing views on the meaning and composition of civil society also attests to the importance of considering the ideological framework in categorizing the nonprofit sector.

This being accepted, there are nevertheless countless organizations that do not identify with any ideological group, and many others that can be classified with conservative causes. Many of the non-ideological organizations predate the existing organizations of the left, and include traditional welfare organizations and most established nonprofit institutions such as schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc. Those of the right include many groups identified with the military and some, but by no means all, organizations initiated by government, the business sector, and churches.

There is in fact a need to disentangle institutional origin from ideological position, and to remove the bias in favor of left-leaning organizations in identifying any organization as part of the nonprofit sector. We attempt to do that here by analyzing the relationship of the genesis of organizations and their ideological orientation and thus to show that institutional initiative may produce NPOs at all points of the political spectrum. Institutional origins include the three domains of society—state, market, and civil society. From civil society, for example, one can identify the churches, the movements of the left and the right, and the more neutral, non-ideological civic institutions.

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17 The other types in her list are attempts to unbundle the non-ideological groups, such as TANGOs (traditional NGOs), FUNDANGO (funding agency NGOs), MUNGOs (mutant NGOs that, according to the author, mutated the original spirit of NGO and which include GRINGOs [government run/initiated NGOs], BONGOs [business organized NGOs], and COME NGOs [NGOs that exist purely to capture funding]) (Constantino-David 1997). However, the classificatory criteria to distinguish them from each other are not clear.
The role of government in the initiation of nonprofit organizations is a controversial issue in the Philippines. NGOs have been classified as “authentic” and “auxiliary,” the latter being formed by government, the former being created by persons or bodies other than government (Cariño 1995). Legaspi (1990) and Gaffud (1995) have shown that some “auxiliaries” have transcended their origin as government-instituted bodies and have managed to perform effectively as delivery systems or even as agents of change. On the other hand, “authentic” NGOs have not necessarily performed better. Thus there is a need to move away from pejorative labels such as GRINGOs (Government-Run/Initiated NGOs).

Even business-initiated organizations would not necessarily be located on the right with such groups as the Makati Business Club. The Philippine Business for Social Progress and many corporate foundations have common cause with the SOCDEMS. Others would fall in with the neutrals, including those involved in disaster management and the promotion of information technology and other innovations.

Church organizations also fall into three groups depending on their historical and ideological orientation. We can distinguish the traditional welfare associations of the Roman Catholic Church (such as orphanages, different Sodalities, the Knights of Columbus, the University of Santo Tomas, and the San Juan de Dios Hospital) from those proceeding from a liberation theology or social democratic orientation (such as the Federation of Free Farmers) and from SALIGAN and those espousing conservative causes. Associations of the Protestant churches, the Iglesia ni Kristo, and even the Muslims can have similar distinctions within the general rubric of their religious affiliations.

The classification we have identified combining institutional origin and ideological orientation includes the following categories:

1. Non-ideological groups including traditional welfare organizations, whether initiated by the church or not, nongovernmental schools, hospitals, orphanages and other institutions and most socio-civic organizations;
2. Organizations identified with or leaning to the left, including all those identified as DJANGOS, cause-oriented organizations, and the so-called SOCDEMS/NATDEMS; and
3. Organizations identified with or leaning to the right, including those identified with the military, and with conservative church, business and government positions.

**STRUCTURAL CLASSIFICATION**

Nonprofit organizations are also distinguished by the way they are organized. They range from bureaucracies to associations. Bureaucracies are large formal organizations with a voluntary board and a paid staff, not necessarily augmented by volunteers. In the nonprofit sector, this category subsumes a number of organizations, such as traditional welfare organizations like the Philippine National Red Cross, nonprofit schools, corporate foundations, and cooperatives. On the other side are associations run voluntarily by the members themselves. Within these organizational forms we can discern two other distinguishing factors: their geographical coverage and their relationship to the people served. Geographical coverage in turn
identifies organizations as federations or peak associations (tertiary organizations in the nomenclature of cooperatives), at the provincial or even national level; secondary organizations which are organizations of local organizations under a bigger federation; and primary organizations, composed of people or the smallest organizations as members. The second distinction is how the organization relates to the people served. People’s organizations (POs) are associations of the people themselves, while NGOs are viewed as only intermediary organizations. This factor is applied only to membership organizations, whether a bureaucracy or not, but is not used to classify traditional nonprofit institutions, such as schools and hospitals.

Putting these factors together produces the following categories:

1. Bureaucracy
   a. Primary, including traditional nonprofit institutions (schools, hospitals, etc.), corporate foundations, large traditional welfare organizations.

