

Working Class Studies: Identifying and Defining the Working Class

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Who belongs to the working class?

Some basic issues

- How to identify the working class
- How to define the working class
- What are the approaches (if any)

- Do we look at the labor market?
- Yes, but not exclusively. Avoid reductionism.

Class as a question in economics (Zweig 2005)

- Economics has focused “on the market as the proper subject matter ... coupled with the reduction of “the market” to a mechanism for the organization and regulation of production and consumption in the presence of scarcity ... the dominance of formal mathematical modeling as the method for exploring individual and business behavior in market activity, and the effects of those activities on market outcomes.”

Class as a question in economics (Zweig 2005)

- “Reducing the field of economics by separating the market as a mechanism from the economy as a set of social relations has weakened the connections between economics and the other social sciences ... This reductionism has also, by definition, masked the power relations that shape the rules by which markets operate and drive market outcomes ... Class becomes relevant when we reassert the traditional scope of economics as the study of social processes that govern production, exchange, and distribution.”

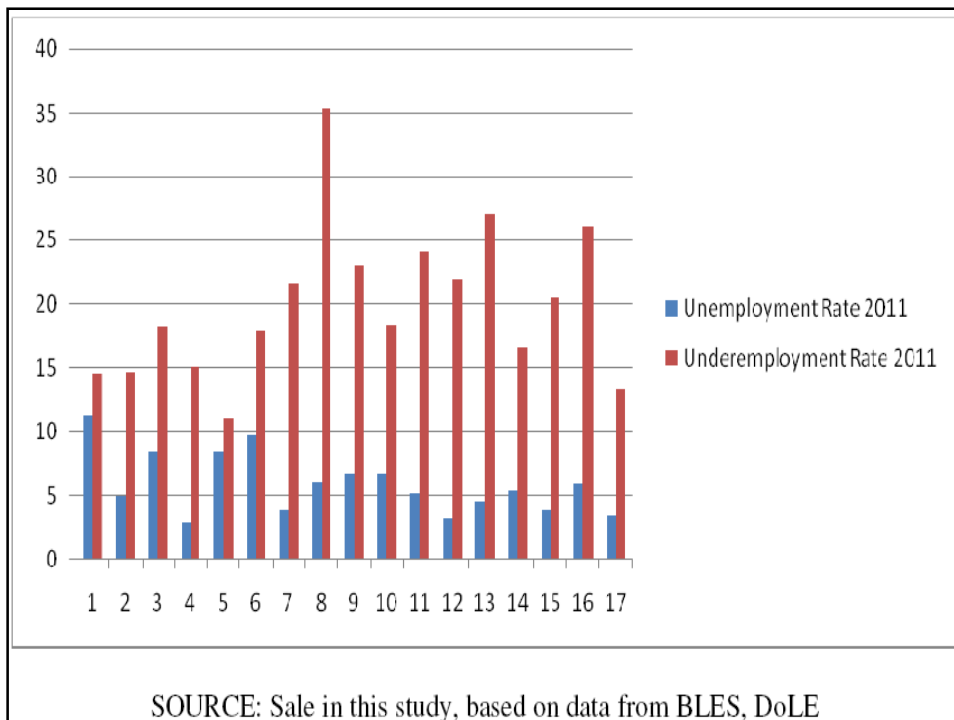
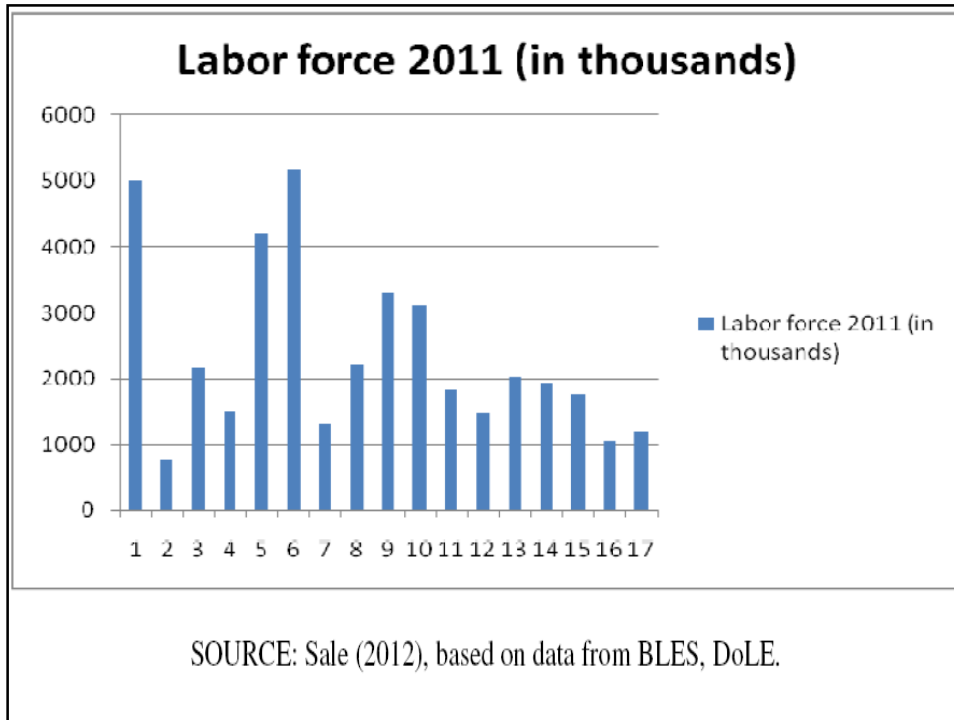
- In the field of labor and industrial relations, its . . .
labor market governance.

