

Needed: Philippine urban growth centers

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In 1571 Manila became the center of Spanish colonization activities. From that day to this, Manila has maintained and expanded her role in the Philippines. She has been the unitive center for divergent groups of island peoples and, through the process of politization, has bound them into a nation.

Manila's rise to prominence was enhanced by her natural port facilities. Manila early established herself as a center of commerce through the Manila Galleon trade. When this waned she regained her commercial importance as a trading partner of the US. Her commercial relations with China, the United States, Spain and other European nations have made Manila a cosmopolitan city. She has been fed by the streams of many religious, political and cultural traditions. This cosmopolitanism has had both advantages and disadvantages for the Philippines. It has, on the one hand, made the Filipino very world-conscious. His Roman Catholicism has related him to a worldwide religious faith which ties him both to Rome and to Spain. His English-speaking ability has provided him easy mobility in world travel and in international organizations. His education has provided him with a knowledge of the history and culture of Europe and America. On the other hand, his cosmopolitan view has often limited his concern for his own nation. To the degree that he has become world-related he has neglected his own history and tradition. He has not paid serious attention to the problems of his own country. If he has paid attention to these problems it has been with a Western perspective.

These problems are focussed in Manila, which, even though it has helped to unite the nation, lives in a discontiguous relationship with the rest of the country. This has been Manila's shortcoming as a primate city. First, as a colonial city, Manila cast her lot with the metropolitan countries of the West. Her role as a middleman for the raw materials coming from her own hinterland and for the manufactured goods arriving from overseas has differentiated Manila from the rest of the country. From her middleman role Manila has acquired a standard of living and a way of life substantially different from those of the provinces.

Second, the higher standard of living in Manila attracts the more mobile members of the provincial population, further depleting the human resources which the hinterlands need for their own development. A study of 92 Filipino businessmen shows the determinative influence which Manila has upon the development of entrepreneurship. Two thirds of the Filipino entrepreneurs studied were raised in Manila, in the towns immediately adjacent to it or in towns within five kilometers of the Manila Railroad. Industrial plants as far away as Iligan and Davao in Mindanao have been established by entrepreneurs from Manila. This points to the other side of the development equation. The concentration of resources in Manila provides the kind of education and experience which equips men for their role in political and economic development. Manila has provided the environment which now needs to be developed in other regions of the nation.

Third, the movement to Manila, while attracting a surplus of the best human and economic resources from the countryside, has occurred at such a rapid pace that urban growth has outstripped urban facilities. One of the major diseconomies has been the mushrooming of squatter settlements throughout the Metropolitan Manila region. While the squatters form an ever-available labor pool, the encroachment of their flimsy *barong-barongs* on government and private property is a constant threat to the health, safety and security of the city. The growth of the Metropolitan Manila squatter community from 23,000

COMMUNITY SCALE		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
ELEMENTS	EXISTIC UNITS	MAN	ROOM	DWELLING	DWELLING GROUP	SMALL NEIGHBOOD	NEIGHBOURHOOD	SMALL TOWN	TOWN	LARGE CITY	METROPOLIS	CONURBATION	MEGALOPOLIS	URBAN REGION	URBANIZED CONTINENT	ECUMENOPOLIS
	NATURE															
	MAN															
	SOCIETY															
	SHELLS															
	NETWORKS															
	SYNTHESIS															

in 1948 to 767,000 in 1968 has made a national plan of metropolitan and regional development an immediate necessity.

In speaking of a national plan for metropolitan and regional development, it must be recognized that the Philippines is not without its urban-planning machinery. By May 1965 100 towns, 17 cities and 8 provinces had created planning boards. The National Planning Commission had received requests from 49 local governments for assistance. While machinery exists for local governments to plan for their future, what is lacking is a comprehensive national plan for metropolitan and regional development that will create a workable framework for coordinating the planning activities on the regional, provincial and municipal levels.

