

Chapter 82

The Narrative Construction of Coffee for Peace: An Intertextual Analysis of a Social Enterprise

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ABSTRACT

This article shows the narrative construction of a social enterprise, Coffee for Peace, against the backdrop of historical conflict, cultural differences, and poverty in Philippine conflict areas. The article hinges on the principle of Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO), which holds that organizations are communicatively constituted. Within the CCO framework, narrative is employed as a construction device that determines how an organization is constituted because of the ability of narrative to organize events and experience from multiple settings. As org events happen in different interactional contexts, an intertextual analysis was used in making sense of narrative fragments from 45 articles about Coffee for Peace. The coding has shown six SE concepts that communicatively constructed Coffee for Peace, namely innovation, inclusive development, sustainability, training and mentorship, social value creation, and social impact. The article concludes that the communicative events and practices of Coffee for Peace constructed its identity as a social enterprise.

INTRODUCTION

Defined as any organization, cooperative, small or medium enterprise that seeks innovative solution to a social problem through business, a social enterprise is an alternative strategy to address poverty (Philippine Social Enterprise Network [PHILSEN], 2017). The call for creative ways of engagement as intervention in conflict areas (Mendoza and Taylor, 2009) and inclusive programs for the poor that encourage community participation (Tolentino, n.d.) has made the Social Enterprise (SE) model attractive to government and funding agencies. Dacanay (2012) advocated for SE as a poverty alleviation tool through engagements with the poor as stakeholders. In the Philippines, the SE model has been adopted by small and medium enterprises and cooperatives for its innovative and sustainable components (Yao,

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2010; Constantino, 2012; Gordoncillo, 2012; and Banzon and Mojica, 2012). Recently, the SE model has been used as a post-disaster recovery strategy in regions badly affected by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 (Dacuyan, 2021).

Not only has the SE model been applied for poverty reduction programs and post-disaster recovery, but also for peacebuilding intervention in Philippine conflict areas. For example, Coffee for Peace, an SE based in Davao City, in the Southeastern part of the country, has employed the SE model in building peace in communities that have the narrative of conflict. Through its transformative approach, the organization teaches farmers the technology of coffee and trains them in how to manage conflict. Despite their past, being caught up in conflict with the law, these farmers are given the opportunity to have a stable source of livelihood and a fresh start in life.

Back in 2006, while the founders of Coffee for Peace were mediating a conflict between a migrant and a Muslim over a land dispute, they served coffee and then a dialogue proceeded (Coffee for Peace, 2021). In their peacebuilding work in Maguindanao, Basilan, and Sulu, Coffee for Peace brings Muslims and Christians to a dialogue over cups of coffee (Coffee for Peace, 2022). Since then, the organization has used coffee as a symbol for peace.

An intertextual analysis is crucial in linking the narrative fragments that built up the name “Coffee for Peace”. This paper shows how Coffee for Peace is narratively constructed against the backdrop of historical conflict, cultural differences and poverty in Philippine conflict areas in Mindanao. The paper hinges on the principle of Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO) which holds that organizations are communicatively constituted. Within the CCO framework, narrative is employed as a construction device in determining how an organization is constituted because of the ability of narrative to organize events and experience spanning across multiple settings. The paper demonstrates that the narrative of Coffee for Peace endures because its foundation is built on solid core values of peace and reconciliation. Its founding leader, the main actor, has confronted conflicts and cultural differences from the Peace Reconciliation Principles with high sensitivity and historical knowledge about the root cause of conflict. Lastly, Coffee for Peace has maintained the key SE concepts that solidify their identity as a social enterprise.

Employing a communication perspective, the paper offers another way of evaluating success, sustainability, or failure of a business organization. By exhibiting the communicative construction of Coffee for Peace via language or narrative device, the paper promotes an interdisciplinary research that brings out the interconnectedness of communication, business management, development and agribusiness organizing.

BACKGROUND

In the Philippines, earlier studies on SE’s processes are mostly viewed from the Management perspective (Yao, 2010; Constantino, 2012; Gordoncillo, 2012; and Banzon and Mojica, 2012). These studies are usually framed from functionalist perspective which adheres to the principles of efficiency and sustainability. Functionalist studies may tend to be isomorphic (DiMaggio, 1988), which could no longer bring any further the studies on institution. This view may be limiting if applied to the study of entrepreneurship which has to be situated in a context that produces it. The limitations encountered in capturing the increasing complexity of organizing has prompted new ways of viewing organization. A shift from the

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