

Estancia, Iloilo: town in transition*

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For the past 20 years the problems of economic development and social change in the Philippines have received considerable attention from government agencies, private foundations, and research scholars. In a country emerging from the major destruction caused by World War II and the direct economic and political dominance of the United States, many Philippine leaders have tried to shape policies and programs which would lead to the rapid economic development of the country. Given its natural resources and large cadre of trained professionals, this might not seem an insuperable task. Yet by most reasonable standards, though progress has been made, the country's economic development has been markedly slower than hoped or anticipated. Despite the efforts of well-intending individuals and vast amounts of foreign aid and advice, real per capita income has not risen very appreciably above pre-war levels. Booming residential suburbs near Manila, Cebu, and Davao show there are now more wealthy Filipinos than before, but travel through the provinces or in the city slums indicates that the poor have also multiplied in number. "Objective" indicators point in both directions; but on the whole, outside of certain metropolitan areas, economic growth in the Philippines has been very slow.

The factors contributing to this situation are varied, complex, and controversial. They range from purely technical production problems to an extremely high population growth rate, and from external economic pressures to conservative cultural

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and structural features internal to Philippine society. Without denying the importance of the former, it is with these latter features—the traditional values and modes of social organization which appear to inhibit economic development, and the forces working against them—that these notes and the outlined research will attempt to deal.

Previous Studies

Since the mid-1950's, many social scientists have been concerned with the relations between social organization, social change, and economic development in the Philippines. Classical and agricultural economists, sociologists and anthropologists, psychologists, and political scientists, geographers and demographers have all contributed to a now substantial literature on the subject. Even so, our understanding of the situation is still inadequate, and our ability to make useful recommendations for development programs is still severely limited.

There are no doubt several reasons for this. Perhaps foremost is that the study of social change and economic development in the non-Western world is still a very new field. Theories or models adequate to describe or predict change in social organizations have not yet reached sufficient sophistication nor taken adequate account of local conditions to permit the framing of sure-fire development programs for particular regions or countries. As in any new field, time and accumulated experience are necessary before the exact nature of the problem is clear and we can begin to ask the most useful questions or frame the most productive research designs. This has been particularly true of studies of social change in the lowland Philippines, which on the whole have been concerned with peripheral or secondary phenomena, leaving the central processes or mechanics of social change in particular communities largely unexamined.¹

¹ This problem has been compounded by our still sketchy knowledge of "traditional" lowland Philippine values and social organization. While many explanatory terms and concepts have been put forward (e.g., social acceptance, *pakikisama*, *hiyd*, *utang na loob*, *lider*, patron-client relationship, *compadrazgo*, the intermediary, etc.), none has been critically examined in more than a few situations. The limitations, variations, and interaction of these values and forms of social interaction are still largely untested. They are at best clues and not conclusions concerning patterns of social interaction in the lowlands. For studies of social change they inevitably prove slippery foundations.

Broadly speaking, five general approaches have been taken to the study of social change in the Philippines. One has been to examine large-scale macro-variables such as national population growth, improved communication networks, an expanding educational system, increasing urbanization and monetization, and government efforts to induce change (Hart 1955; Carroll 1963; Huke 1963; McHale 1964). While often provocative, these macro-change studies rarely come down to the specific interrelations of the variables on the community level or demonstrate their effects on local social or cultural patterns. A new road or higher population density may be presumed to produce social or economic changes, but the necessary preconditions, the processes involved, and the actual forms the changes take in specific communities are usually left unexamined.

A second approach has been to follow the progress of particular technological or governmental innovations (Sycip 1960; Covar 1960; Olivar 1966). While this can be a useful procedure, it demands more careful investigation than has yet been done of independent variables which condition the adoption or rejection of the innovation, its impact on other aspects of technology and on larger social patterns.

A third and very popular setting for discussions of social change in the Philippines has been analyses of specific attempts at inducing social or technological change which have failed (Oren 1958; Pal 1959; Kaut 1960; Collier 1961; Jocano 1963; Hart 1965). These studies often contain interesting after-the-fact theorizing, but by their choice of data necessarily focus on why change *does not* take place, rather than on the situations, forms, and processes in which it does.