Developing urban growth centers in the Philippines

In offsetting the primate size of Manila, planning at the national level should give serious consideration to the development of those urban regions which have natural growth potential within the several regions of the Philippines. The choice of urban growth centers will be determined in part by the goals set within the national development plan. One criterion in the choice of urban growth centers is the rural-urban migration patterns within the various regions. Urban growth centers need to be developed in those regions with the highest out-migration patterns. Since Manila receives the largest percentage of the rural-urban migration, the developing of other regional urban growth centers will help draw off some of the flow into the metropolitan Manila region. It is important to recognize, however, that the development of urban growth centers is not put forward solely as an attempt to diminish the growth potential of Manila. Instead it is a plan to create alternative points of attraction for human and capital resources in the building of other regions. The issue is not the decentralization of Manila but the concentration of resources and development strategy in potential urban growth centers, which can provide a balance for Philippine development. In assessing the regions to be considered in a plan of urban development the three traditional geographic divisions come to mind: Luzon, the Visayas group and Mindanao. Each of these three regions can be redivided into sub-regions.

While the central part of Luzon is dominated by the Metropolitan Manila region, it is possible to delineate a sub-region in northern Luzon and another one in southern Luzon, generally called the Bicol region. Neither of these sub-regions has the growth potential to be considered in a national plan for the allocation of resources for development. Topography is the major factor in both sub-regions.

The Visayas is composed of six major islands in central Philippines. They account for 12 per cent of those employed in manufacturing within the nation.

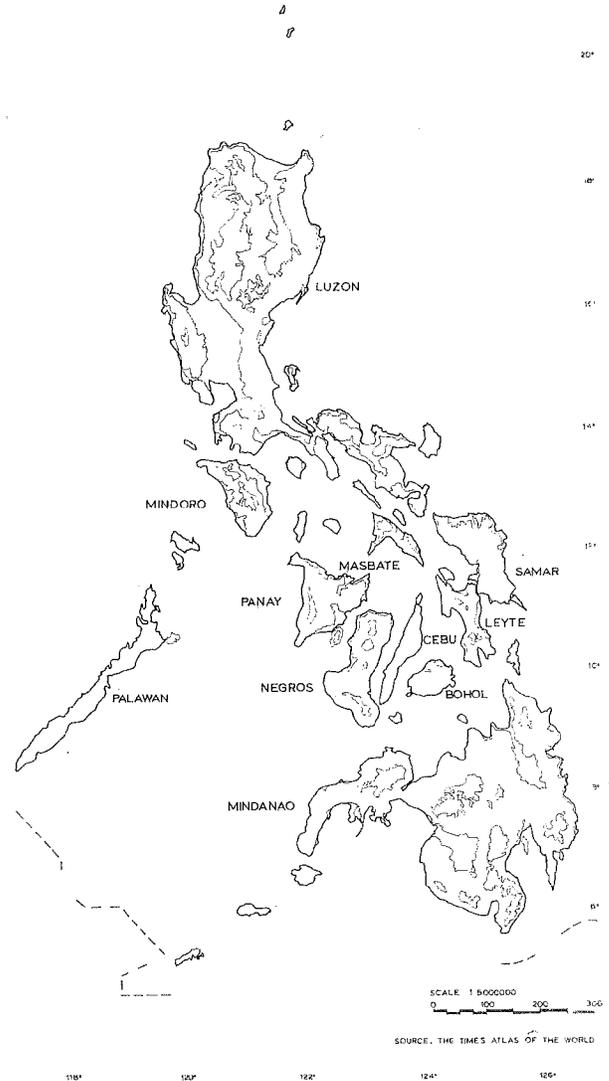


Fig. 1: The Philippines, showing land over and under 100 m. from sea level.

The largest percentage of this group work in the sugar centrals of the region, particularly in the province of Negros Occidental. The urban center for the region is Cebu City, which ranks second to Manila in population with 290,427 in 1960.

Cebu City is the natural choice for the development of an urban growth center in the Visayas. It has many factors in its favor. Agriculturally the island of Cebu is a corn-growing area, but it is not a fertile place, so it is always plagued by low productivity. Cebu fares better as an industrial center. The island has a good potential for the production of cement and several cement plants now operate there. Cebu has the second most varied manufacturing base in the Philippines, with Manila leading it.

Cebu City is also vying for the country's second international airport. At present it has the best landing

facilities in the Philippines — on Mactan Island, directly across from Cebu City.

