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The Urban Sprawl

Bahay Kubo Country No More

Every day, new urban dwellers are added to the world's cities and urban centers, contributing to the human bloat of more than 3 billion in 2003.

A United Nations report says that the dramatic growth of the global urban population, “especially concentrated in the less developed regions, continue to pose formidable challenges to individual countries as well as the world community...”

The Philippines is an urbanizing society. In 2000, its urban population—the proportion of the total population living in areas classified as urban—was pegged at 48%—proof that the country is more urbanized than rural or agricultural. Urban growth was largely attributed to the natural increase in population in urban centers, migration of people from rural areas, and the reclassification of settlements from rural to urban.

This rapid urbanization has occurred only in the last four or five decades, when many rural dwellers trooped to urban centers in search for the proverbial good fortune and good life. Indeed, as research shows, cities provide countless opportunities for economic development. In fact, urban areas contribute to the growth and expansion of the domestic economy.

Furthermore, urban areas serve as the industrial, commercial, and

administrative centers in the different regions of the country. Urban centers represent availability and accessibility to various services and facilities.

Often, however, urbanization is occurring at such a rapid pace that cities are not able or are unequipped to manage the attendant concerns and provide the basic services needed by the growing population.

Population management: LGU mandate

Managing rapid urban population growth is a critical concern of the government, especially local government units (LGU). Under Executive Order 307 and Section 17 of the Local Government Code, LGUs are now tasked with providing services and carrying out programs on population. Thus, they are expected to manage the problems arising from population growth resulting from urbanization and development.

Our local government executives are faced with a tall order. The

population problem, especially in our rapidly urbanizing society, is a serious concern that needs to be addressed immediately if the quality of life in our cities and towns will be improved. To arrest problems in urbanizing centers, population growth needs to be stabilized and managed.

The implication of this is worrisome for the national government, but even more so for local city executives and local government officials. How will they manage the burgeoning urban mass? How can they even plan to enhance delivery of services when basic problems such as lack of an appropriate structure to deal with local governance and inadequate resource generation mechanisms or revenues for city development and improvement persist?

How can cities cope with the issues, challenges, and constraints that they currently face? There is no one blueprint for success that local executives could follow. Each local executive can learn from the experiences of other city planners and officials on how best to

solve problems of local governance, service delivery, and population management.

Local government units should take on the task of managing the population in earnest. Implementation of population programs indicate the importance that the LGUs place on demographic concerns. And currently, LGUs do not put much focus on these concerns.

SPPR 2004

The State of the Philippine Population Report (SPPR) 2004 focuses on how LGUs manage the growing urban population and cope with the challenges brought about by decentralization, rapid urbanization, and booming population. It presents the results of eight case cities and highlights how selected LGUs rose to the challenge of providing critical services to an ever-increasing population, specifically in the areas of local policies, planning and monitoring, resource mobilization, revenue allocation, population management, and institutional collaboration.

The report stresses that urbanization creates both opportunities and challenges. Opportunities include expanding tax base and joint economies, accompanied by the burden of heavier service delivery. It is expected that an increase in revenues from tax collection or the internal revenue allotment should be able to pay for increased service provision.

This report also promotes several interlocking messages that could make cities work. Productive population, responsive service delivery, revenue generation, investment opportunities, and sustained productivity are the goals that cities work for. These are hinged on five basic needs that include food, shelter, health, education, and employment.

How well the LGUs handle changes brought about by urbanization are tackled in the individual case studies, which also show the unique strengths and advantages of each of the cities. Lessons distilled from the cases are presented in the last two chapters, which also include some policy recommendations.

Some prescriptions are forwarded here based on the experiences of the selected cities. These should provide local executives with a guide to what works and what does not work. Learning from these experiences would help city planners and executives avoid the pitfalls of poor or lack of urban or municipal planning.

Our actions today will decide whether tomorrow's population will lead healthier and more productive lives. It is urgent that the right choices and decisions are made now because the consequences of these decisions would take time and resources that there is not enough of.



RA 7160: The Local Government Code, Section 17, Basic Services and Facilities

- a. Local government units shall endeavor to be self-reliant and shall continue exercising the powers and discharging the duties and functions currently vested upon them. Local government units shall likewise exercise such other powers and discharge such other functions and responsibilities as are necessary, appropriate, or incidental to efficient and effective provision of the basic services and facilities enumerated herein.
- b. Such basic services and facilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

For a Barangay: Health and social welfares which include maintenance of barangay health center and day-care center.

For a Municipality: Subject to the provisions of Title Five, Book I of this Code, health services which include the implementation of programs and projects on primary health care, maternal and child care, and communicable and noncommunicable disease control services; access to secondary and tertiary health services; purchase of medicines, medical supplies, and equipment needed to carry out the services herein enumerated.

Social services which include programs and projects on child and youth welfare, family and community welfare, women's welfare of the elderly and disabled persons, community-based rehabilitation programs for vagrants, beggars, street children, scavengers, juvenile delinquents, and victims of drug abuse; livelihood and other pro-poor projects; nutrition services; and family planning services.