A fourth group of studies looks not at change directly but at verbally expressed attitudes towards it (Pal 1956, 1957; Oppenfeld 1959; Madigan 1962). These take their cue from anthropologists who have insisted on the major role of attitudes in affecting the acceptance or rejection of proposed innovations. While attitudes are unquestionably important, alone they are insufficient to account for events or behavior. Many forces may intervene (e.g., lack of resources, social pressures, personal incompetence) and prevent the adoption of an innovation, despite

positive attitudes towards it. Likewise, circumstances may force changes despite negative attitudes towards them (Sycip 1960). These studies often seem to overlook this, presenting attitudes as the sole determinants of change.

Finally, the fifth approach has been to initiate full-scale long term studies of a set of communities. At least three are now under way (Kaut 1963; Sibley 1965a; Jocano 1966). This is undoubtedly an excellent approach, but it will be some time before we have more than preliminary findings (*e.g.*, Sibley 1965b). Furthermore, the communities were chosen at least in part because of their conservative or traditional character — the typical anthropological approach — and not because they were undergoing rapid social or economic change. Thus again the research design and choice of data are less than ideal for telling us more about how economic development or more general social change *does* take place.

While all of these studies have contributed to our understanding of social change in the Philippines, none attacks the problem directly. They leave untouched what seems the most productive research strategy — that of empirically examining specific communities which are presently undergoing significant economic development or social changes. Ideally, these changes should have beginnings recent enough so that reliable base-line data are still available in local memories and records. Such communities, though still numerically rare, do exist and should provide models for change in the Philippine setting. They should make explicit the necessary preconditions, the role of various types of innovators, and the effects on more conservative individuals and traditional modes of social organization. Communities which are rapidly developing or “modernizing” under their own efforts ought to yield the best clues to the forms and processes of change we may ultimately expect (or encourage) in other more slowly evolving communities.

A New Approach

With this in mind we developed a research proposal involving investigation of small communities in a region undergoing a transition from traditional small-holder subsistence rice cultiva-

tion to presumably more modern or economically developed market-oriented sugar production. Our intention was to study the innovators, those who had shifted to the cash crop, sugar, and the conservatives, who had stood by rice, the old subsistence crop. We also expected to examine the effects of the shifts on various aspects of community organization and local values. Finally, we hoped to draw some general conclusions concerning the relationship of economic change or modernization to the larger patterns of rural Philippine society.

However, upon arrival in the field, a brief investigation of the situation indicated that the study as originally planned would not be so fruitful as expected. There were two reasons for this. First, the decision to shift lands from rice to sugar was being made by very large landholders controlling sometimes hundreds or thousands of hectares, and not by numerous small-holders as we had anticipated. These wealthy landlords could hardly be considered economic "innovators." Long accustomed to working their lands for maximum profit, they had simply shifted to sugar when the market expanded and the price for the commodity rose. They were by no means subsistence farmers shifting for the first time to a cash crop. Second, despite changes in technology and job routine accompanying the shift to sugar, the basic economic structure of the region remained remarkably intact. The formal relationship between the landlord and the farmer had been altered, for under the rice regime the farmer was likely to be a share tenant (local estimates of share tenancy averaged 75-80 per cent, and may well have been higher), and the introduction of sugar usually made him a piece or wage laborer. Yet this did not change the local economic system, for it left unaltered the basic economic fact of the region — that either as share tenant or wage laborer, the man in the field and his family are almost completely dependent on the landlord for credit to cover the daily costs of existence. Shares of the harvest, or wages earned, go in large part to settle interest-inflated debts. Neither shares nor wages provide enough income to last until the next harvest or payday. There had been a technological change from rice to sugar but no appreciable change or improvement in the economic status or resources of the field hands. They remained in a system of

continual indebtedness, of economic—and ultimately political and social—dependence on the landlords for the wherewithal to survive. And short of migration to another region of the country, the farmers appeared to have no expectation of escaping the present system. The production of sugar had made some landholders substantially wealthier, but it had not effectively developed or “modernized” the local economy.