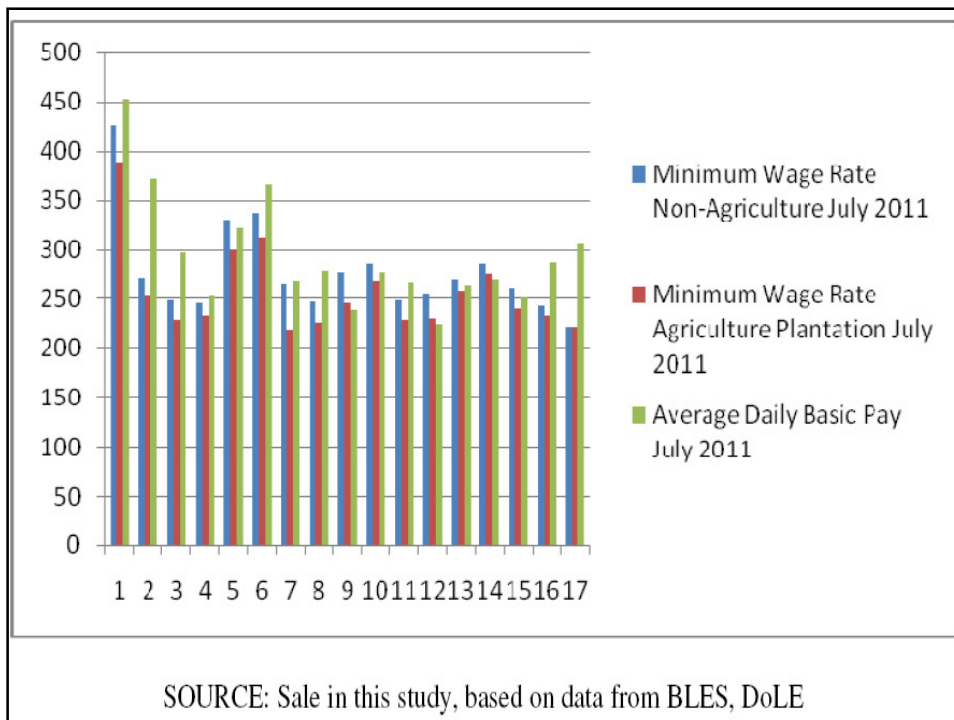
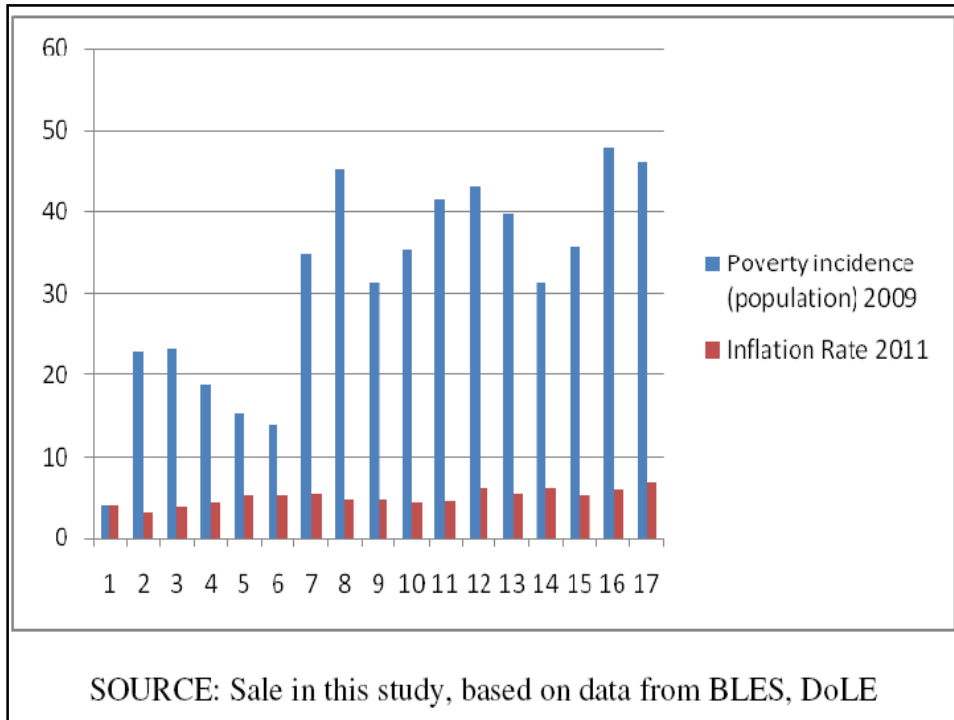
Labor market governance (LMG) – institutions, authority structures, means of collaboration, policies, norms, laws, regulations, machinery and processes that influence the demand for and supply of labor, encompassing labor regulation, industrial relations and labor administration; collective bargaining and labor dispute prevention and settlement are elements. (International Labor Organization 2006, 2008)