For a Province: Subject to the provisions of the Title Five, Book I of this Code, health services which include programs and projects on rebel returnees and evacuees; relief operations and population development services.

For a City: All the services and facilities of the municipality and province, and in addition thereto, the following:

- a. National agencies or offices concerned shall devolve to local government units the responsibility for the provision of basic services and facilities enumerated in this section within six months after the effectivity of this Code.
- b. The basic services and facilities shall be funded from the share of local government units in the proceeds of national taxes and other local revenues and funding support from the National Government, its instrumentalities and government-owned or controlled corporations which are tasked by law to establish and maintain such services or facilities. Any fund or resource available for use of local government units shall be first allocated to the provision of basic services or facilities enumerated in subsection (b) hereof before applying the same for other purposes, unless otherwise provided in this Code.

Urbanization

Urbanization refers to the proportion of total population living in urban areas.

Urban areas are defined as "cities and municipalities which have a population density of at least 1,000 persons per square kilometer, *poblaciones* or central districts of municipalities and cities which have a population density of at least 500 persons per square kilometer, and *poblaciones* or central districts regardless of size, which have the following: street pattern, at least six establishments (commercial, manufacturing, recreational, and/or personal services), any three of the following: town hall, church, or chapel with religious services at least once a month; public plaza, park, or cemetery; market place or building where trading activities are carried out at least once a month; a public building such as a school, hospital, puericulture and health center, or library), and barangays with at least 1,000 inhabitants, where the occupation of inhabitants is predominantly nonagricultural.

An updated definition of urbanization will be adopted in the next census.

Source: National Statistics Office in 1960, 1970

Executive Order No.307: devolving the population management mandate to LGUs

Implementing a family planning program at the local government level

In Executive Order 307 signed by then President Fidel V. Ramos on February 28, 1996, local chief executives, specifically governors and mayors of cities and municipalities, were directed to promote the Philippine Family Planning Program as a priority government program through advocacy activities, participation in program management, use of local facilities, services of local providers and local employees, and use of other local resources and expertise.

Furthermore, local government executives were tasked to ensure that information and services endorsed by the program are made available at appropriate levels of service outlets, that they provide the needed financial support to the program, and that they coordinate with the Department of Health and the Commission on Population as well as nongovernment organizations and the private sector in implementing the program.

The Facts of Urbanization

Urbanization levels

History clearly documents the beginning of cities and urban cores during the Spanish times and how this set off the Philippines' path to urbanization. By 1950, approximately 15% of the country's population resided in urban agglomerations or clusters with more than 26,000 persons, while 10% resided in *poblaciones* or town centers of municipalities. In addition, the proportion of urban population in the Philippines stood at 27.1%, the highest in Southeast Asia at the time.

During the 50s and 60s, however, the pace of urbanization in the country became slower than its Asian neighbors. In contrast, the level of urbanization increased from 31.8% in 1970 to 37.5% in 1980, further shooting up to 47% in 1990. The increase was attributed to the marked rise in urban population growth, which was 4.4% in the 1970s

and 5% per annum in the 1980s, and a decline in rural population growth from 1.8% in the 1970s to 0.3% in the 1980s. Surprisingly, the acceleration in urbanization coincided with the stagnating economy during the period.

From 1990 to 2000, urbanization increased only by one percentage point, that is 47.1% to 48%. This was due to two major setbacks that severely constrained the expansion of employment opportunities in urban areas. The 1990-1991 and 1997-1998 periods experienced negative real gross domestic product (GDP) growth. The Philippines had the lowest annual growth rate of 1.4% in Asia from 1992 to 2002.