This situation required abandoning the original research design, for it invalidated its underlying assumption. The shift from rice to sugar could no longer be regarded as an index of major change or modernization. While this had seemed plausible at a distant university, brief field work indicated that the changing technology was not due to “innovators,” nor had it produced significant changes in the local economy. The original socio-economic pattern of peasant dependency had withstood intact, even overridden, the new agricultural technology. Nor were there indications that this would change in the foreseeable future.

Estancia: A Developing Community

It was not, however, the basic idea or approach of the research that had been invalidated, merely the particular setting in which we had expected to carry it out. We therefore decided to reverse our procedure, and instead of depending on a purely technological indicator and its theoretical consequences, turned to economic and demographic indices which might suggest major social changes and economic modernization in a previously traditional community. Analysis of local statistics, discussions with local businessmen, municipal and provincial officials, and personal survey work throughout northern Iloilo Province led us to select the coastal fishing town of Estancia, 135 kilometers north of Iloilo City, as the appropriate site for our research.

By many relatively objective indices Estancia is the most rapidly growing municipality in the region—if not the province or the entire island of Panay. The population statistics are particularly relevant and revealing. In 1960, according to the Census of the Philippines, the population of the entire municipality was 13,323. This compares with 8,781 for 1948, an increase

of 51.7 per cent over 12 years. In sharp contrast, the mean population growth over this same time period of the four adjacent municipalities, and the mean for *all* the municipalities in the entire province, was only 15.4 per cent. During these same 12 years, Iloilo City, the provincial capital, grew only 37.4 per cent. Estancia's inordinately rapid population growth rate cannot be attributed to disparities in raw birth and death rates. Nor has the town been attracting people with available unused land. Already in 1948, with 2.75 persons per hectare, Estancia was by a small margin the most densely populated municipality in northern Panay. The provincial mean was at that date 1.34 persons per hectare. By 1960, Estancia's population density had reached 4.17 persons per hectare, while the provincial mean had only risen to 1.55 persons per hectare, and no other municipality in the region had a density higher than 2.87 persons per hectare. Not land, but the productive and commercial activity of the town and specifically the fishing industry and its outgrowths were attracting numerous people from other communities and also limiting migration from Estancia to distant urban or pioneering areas. Whereas almost all other towns in Iloilo have been marked by heavy flows of population to Iloilo City and to Mindanao—particularly Cotabato—few residents of Estancia seem inclined in that direction.

Some indication of the commercial orientation of this rapidly expanding town is given by the heavy population concentration in the poblacion and the immediately surrounding barrios. In 1948 some 35 per cent of Estancia's residents were in the poblacion and the two contiguous seaside barrios. The average proportion of their total population in the poblacion of the other municipalities in the province was at that time about 16 per cent. By 1960, about 40 per cent of Estancia's total population was in its central core area, making it by far the most "urban" municipality in the region. These other municipalities averaged only about 17 per cent of their population in the poblacion in 1960.

When compared with the immediately adjacent towns, those of northern Panay, or the towns of the entire province of Iloilo, Estancia stands out as the most rapidly urbanizing community.

Further, a 1966-67 census currently being conducted by the municipal government, although not yet complete, indicates a continuation of both trends towards population growth and concentration. If we can assume that populations tend to shift according to economic opportunities, Estancia and its fishing industry appear to be offering far more to potential workers than otherwise comparable communities in the province.

Unlike many of the towns in the area, Estancia is a relatively new community. Until the turn of the century it was part of neighboring Balasan and from 1903 to 1919 was an *arrabal*, or suburb, of that municipality. At the 1918 census, the barrios which compose Estancia today had altogether 3,040 people. By 1935 the population was reported as only 3,083. Nonetheless, even before World War II the fishing industry was active enough to draw Samareños, Leyteños, Cebuanos, Tagalog, and Ilocanos, as well as Ilongos from other towns, to settle in Estancia. This widespread attraction has continued, and today people often speak of the "cosmopolitan" character of the town. It is a common observation that in the longer settled communities of the region, the families of the elementary and high school teachers form a stable basis for a middle class and usually meet the demands for local professionals. In Estancia, however, the professionally trained children of local entrepreneurs tend to migrate to the country's urban cultural centers; a very large proportion of the professionals active in the town are from elsewhere, and about a third of the teachers go home every weekend to permanent residences in other municipalities. Estancia's "old established" families cannot yet meet the demands caused by its rapid growth.

