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UN and the Government of the Philippines: Population Growth and Manpower in the Philippines

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PHILIPPINE DEMOGRAPHY

POPULATION GROWTH AND MANPOWER IN THE PHILIPPINES: A joint study by the United Nations and the Government of the Philippines. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 1960. v, 66pp.

In accordance with the recommendation of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the Population Commission, demographic pilot studies are undertaken to: (1) provide member nations with the information required in economic and social planning and as an aid to policy-making; and (2) demonstrate methods of studying demographic aspects of development problems. The recent publication released by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations entitled **POPULATION GROWTH AND MANPOWER IN THE PHILIPPINES** strives to fulfill the two-fold purpose embodied in the U.N. recommendations. No other study concerning the Philippine population has yet appeared which can compare with the statistical treatment utilized here, and this publication can count as a definite example of *demographic* analysis. As an illustration of the diverse approaches to statistical data, the report possesses true value. The study has been less successful in complying with its first purpose: that of serving as an aid to policy making and planning. Recently available data show the need for updating some portions of the report.

On the central topic of manpower and population growth, the U.N. findings are not altogether new. That the Philippines is one of the fastest growing populations in the world has been corroborated by the preliminary results of the 1960 enumeration of population. This upsurge in population growth has taken place in many other countries of Asia and Latin America, and the Philippines is not unique in this respect. New discoveries in medical science applied in these regions have produced spectacular decreases in death rates without considerably affecting the people's way of life. Reduction of death rates has not only improved individual life expectancy but has contributed to the maintenance of a high birth rate.

In the first section of the report, after a brief demographic history of the Philippines, the U.N. reviews the evidence supporting the claim that the birth rate has been constant at a high level of 50/1000 for the past fifty years.

The analysis of population distribution yields information for two broad areas, the urban and the rural. However, useful information concerning certain aspects of migration are missing altogether. For instance, there is no detailed delineation of major recruitment areas for the "primate" and lesser cities, the different growth patterns of

the stable town and the fast developing industrial city. There is room for further study of the relative importance of the "push" of necessity in rural areas and the "pull" to the many attractions of urban living. A recent and relevant study (Jupp, 1960) reveals the sending and receiving regions in the Philippines and the relationship between population density and cultivated land areas.

After giving projections of the total and the rural-urban populations for a 20-year period (1957-1977), the U.N. comes to the core chapter, the demography of manpower. Here again, there is need for more detailed analysis. Economic activity rates and employment levels in smaller areas within the urban sector, e.g., chartered cities or *poblaciones*, show distinct differences. Also, seasonal variations exist in the size of the labor force. Shifts in the industrial distribution of the economically active population could show the relevance of the Clark-Fisher hypothesis to the Philippine economy. Clark and Fisher maintain that as real income per capita rises, employment characteristically shifts from primary to secondary and then to tertiary industries.

The projections of the labor force to 1977 show an important problem which has to be solved. How can the Philippines find employment in the next two decades for the increases in the labor force which high fertility has brought about? Estimates show that between 1939 and 1957, the number of men aged 15 to 64 increased by 33%, in absolute numbers by one and a half millions. From 1957 to 1977, the increase will be 87%, in absolute numbers of five millions.

The danger of this situation lies in the perpetuation of the differences between the modern city economy with its relatively well paid and unionized workers and the traditional agricultural small industry with its poorly paid, inefficiently employed, and underemployed labor force. The social and political outcomes are obvious.

It will be extremely difficult to achieve full employment: the danger may be that both the numbers of the unemployed and the underemployed will increase. Various measures will have to be taken to spread some of the benefits of economic growth to those sectors where the labor force cannot find full employment. The task is clearly difficult but not impossible.

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