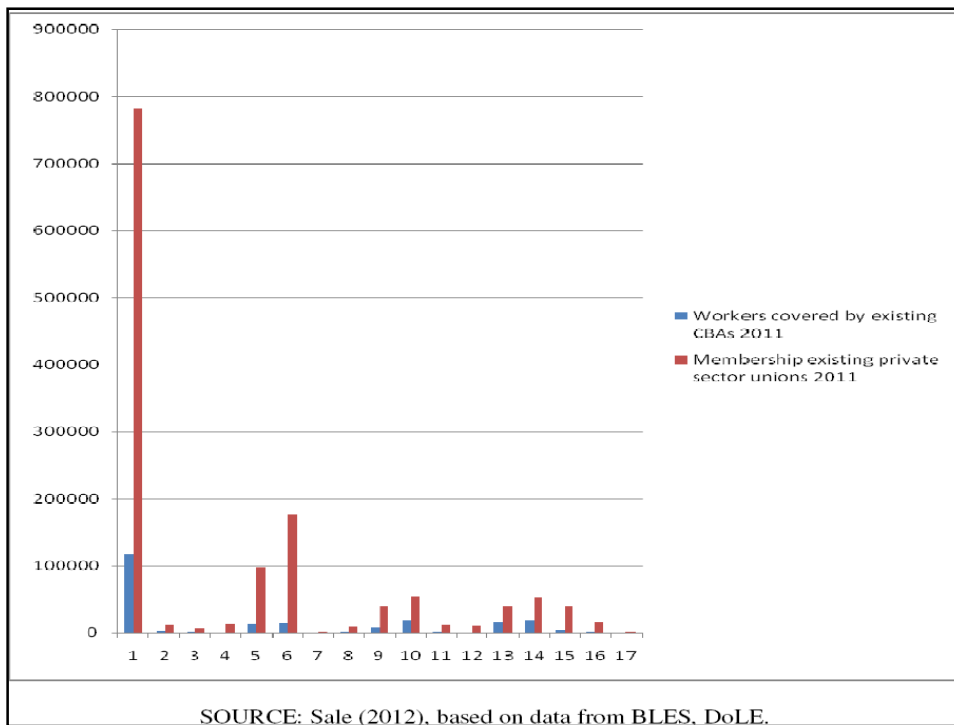
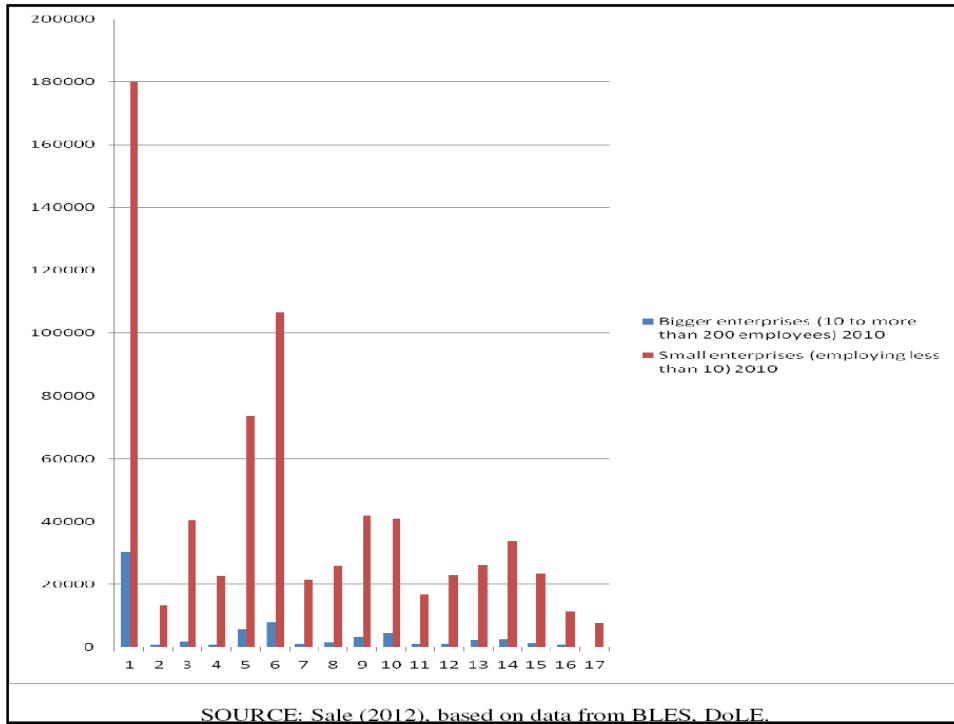
Some LMG indicators