Yet another sign of the town's recent expansion is the relatively "pure" Ilongo spoken by its residents. Older, more stably settled towns in the province have developed distinctive dialects or accents, but Estancia is too new a community and too much a mixture for that to have occurred.

The economic base and most powerful attraction of Estancia is the commercial fishing industry. Directly or indirectly, it is estimated to account for some 90 per cent of the local labor force. Prior to World War II, the town was known as "The Alaska of

the Philippines," because of the abundant fish which could be caught with simple traps or corrals just offshore. As a result of very intensive fishing as well as the use of fine-mesh nets and explosives (which became all too familiar during the war), the fish resources immediately surrounding the town have declined considerably.² Nonetheless, despite the increasing difficulty of catching fish in the immediate vicinity of the town, Estancia's role as the commercial marketing center for fish caught in the Visayan Sea and off Palawan has continued to grow since World War II. (Statistics on this matter are unfortunately deceptive, for only the catches of "registered vessels"—those above three tons—are officially recorded. These fish are, however, subject to taxation, and substantial quantities are understood to go unreported. Further, there are several hundred smaller boats whose catches never find their way into official records.)

The always larger volume of fish passing through Estancia can be attributed to continually intensified activity, a willingness to fish deeper and more distant waters, and more efficient techniques—larger and more sophisticated fishing boats and the use of explosives no doubt foremost among them. On the other hand, it is also due to the demand from Manila and towns all over the island of Panay for constantly increasing quantities of fresh and dried fish. While many who sell at the market are locally based, fishermen large and small from other towns of Panay and from Negros, Cebu, and Masbate are always assured of an extremely active market at Estancia from Sunday evening until Tuesday afternoon. It is in fact the hub of commercial fish trade north of Iloilo City. Market days are characterized by great bustle and activity, with boxes and baskets of fish being rapidly exchanged by fishermen, "buy-and-sell" middlemen, and large scale commercial dealers from distant towns. Large bulk shipments go direct to dealers in Manila. The market area fills with trucks and buses, while the shore line teems with small craft and large, nearly all transporting fish in one direction or

²Explosives are highly effective in catching fish, but also kill microscopic feed and many fish too small to be landed, rupture any eggs in the vicinity, and destroy the general ecological balance. Shallow water trawling may also have contributed to the decline, for the nets dragging along the bottom scatter eggs and destroy spawning grounds—though some argue it is ultimately beneficial because of the organic matter, food for fishes, that it stirs up from the mud below.

another. Few towns in the province or anywhere in Panay have comparably active and lively markets.

Along with the fish market, general commercial activity has grown over recent years. In 1935 there were 20 commercial enterprises in the town, mostly *sari-sari* stores, and the town's annual municipal income was under ₱10,000. Today, aside from the fishing boat owners, there are some 70 storekeepers selling both general merchandise and a variety of specialties. Municipal income currently is almost ₱100,000 a year. Competition for space in the commercial area of the town is intense, and real estate prices are extremely high. A local firm recently paid ten pesos a square meter for a site on the edge of the commercial district. Strikingly absent is the economic domination of any one person or small group of individuals. Some people are obviously more wealthy and powerful than others, but there seems always to have been room for new entrepreneurs with skill and drive.

Along with supporting boat crews and owners, suppliers and dealers, the fishing industry is deeply involved in other aspects of the town's economy. Most of the fish sold in the town have already been salted and dried in the sun, but the fishing industry also demands the continuous operation of an ice plant. Its operating capacity of five tons a day is consumed for shipping fresh fish to Manila and to local markets, as well. A large concrete pier (shortly to be extended) allows the docking of four scheduled inter-island steamers every week. Aside from their other cargoes, these ships regularly load fresh and dried fish on consignment to merchants in Manila. Beginning this year they will also be loading copper ore from the mines in nearby Pilar, Capiz. The fishing fleet, the port facilities, and the excellent island-protected anchorage provide such a large volume of marine transportation that one of the large oil companies has constructed a bulk oil installation in the town, and negotiations have been conducted for a second.