Geographical patterns

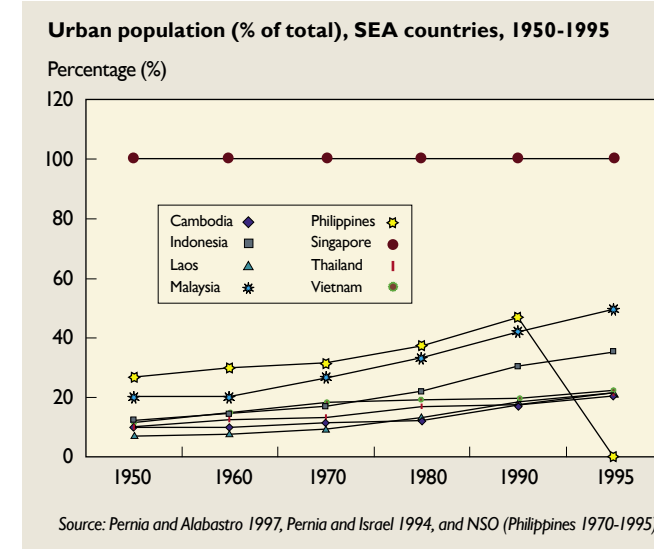
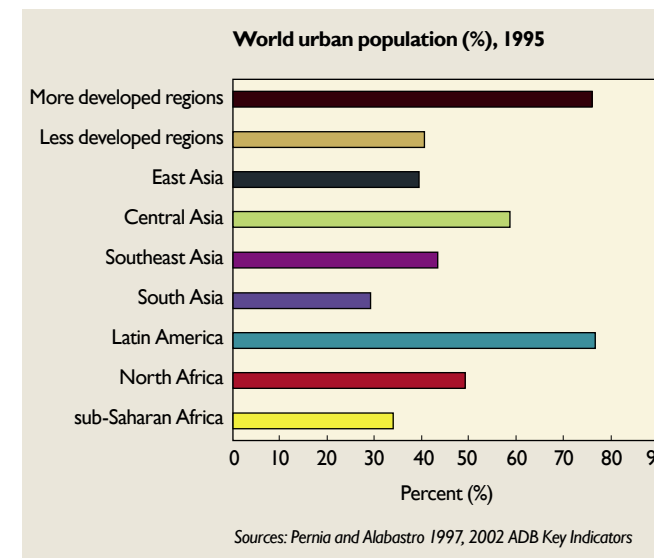
Two patterns of urbanization are evident by geographic location: (1) Urbanization rates have consistently been highest in the same five regions—excluding the

National Capital Region (NCR), and (2) the urban population has remained spatially concentrated.

The NCR along with other regions such as Central Luzon (Region III), Southern Tagalog (Region IV), Central Visayas (Region VII), Northern Mindanao (Region X), and Southern Mindanao (Region XI) had the highest proportion of urban population since 1970.

Of the 1,500 towns and cities in the Philippines, the 14 urban areas with population sizes exceeding 250,000 accounted for about 55% of urban population in 1970 and about 44% in 2000. The NCR accounted for 27.8%—a condition referred to as urban primacy.

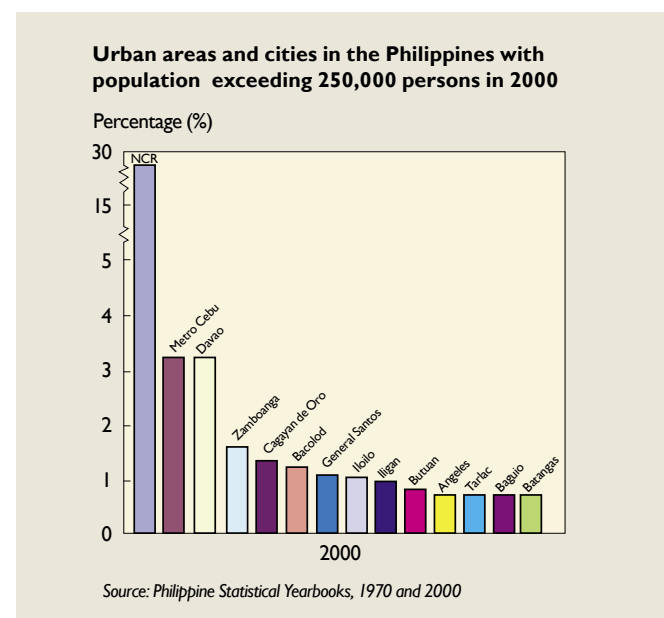
The obvious trend is that smaller towns and cities are starting to have higher population growth than the larger cities, indicating that: (1) migration has started to favor smaller urban centers as areas of destination, and (2) gradual geographic deconcentration of the urban population has started.



The facts of urbanization

- The world's urban population was 3 billion in 2003 and is expected to rise to 5 billion by 2030.
- 48% of the world's population lived in urban areas in 2003. This is projected to exceed the 50% mark by 2007, when the world will have more urban residents than rural residents.
- By 2030, the proportion of urban population is expected to be 61%.
- Population growth will be particularly rapid in urban areas of less developed regions, averaging 2.3% per year during 2002-2003.
- By 2017, the number of urban dwellers will equal the number of rural dwellers in the less developed regions.
- Asia posted the fastest urban population growth in the world in recent years. By 2015 almost half of the world's 27 cities will be found in Asia.

Source: UN Press Release POP/899, 24 March 2004



Sources of growth

In the Philippines, urban population has been growing much faster than total population. It has been increasing in three ways: natural increase (births minus deaths), net migration (in-migration minus out-migration), and reclassification of previously rural to urban areas.

Among the three sources of urban growth, natural increase was the largest source of growth, followed only by reclassification in 1960-1970. Net migration was also a significant

source of urban growth. In contrast, reclassification was the main source followed by natural increase in the 1980s-1990s.



Across cities, the importance of migration in the growth of cities located within the same region varied. Another observation was that while core cities may not be growing fast, the surrounding areas are growing faster, indicating spillover effects.

Urbanization is expected to continue and may reach 65% by 2020. Urban primacy, however, will be reduced as other urban destinations become more attractive.