In the next 7 slides, values in the x-axis represent the 17 regions of the Philippines –

- 1 – National Capital Region
- 2 – Cordillera Administrative Region
- 3 – Ilocos Region
- 4 – Cagayan Valley
- 5 – Central Luzon
- 6 – CALABARZON
- 7 – MIMAROPA
- 8 – Bicol Region
- 9 – Western Visayas
- 10 – Central Visayas
- 11 – Eastern Visayas
- 12 – Zamboanga Peninsula
- 13 – Northern Mindanao
- 14 – Davao Region
- 15 – SOCCSKSARGEN
- 16 – Caraga
- 17 – Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao







Some approaches

According to Zweig (2005) –

- Working class, in relation to other classes

According to Metzgar (2005), class as defined by –

- Occupation
- Education
- Income
- Level of comfort
- Self-identification
- Cultural difference

Working class

- “... men and women, skilled and unskilled, blue-, white-, pink-collar, in all industries and from all nationalities and races; people who have little control over the pace and content of their work, who are no one’s boss, who answer to the discipline and needs of their employers on the job. They form a class because they share a relationship with another class, the capitalist class ...” (Zweig 2005)

Capitalist class

- “... those who exercise power by controlling the operations of the businesses that employ the working class. In the United States the working class is 62 percent of the labor force; the capitalists are 2 percent.” (Zweig 2005)
- “... is defined by its ownership and control of giant profit -making enterprises...” (Metzgar 2005)

Middle class

- “... connotes some sense of lifestyle reflected in stable employment and the ability to consume an array of goods and services beyond the bare minimum for survival, albeit through ever-increasing consumer debt ... are those professionals, supervisors, and small - business owners whose positions of economic authority are between those of the working class and the capitalists, and who have mixed and contradictory experiences - sometimes akin to workers, sometimes reminiscent of capitalists. In the United States the middle class constitutes 36 percent of the labor force.” (Zweig 2005)

BLES data, RP (Source: BLES) –

TABLE 6 - Employed Persons by Major Occupation Group, Philippines: 2010 - October 2012
(In Thousands)

MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP	2010	2011					2012 ^p				
		Ave	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Ave	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
ALL OCCUPATIONS	36,035	37,192	36,293	36,820	37,106	38,550	37,622	37,394	37,841	37,584	37,668
Officials of Government and Special - Interest											
Organizations, Corporate Executives, Managers, Managing Proprietors and Supervisors	4,979	5,217	5,114	5,106	5,281	5,366	5,188	5,244	5,144	5,201	5,161
Professionals	1,686	1,732	1,674	1,752	1,737	1,765	1,837	1,848	1,821	1,817	1,862
Technicians and Associate Professionals	954	985	955	981	988	1,016	1,102	1,125	1,091	1,125	1,068
Clerks	2,003	2,109	2,051	2,127	2,154	2,105	2,099	2,133	2,085	2,056	2,122
Service Workers and Shop and Market											
Sales Workers	3,838	4,141	4,068	3,998	4,019	4,479	4,198	4,124	4,133	4,353	4,180
Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen	5,747	5,715	5,795	5,633	5,631	5,800	5,461	5,754	5,544	5,136	5,409
Trades and Related Workers	2,792	2,769	2,705	2,793	2,805	2,775	2,828	2,690	2,904	2,935	2,781
Plant and Machine Operators & Assemblers	2,259	2,245	2,244	2,212	2,233	2,291	2,347	2,310	2,403	2,351	2,324
Laborers and Unskilled Workers	11,622	12,118	11,514	12,057	12,110	12,790	12,407	11,988	12,562	12,476	12,603
Special Occupations	156	161	173	161	147	164	156	178	154	135	158

Note: Details may not add up to totals due to rounding.

^p Preliminary.

Source of basic data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey.

By occupation

- Middle class about 22% in 2012
- Working class about 78% in 2012

BLES data, RP (Source: BLES) –

TABLE 9 - Employed Persons by Sex, Age Group and Highest Grade Completed, Philippines: 2010 - October 2012

(In Thousands)

INDICATOR	2010	2011					2012 ^P				
		Ave	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Ave	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
BOTH SEXES	36,035	37,192	36,293	36,820	37,106	38,550	37,622	37,394	37,841	37,584	37,668
Men	21,921	22,573	22,193	22,383	22,475	23,241	22,849	22,695	23,037	22,703	22,962
Women	14,114	14,619	14,100	14,436	14,631	15,309	14,773	14,699	14,804	14,882	14,706
ALL AGE GROUPS	36,035	37,192	36,293	36,820	37,106	38,550	37,622	37,394	37,841	37,584	37,668
15 - 24 Years	6,816	7,258	6,883	7,201	6,890	8,057	7,316	7,184	7,611	7,105	7,364
25 - 34 Years	9,526	9,771	9,605	9,690	9,863	9,926	9,934	9,892	9,956	9,969	9,919
35 - 44 Years	8,299	8,484	8,329	8,436	8,561	8,609	8,603	8,581	8,573	8,632	8,625
45 - 54 Years	6,408	6,574	6,435	6,523	6,637	6,700	6,656	6,616	6,637	6,706	6,665
55 - 64 Years	3,479	3,599	3,533	3,523	3,627	3,713	3,607	3,600	3,581	3,644	3,601
65 Years & Over	1,506	1,506	1,506	1,446	1,526	1,544	1,506	1,521	1,480	1,528	1,493
Age Not Reported	*	1	1	-	1	1	*	*	1	-	-
TOTAL	36,035	37,192	36,293	36,820	37,106	38,550	37,622	37,394	37,841	37,584	37,668
No Grade Completed	634	616	593	603	644	623	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Elementary	10,989	11,177	11,050	11,097	11,207	11,353	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Undergraduate	5,502	5,617	5,528	5,596	5,592	5,753	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Graduate	5,487	5,559	5,522	5,501	5,614	5,600	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
High School	14,181	14,818	14,470	14,443	14,692	15,666	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Undergraduate	4,797	5,030	4,860	4,922	4,877	5,462	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Graduate	9,384	9,788	9,611	9,521	9,816	10,204	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
College	10,231	10,582	10,179	10,677	10,564	10,908	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Undergraduate	4,873	5,020	4,774	5,122	4,920	5,263	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Graduate and Higher	5,358	5,562	5,405	5,555	5,644	5,645	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Note: Details may not add up to totals due to rounding.

* Less than 500.

^P Preliminary.

NA Not available.

Source of basic data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey, Public Use Files.