Estancia is also favored with adequate land transport, the terminal for the largest bus lines on Panay being located in the town. In addition to numerous local jeepneys and buses, buses go west almost hourly to Roxas City and Kalibo, Aklan, and

south to Iloilo City. A large sewing machine company has established in Estancia the only distributorship within 35 kilometers, and one sees the machines in operation in tailor shops, private homes, and many of the now innumerable tiny sari-sari stores scattered throughout the town. Weekends and market days draw to the town enough people with extra change in their pockets to support a movie theater four days a week. A Rural Bank controlled by local interests is under construction and a Knights of Columbus Credit Union is in active operation. Even the Philippine National Bank has lately shown some interest in setting up an Estancia branch.

Estancia is undoubtedly one of the smallest towns in the country with a commercial telegraph station to complement the regular government lines. It is the only town in the region with a year-round NAWASA³ piped water system, supplying the poblacion and several nearby barrios. From 1960 to 1964 the town had an operating electric plant as well, but demand overcame capacity (many people surreptitiously added extra lines and bulbs). As the lights began to flicker and grow dim, people complained, became increasingly dissatisfied with the system, and ultimately refused to pay their bills. Eventually it was abandoned, but the franchise has recently been purchased by a local party with a power plant large enough to serve the town's needs. Within the year Estancia should have power again; in the meantime many families have bought private generators.

By themselves, these features would make Estancia the most rapidly modernizing municipality in the region. And the near future is likely to bring several more major sources of commercial activity and income. A site has been surveyed and funds appropriated (though not yet released) for an airport with a concrete runway two kilometers from the poblacion. Land-hungry Estancia, nestled between steep hills and the sea, has already seen a great deal of private land reclamation in recent years, and now government funds are anticipated for a large-scale reclamation project in the shallow waters in front of the

³National Waterworks and Sewerage Administration.

town. The local high school of fisheries is soon to be transformed into a college, and a small gold mine is beginning operation in one of the barrios.

Agriculture is the only weak point in the town's economic outlook. In total area Estancia is the second smallest municipality in the province, with only 3,197 hectares, and most of its 727 hectares of cultivated land are devoted to unirrigated one-crop-a-year lowland paddy rice. The average yield over the past years has fluctuated between 20 and 30 cavans per hectare. There are several moderately large coconut plantations, and a muscovado mill went into operation in 1966, but the overall economic importance of these concerns is relatively small.

A striking symbol of Estancia's commercial orientation is its abandonment of the traditional town fiesta. No other town in the province has done so. There has been no fiesta for three years, and there are no indications that the custom is to be revived. Residents insist that in past years Estancia's fiestas were always large and well attended. The commonly accepted reason for their discontinuation is that they were becoming too costly. Interestingly, it is not a matter of being unable to afford the expenses of a fiesta, for many towns with much smaller incomes and fewer wealthy people manage to put on sumptuous affairs. Rather, the individuals in Estancia who once "sponsored" the fiesta are turning to alternative, more productive investments. In the past, social display and paying fiesta bills brought considerable prestige, but today there is a shift towards the "rationally" economic.

Money in the bank is beginning to take precedence over conspicuous giving in the values of the townsfolk. When an established traditional social event such as the town fiesta is eliminated on economic grounds, we can safely say that social change and economic modernization are clearly under way.

* The fiesta has suddenly returned, although entirely at the initiative of Manila-resident Estanciahanons. It has since been transformed by local residents into an "Agro-Industrial Fair."