2. Associations
   a. Primary and direct, such as people’s organizations and primary-level cooperatives;
   b. Primary and intermediary, such as many NGOs;
   c. Secondary, including associations of POs, NGOs, cooperatives, foundations, bureaucracies, and other associations;
   d. Tertiary or federations of secondary associations.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

From the beginning, the government has used sectoral concerns as a means of classifying NPOs, beginning with the list provided by the Corporation Code for non-stock corporations in 1905. The Bureau of Internal Revenue uses a similar list in coming up with those organizations that may be exempt from taxation. The government planning agency, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), uses the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) in reporting the activities of for-profit as well as nonprofit organizations. However, its Directory categorizes NGOs into fourteen (14) sectoral divisions. These are: Agriculture and Agrarian Reform; Education, Culture and Manpower Development; Environmental Concerns; Health, Nutrition and Family Planning; Labor and Employment; Labor Unions; Local Government and Community Development; Multi-Sectoral; Professional Associations; Religious Associations; Science and Technology; Social/Civic Clubs; Social Welfare; and Trade and Industry. This is similar to the International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations (ICNPO) used by the Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project in using functional categories. However, despite obvious overlaps, the following may be noted:

1. The NEDA sectoral scheme appears to be superior to the ICNPO for use in the Philippines because it highlights activities more relevant to the country. This refers to the inclusion of agriculture and agrarian reform, local government and community development, and multi-sectoral organizations as separate categories. In the ICNPO,
most of these are lumped into “development and housing” where one is forced to put the majority of the most important NGOs.

2. “Multi-sectoral” organizations constitute an important category in the Philippines as more and more organizations find that services are more effective and better appreciated if provided in an integrated and holistic manner. For this reason, many NGOs that started as, say, health organizations later develop into ones offering a more comprehensive set of services. Many of their functions cross the sectoral lines recognized by the ICNPO.

3. However, the NEDA list mixes function (e.g., social welfare) with the institutional origin and source of membership (e.g. labor unions, religious associations), making the categories not mutually exclusive.

4. Since NEDA’s list takes into account the major government departments, it does not recognize advocacy as an important preoccupation of NPOs. Legal advocacy and politics and philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion, which are separate categories in the ICNPO, are placed in the catch-all “not elsewhere classified” category in NEDA.

To make the functional classification useful in the Philippine context, there is a need for a new classification that puts the major advantages of the NEDA and ICNPO classifications together. That would be an improvement over the currently used SIC categories for nonprofits.

**The Nonprofit Sector and Philippine Society**

As has been seen, the growth of state and society and the development of the nonprofit sector have been inextricably linked in the Philippines. From indigenous small communities that valued the other almost as well as oneself, mechanisms of social cooperation and assistance can easily take root. Spain took advantage of their fertile, unsullied soil by implanting its institutions, clothing a fledgling nonprofit sector it created with the promise and punishments of religious fervor. The Americans built upon this structure by transplanting their own nonprofit institutions, separating them—as well as the state—from the authority of the church and providing the legal framework for philanthropy and nonprofit work that survives to the present.

Three themes may be discerned from this development: the enabling, even dictating power of the colonial and post-colonial states; the creative use of associations as a weapon of the weak; and the strategic role of the Church in shaping the contours of the Philippine nonprofit sector.

The colonial powers used the primarily charitable, welfare, medical, and educational institutions among their instruments to consolidate their respective rules. With their consent and sometimes with their direct hand, organizations were established that healed and developed human resources, provided succor in times of distress, and opened opportunities for improving economic and social stations. Following the more limited clientele of the Spanish era, the period under the United States, and later, Filipino administrations, broadened place and purpose to make not only aid-receiving but also membership more accessible to all. The performance of the
sector entrenched these institutions in Philippine soil and gave birth to countless other organizations with the same mission and purpose.

Yet the nonprofit sector is not only a child of the establishment. The peoples of these islands, in turn, used the same forms of association foisted upon them by their colonial masters for their own political purposes. They used them first as a means of helping each other in the face of the hardships imposed by colonial rule. Then they became a means of establishing the idea of a common identity and the possibility of a shared destiny. From the time of Hermano Pule in the 1800s, they were mechanisms for gathering ideas and allies, first, for salvation from the slavery of colonial rule, and then for associational freedom and national self-determination, and finally, for forging common action for broad and even radical social changes. It may thus be said that the Filipinos, in 450 years of colonial rule and 50 years of the ups and downs of independence, were creating and using various forms of nonprofit organizations as weapons to change objectionable conditions and take strides towards human liberation. Thus, while the state has preferred that the sector take a non-ideological or conservative stance since the 16th century, its more ardent admirers and activists regard it as primarily a tool of the weak, a means to struggle against the hegemony of the establishment. This may also explain the preference in the country for the terms “nongovernmental organization” and “civil society” over the “nonprofit sector,” for the main work of the sector is oriented to the workings of the state rather than to business or the exemption from taxes. This orientation has a wide compass and includes an organization’s opposition to, impact on, or alliance with the state.

