Project Title: Examination of the Philosophy of Cooperative Action as Applied to the Philippines Community Forestry

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Project Abstract:

This paper looks into the philosophical imperatives of collective action as applied to communal forestry in the Philippines. As a product of a case study confirming the assessment of general reviews of the failure of communal forestry program in the Philippines, this article found the need to create a livelihood that would encourage cooperation—a livelihood that the community should do together to develop a cooperative lifestyle among the members. The author sees this type of livelihood as a solution to the massive deforestation and poverty in upland forest communities. An example of this livelihood is that generated from the rice terraces of Northern Philippines. Modern examples are economic pursuits of present-day cooperatives but the key to success of these pursuits in forest management are restraints to free riding activities. These restraints should be developed not only through moral suasion and regulation but through the nature of the activities themselves which makes cooperation inevitable. The philosophical underpinning of the problem is the motive of sociability in economic collective action and the principle behind the effort to sustain it. Hence the study asks the philosophical questions “Is sociability innate human character or merely developed and conditioned by economic and self-interested imperatives, in particular the nature of the economic activities?” “If sociability is conditioned by the nature of economic activities, should these economic activities be encouraged by institutionalizing programs to develop them?” “Or should those communities with a highly-entrenched sociability culture be the only ones to be awarded the forest land stewardships and corresponding development assistance?”

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