Although Tagalog, the language used in the Manila area, was chosen as the national language, those speaking Cebuano form the largest language group in the Philippines. The Cebuano-speaking group makes up 24.1 percent of the population, while those who speak Tagalog make up only 21.0 percent. If those speaking other Visayan languages are added to the Cebuano-speaking group the figure will reach 40.0 percent. Thus the choice of Cebu City as a potential urban growth center within a national plan for metropolitan and regional development is based not only on its economic potential but also on the more overt factor of ethnic loyalty. Cebu City, an urban growth center for the Visayas, is needed to draw together the various peoples of central Philippines. While migration to Manila from the Visayas should not be discouraged, the gap between the number of Visayans migrating to Manila and the number of those moving to Cebu City needs to be narrowed. Migration figures from 1960 show that Manila and the adjacent province of Rizal drew 261,036 persons born in the Visayas, while Cebu City attracted only 40,202 persons born in other Visayan provinces. The Visayas also contributes heavily in human resources to the growing frontier island of Mindanao, in the extreme south. The province of Davao, with Davao City, the largest urban center in Mindanao, has drawn 298,901 persons from the Visayan provinces (37,865 more than the Metropolitan Manila region). While this migration is important for Davao's potential as an urban growth pole in Mindanao, it nevertheless points to the need for an urban center of attraction in the Visayas.

As has been suggested, this is Cebu City. The city administration has already embarked on a program to draw more human and capital resources into the city. The work of the Cebu Development Corporation in reclaiming the land from the sea for commercial and industrial expansion should be paying off in the next decade, but along with this local effort the national government needs to undertake a fiscal policy and an infrastructure program that would hasten private investment in the region.

Let us now turn our attention to Mindanao, the third geographic unit of the Philippines. The island of Mindanao is the «Frontier West» of the Republic.

In considering an urban growth-center policy for Mindanao there are two possible poles of regional growth in the island. One is in the north, in the Iligan Bay area. This area includes Iligan City in Lanao del Norte, and Cagayan de Oro City, in Misamis Oriental. The 1960 population of the two cities totaled 126,707, with Cagayan de Oro providing 68,274 and Iligan City 58,433. The second potential

urban growth center is Davao City, in southern Mindanao. Davao City leads other urban areas in Mindanao, with a population of 225,712.

While Davao City is a likely area for urban growth because of its flat and extensive land area and its large migrant population, it is basically oriented toward agricultural production. The Iligan-Cagayan de Oro region has greater industrial growth. A distance of 60 kilometers separates the two cities, but both of them will be tied together by the electricity which will come from the Maria Cristina Hydroelectric Power Plant, outside Iligan City. Two urban centers in close relation to each other within a region provide for more flexibility in planning the growth of the region. One of the advantages of a regional development plan with two urban growth centers is that it provides the opportunity for choice of location for business or industry. The chief focal point for drawing industry into the Iligan Bay area is the presence of the Maria Cristina Hydroelectric Power Plant. Since the power will cover the entire bay area, a businessman can make a choice of areas and still be in touch with the alternative urban center. Another advantage of the dual urban growth-center scheme is in the possibility it provides for developing specializations within the two areas. Cagayan de Oro presently has the Jesuit-administered Xavier University and several good high schools. On the other hand, Iligan City lacks adequate facilities of higher education. The government has established Mindanao State University in Marawi City, the center of Muslim population, thirty kilometers south of Iligan City. Since Muslim-Christian relations are often tense, it will take some time before these groups are fully integrated in the university. In view of Iligan City's growing industrial base, which includes an integrated steel mill, a cement plant, a fertilizer plant, a flour mill and a small chemical plant, government resources might be better allocated to the developing of training programs for technical and machine-trade skills. Iligan City would therefore develop specialized facilities for technical training while Cagayan de Oro was concentrating its efforts on higher education, building on its present educational base.

One further advantage of developing an urban growth region in the Iligan Bay area is its proximity to the Visayas. Migration could be contained within the region of the Visayas and northern Mindanao. An enlarged regional plan linking the development of Cebu City with the Iligan-Cagayan de Oro Complex could provide a countergrowth pole to the Metropolitan Manila region if the regions were not moving fast enough as separate units. This combination of Cebu City and the Iligan Bay area would have the added advantage of being basically an ethnically homogenous grouping.