By education

- Middle class (bachelor's or more) – about 28% in 2011
- Working class (less than bachelor's) – about 72% in 2011

BLES data, RP (Source: BLES) –

TABLE 21 - Average Daily Basic Pay of Wage and Salary Workers by Major Occupation Group, Philippines: 2009 - October 2011
(In Pesos)

MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP	2009	2010					2011				
		Ave	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Ave	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
ALL OCCUPATIONS	290.73	306.53	303.80	301.00	308.26	312.98	317.44	309.37	319.54	320.59	319.88
Officials of Government and Special - Interest Organizations, Corporate Executives, Managers, Managing Proprietors and Supervisors	687.74	724.21	809.86	667.22	696.77	720.92	748.68	715.55	738.03	787.87	753.66
Professionals	589.02	632.35	640.22	612.31	618.55	658.72	678.81	655.60	668.68	697.40	692.50
Technicians and Associate Professionals	434.19	444.81	451.04	430.58	435.44	460.61	461.30	437.88	465.91	481.26	458.14
Clerks	370.43	394.96	402.15	376.69	394.63	406.13	411.47	402.22	411.87	415.53	415.95
Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers	250.56	261.50	258.75	260.05	265.23	262.04	267.41	258.87	272.99	267.83	270.03
Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen	175.52	184.17	174.35	178.29	202.85	179.85	195.81	165.34	209.06	194.98	202.58
Trades and Related Workers	272.70	281.47	277.72	276.83	287.73	283.71	291.51	287.77	288.59	293.22	296.27
Plant and Machine Operators & Assemblers	296.76	310.17	309.20	304.07	314.03	313.28	321.58	313.57	326.05	319.71	326.52
Laborers and Unskilled Workers	160.75	169.73	166.65	169.85	170.28	172.44	176.44	171.11	175.27	178.68	180.18
Special Occupations	525.32	513.45	487.45	487.14	567.42	515.43	580.50	546.69	581.33	571.41	631.62

Note: Excludes those paid on commission basis, honorarium and boundary as in the case of jeepney/bus/tricycle drivers.

Source of data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey, Public Use Files.

Definition:

Basic Pay - pay for normal time prior to deduction of social security contributions, withholding taxes, etc. It excludes allowances, bonuses, commissions, overtime pay, benefits in kind, etc.

By income

- Middle class – on average P617 per day in 2011 (*P579 in 2010; P559 in 2009*)
- Working class – on average P277 per day in 2011 (*P267 in 2010; P254 in 2009*)
- Pay gap is increasing over time
- “Collapsing” Filipino middle class (Virola 2007)

By level of comfort

- Poverty incidence
- Poverty threshold

BLES data, RP (Source: BLES) –

TABLE 70 - Incidence of Poverty by Region, Philippines: 2006 and 2009

REGION	2006					2009				
	Annual Per Capita Poverty Thresholds ¹ (P)	Magnitude of Poor ² (000)		Poverty Incidence ³ (%)		Annual Per Capita Poverty Thresholds ¹ (P)	Magnitude of Poor ² (000)		Poverty Incidence ³ (%)	
		Families	Population	Families	Population		Families	Population	Families	Population
PHILIPPINES	13,348	3,671	22,173	21.1	26.4	16,841	3,856	23,142	20.9	26.5
National Capital Region	16,487	81	594	3.4	5.4	19,802	64	448	2.6	4.0
Cordillera Administrative Region	12,976	56	338	18.6	23.0	16,122	55	346	17.1	22.9
Region I - Ilocos Region	14,350	193	1,193	20.4	26.6	17,768	179	1,085	17.8	23.3
Region II - Cagayan Valley	12,212	96	564	15.5	20.0	15,306	94	545	14.5	18.8
Region III - Central Luzon	15,374	229	1,407	12.0	15.2	18,981	244	1,457	12.0	15.3
Region IV - A - CALABARZON	14,284	211	1,303	9.4	12.3	17,779	248	1,566	10.3	13.9
Region IV - B - MIMAROPA	12,610	187	1,122	34.3	42.2	15,769	163	981	27.6	35.0
Region V - Bicol Region	13,645	364	2,336	36.1	45.2	17,146	385	2,422	36.0	45.1
Region VI - Western Visayas	12,432	303	1,849	22.1	28.6	16,036	346	2,113	23.8	31.2
Region VII - Central Visayas	14,468	433	2,426	33.5	38.8	17,848	415	2,368	30.2	35.5
Region VIII - Eastern Visayas	11,885	253	1,565	31.1	39.0	15,910	287	1,732	33.2	41.4
Region IX - Zamboanga Peninsula	11,810	224	1,274	34.2	39.8	15,160	242	1,361	36.6	43.1
Region X - Northern Mindanao	12,987	258	1,530	32.7	39.7	16,568	275	1,587	32.8	39.6
Region XI - Davao Region	13,469	221	1,259	26.2	31.7	17,040	226	1,279	25.6	31.3
Region XII - SOCCSKSARGEN	12,530	203	1,204	27.1	33.1	15,762	225	1,332	28.1	35.7
Caraga	12,935	164	979	36.9	44.0	16,858	187	1,131	39.8	47.8
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	12,358	195	1,232	36.5	42.8	16,334	218	1,389	38.1	45.9