The contributions of the Roman Catholic Church in the development of the nonprofit sector also need to be acknowledged. It had played a seminal role in introducing and developing the organizational form, albeit embraced by people for different purposes. Like the state, it has been the point of orientation of many associations, some as a conscious arm of its evangelistic and mission activities, others as an indirect outgrowth of its teachings, and still others in clear opposition to it (for instance, those identified with the Communist left).

Beyond its effect on organizational processes and purposes, the Catholic religion has so permeated Filipino culture that many organizers acknowledge Christian values and ideals as their inspiration in the formation and conduct of many organizations and the recruitment of their volunteers. Besides, it is routine to start off many activities with a prayer even though the rest of the program may be completely secular. Perhaps the remarkable quality is that most organizations also practice tolerance of all religions so that in Muslim areas, the Islamic blessing is either added to or substituted for the Christian invocation. The religiosity of the Filipino has been recognized as a major national trait (Shahani 1987). This is evidenced in focus group discussions on volunteering where many participants included such religious acts as praying for someone or attending and assisting in wakes as acts that they consider to be examples of volunteering.
Conclusion

The main actors in the themes set out above—the state, the Church and the people—singly and together decide what may or may not be considered part of the sector.

The role of the state in defining the nonprofit sector is clear enough. Throughout the colonial period and through the Marcos years, the state decreed certain organizations as illegal, forcing them to go underground and outside the realm of civil society. These included, at one time or another, millenarian movements, alternative churches, political parties advocating independence, labor unions assumed to be Communist fronts, medical groups serving in rebel-infested areas, and women’s associations opposed to the regime. It is only since 1986 that there were no barriers to the acceptance of any organization into this public space. With that fresh whiff of freedom, however, legislative bills for the registration and accreditation of NPOs emanated from their own leaders and activists. None has passed despite the passage of over a decade.¹⁸ This fact is seen in the Philippines as a lack of state interest in the development of the sector. In other countries, however, government moves to require registration would have been regarded as an ominous design by the state to control the sector. Thus, this attitude of openness to the state, more than anything else may manifest the current overall positive relationship between the nonprofits and the state.

The Catholic Church, too, has not only contributed to the growth of the sector but also to deciding what should be part of it. In alliance with the Spanish state, it delegitimized associations organized outside it. In the post-independence period, it spread its formidable power to organize associations with a “preferential option for the poor” (a favorite phrase), in the process unwittingly encouraging other churches and secular groups to create similar groups. It continues to have an unrivaled network of institutions and organizations in all areas of endeavor, including some of the best and best known schools, hospitals, media agencies, and voluntary organizations in the country.

In addition to these institutions, the other player that has contributed to defining the sector is the Filipino people. Although not known as joiners by nature, their notion of kapwa facilitates binding an individual to the collective and provides a push to forming organizations when sufficiently abused, aggrieved or challenged to be recognized. From both the approved and illegal cofradías of the Spanish times to the Crusade against Violence (started by families of murder victims), the Association of Major Religious Superiors (nuns who struggled for human rights during the Marcos era), the Caucus of Development Nongovernmental Organizations (CODE-NGO, the largest NGO network in the country), the Everlasting Club (a village association of married couples), and the Association of Bar Flunkers of the Philippines (a self-explanatory category), Filipinos have formed clubs of all sorts to give voice to their longings or to represent those bereft of a voice.

Some of these organizations are identifiably middle and upper class. Garden clubs, chambers of commerce, and advocates of reform draw from these strata of society. Also in this category are alumni associations of a given year that register with the SEC just so they can

¹⁸ However, several laws have been enacted mandating consultation with organizations and people’s representatives or their participation and membership in standing committees of local governments units and national departments.
collect enough funds to make their presence felt in the tenth or 25th anniversary of their graduation from a particular university. Many intermediary NGOs also have middle and upper class origins; this is the basis for the oft-stated comment that the EDSA Revolution that ousted Ferdinand Marcos was a middle-class affair.

However, as animators and fund-givers dig deeper into the countryside, they have helped to organize peasants and fisherfolk who in turn manage to keep their community or livelihood organizations thriving. Associations of jeepney drivers are ubiquitous throughout vast Metro Manila, acting as a semi-cooperative to protect their transport routes, protest oil price increases, petition for the increase of their rates, strengthen their ranks against abusive police officers, and police their own ranks. They form federations and split them in response to ideological conflicts, change of leaders and a myriad of other reasons, but the primary association persists or is reformed, again and again. Even the smallest of them can muster the five criteria of the structural-operational definition, even though they may be led by underschooled and low-income drivers.

In addition to these main three actors, two major factors have also congealed to shape the nonprofit sector: colonialism and the global influence on the Philippines and the critical spirit underlying much of the nonprofit sector’s activities.

Colonialism gave birth to the nonprofit sector in the Philippines; opposition to it gave birth to peasant movements and secret societies. The succeeding American rule built upon the base of largely Catholic institutions and added new organizations, both religious and secular. It also contributed new forms: the tax-exempt foundations, the branches of American societies, and the layers of organizations from base to peak. Even in the early American period, the nonprofit sector as we know it today was pretty much set. It remained only for the later periods to develop new content in keeping with the needs of the times, moving from the traditional welfare, health, and education causes to policy advocacy. Some of these developments were native to the Philippines, such as the suffragette movement of the 1930s and the development organizations born after World War II, although one can easily see international liberal or communist influence in one sector’s flowering. Other emerging forms may respond to local situations but are clearly parts of global mass organizing, such as gay liberation and environmental organizations. The nonprofit sector landscape is largely patterned after the Western model and would not appear alien to observers from Spain and the United States.

However, another part of that landscape, the non-institutionalized portion, is largely fluid by nature. It can trace its lineage to popular movements and the organizations they put forth—indigenous in origin, often secretive by nature, rising and falling with the ebb and flow of social and historical necessity. These movements imbue the nongovernmental, nonprofit sector with a persistent critical spirit that has proven decisive at significant junctures of not just the nonprofit sector’s history, but of the nation’s. It is this quality that makes people insist that change and causes should be among the qualities defining the nonprofit sector despite the undeniable presence of a host of organizations of the status quo within it.
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Philippine Constitution, 1987, Article II, Section 23.


Philippine Corporation Law of 1906


APPENDIX A:
Defining/Basic Characteristics of the Term Nongovernmental Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed, Garilao and Luz, (ed), 1991.</td>
<td>Voluntary (but hires motivated and professional staff); not profit-oriented (but should not operate at a loss)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldaba, 1993.</td>
<td>Anything outside the government; excluding the profit or business sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brillantes and Palabrica, 1991.</td>
<td>Privately funded; nonprofit; developmental; engaged primarily in promoting, empowering and providing members with legal means to improve their socioeconomic and political status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODE-NGO</td>
<td>Are social development agencies; private; nonstock; nonprofit; voluntary; anything that is not part of government or business; are intermediate agencies; provide a wide range of services for POs; tend to operate with full-time staff; development NGOs: promote general welfare and development usually in partnership with people's organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronel-Ferrrer, ed., 1997.</td>
<td>Private; nonprofit; development-oriented; provide services to people outside the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAR Basic Survival Guide</td>
<td>Nonprofit; nonstock; registered; aims for political, economic, and socio-cultural development; for marginalized sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Guzman and Reforma in Ocampo and Alfonso, eds., 1991.</td>
<td>Privately owned; nonprofit; developmental; promotes empowerment; provides members with legal means to improve social, economic, and political status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzales in Alegre, 1996.</td>
<td>Private; nonprofit; voluntary established for socio-economic, socio-political, and cultural purposes; includes cooperatives; excludes civic, religious, and business groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legaspi and Cuaresma in Padilla, 1992.</td>
<td>Private associations, organizations or foundations; does development work; may be registered or informal; voluntary; autonomous or local-government-initiated; nonprofit; focuses on and serves marginal groups; flexible leadership structure; workers and staff are committed and motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liamzon and Salinas, 1989.</td>
<td>Organizations in the private sector; full-time; formal; developmental; intermediary or support groups; composed mainly of professionals; legal; registered; service, people and process-oriented; relatively small in size; personnel are motivated and committed; for marginal groups; dependent on external funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEDA Board Resolution No. 2, Series of 1989</td>
<td>Private; nonprofit; voluntary; for socio-economic development; established primarily for service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE</td>
<td>CHARACTERISTICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEDA Sept. 1988 Workshop</td>
<td>Private; nonprofit; voluntary; developmental; established for: civic service, religious, charitable and/or social welfare; relatively small; with flexible structures; services focused on marginalized groups; undertaking a wide spectrum of activities; having farmers, women, tribal minorities, squatters, youth, and others as clientele; generally people-oriented; formally registered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate Bill No. 786</td>
<td>Private; nonprofit and/or non-stock; registered with the SEC; engaged in long-term activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizon and Reyes, 1989.</td>
<td>Private; nonprofit; with development activities; for disadvantaged sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizon, 1989.</td>
<td>Are social development agencies; private; voluntary; alternative professional support-or-cause-oriented groups; nonprofit; legal; developmental; established for socioeconomic services, civic, religious, charitable, and/or social welfare purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO Resolution No. 288, Feb. 1950</td>
<td>Not established by inter-governmental agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wong, 1990.</td>
<td>Social development agencies; private; nonprofit; voluntary; established primarily for socioeconomic development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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