Notes: 1. Details may not add up to totals due to rounding.

2. Estimates were generated based on the refinements in the official poverty estimation methodology approved by the NSCB Executive Board on February 1, 2011.

3. The annual per capita income/expenditure required or the amount to be spent for the cost of the basic food and non-food requirements (valued in peso).

4. The number of families/population whose annual per capita income falls below the annual per capita poverty threshold.

5. The proportion of families/population with per capita income less than the per capita poverty threshold to the total number of families/population.

Source of data: National Statistical Coordination Board.

By self-identification

- How people identify themselves by class, based on observation and experience (Metzgar 2005), or in terms of poverty
- An example is the SWS survey on self-rated poverty/poverty threshold

By cultural difference

- “...middle-class culture , with its achievement orientation, emphasizes ‘doing and becoming’, while working-class culture gives primary value to ‘being and belonging.” (Metzgar 2005, citing Jensen)
- Unintended homogeneity (middle class) versus unavoidable diversity (working class) (Metzgar and Jensen 2001)

Working-class culture

- “This part of working-class studies is not about counting and classifying people. It’s about how to relate ...” (Metzgar 2005) to others.
- “Gathering, creating and analyzing working-class stories.” (Metzgar 2005)

- Is there a working-class consciousness?

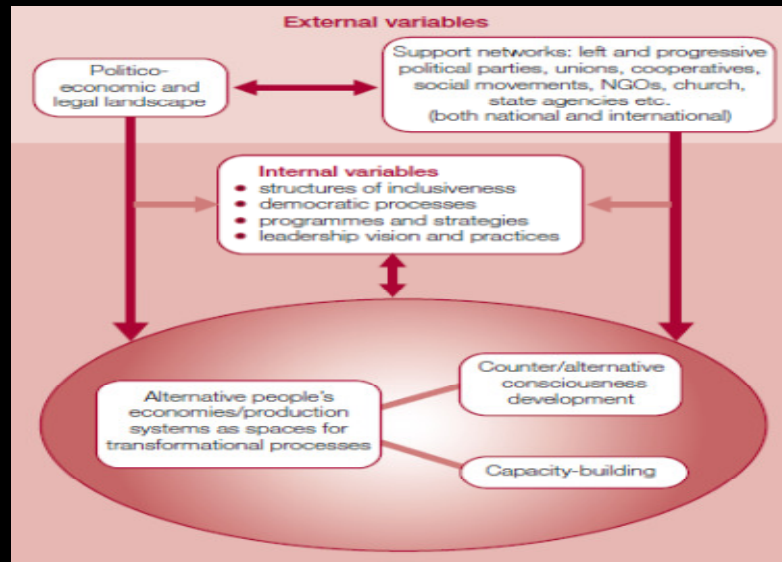
Working class and working class consciousness

- Inherent diversity of the working class
 - Do not have capital to generate a living: the employed, the unemployed, part-time workers
 - Informal, precarious and pauperized workers
- Formation of classes and class fractions only through confrontation & struggle with other social forces or classes (Candeias, 2007)
 - Materialization of working class & working class consciousness through organization and collective struggles

Working class (critical) consciousness

- Intertwined dimensions
 - An understanding of the interconnectedness of various struggles
 - An understanding of the need to resist the underlying causes of peoples' oppression & exploitation
 - A recognition that people have the capacity to act to change their circumstances & in the process transform themselves ('self-change')
- International research project on 'The Pursuit of Alternatives' of the Global Labour University & ILO
 - 10 case studies in 6 countries (Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Philippines, South Korea & Nigeria)

Analytical Framework



Source: Serrano and Xhafa (2012: 4)

Working-class studies

- Focus on working-class life and culture (Russo and Linkon 2005)

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