Proposed Research into Economic Growth and Social Change in Estancia

Given Estancia's recent and rapid economic expansion we can begin to ask the questions we had originally expected to investigate in the rice-to-sugar transition zone. Who are the initiators—the innovators—who have left traditional subsistence occupations and turned to larger commercial activities? Do they introduce new forms of social organization into the area, or simply extend traditional modes of organization for their new purposes? How extensive is their influence on the local economic system? Do they alter its basic structure, or merely elaborate the periphery? To what extent does the increasing total wealth of the community become distributed to the general populace—or does it all ultimately concentrate in the hands of a small minority? How does an increasingly productive and commercial orientation affect the social, political, and religious values of employees and employers? What precisely has been the role of migration in the town's economic development? How have national and local government programs and policies, and the remarkable political stability of the town (the incumbent mayor has been in office for 20 years) contributed to its growth? Finally, how does Estancia compare on these matters with adjacent towns, both coastal and inland?

These are some of the questions which will be investigated during the next year's research. Hopefully, they will shed light on the processes and forms of economic development and more general social changes which can be expected from Philippine communities as their residents move out of traditional subsistence occupations and begin to take increasing advantage of the various local natural resources. Estancia, as a fishing town, cannot be taken as the "typical" Philippine community, though there are of course many fishing towns with comparable potential scattered all through the archipelago. Nonetheless, its pattern of development is likely to be unique only in that it is one of the first communities that has begun to tap its resources. Economic surveys indicate comparably great agricultural, industrial, and mineral potential in the other regional towns. Their residents have been somewhat slower in exploiting them, but when

they do, the patterns of economic growth and social change may prove similar to those of Estancia. Estancia's experience, when fully documented, may provide some suggestions to help speed the growth of other towns, and perhaps also ways to avoid some of the unhappy side effects of rapid social change.

Estancia's economy

The initial base for understanding growth and change in Estancia must be a thorough economic history of the town. This will be our first undertaking in the formal conduct of the research. Local statistics are somewhat sketchy and unreliable, and it will require intensive interviews with a very large proportion of the entrepreneurs who have established commercial operations in the town. We will be concerned with discovering the growth pattern of their enterprises, from the initial investments up to the present. In some cases this will take us back before World War II, though most of the local businesses have developed since that time. Some of the specific questions we will be asking are the following.

1. Business origins

Who founded the business and where are they from? Estancia's poblacion? The barrios? Other Ilongo communities? Other regions of the Philippines?

What was their religious and educational background?

What were their parents' occupations, and how do their siblings earn their livelihood?

Where did they obtain their initial operating capital?

What previous occupations had they engaged in?

2. Business evolution

What are the major products or services sold? How have these changed over time?

What is the extent of local competition, and how has it changed with Estancia's growth?

To what extent is the business "cushioned" during tight periods by other sources of income, e.g., agriculture, investments, etc?

What have been the businesses' good and bad years?

Have any similar businesses failed in recent years? Why?

In what way, if any, have government programs and policies assisted or impeded business activities?

3. *Relations with employees*

How many people are employed by the business, and how has this number changed over time?

How long have the employees been with the business?

Are most employees from the immediate family? Distant relatives? Local strangers or immigrants?

Have the employees or their parents worked for the parents of the current business owner?

Are employees salaried, or do they work on a share basis?

Can and do employees get loans in money or kind from the employer, and do they pay interest?

Have any of the employees left the business to start similar enterprises on their own, in Estancia or elsewhere?

The answer to these and other related questions should give us a picture of the present economic situation in Estancia, and some notion of its development over time. To complete the picture we will also take a sample of the economic history, attitudes, and aspirations of local employees, fishermen, farmers, and laborers. Together, these should illuminate the more general social changes which have been taking place in the town. Hopefully, these questions will also lead to a series of case studies of successful entrepreneurs, local fishermen, and some of the other economic types that may emerge.

Later in the research two presumably side aspects of the local economy will be investigated, both as to their intrinsic significance and their contribution to local economic development. One is the unusual proliferation of sari-sari stores mentioned above. It is difficult to imagine that these very small enterprises can bring an appreciable profit to the women who run them. Nonetheless, their numbers around the town are truly impressive. It is possible that the social functions of these stores outweigh their economic functions; for while working men and idlers generally gather at *tuba* stands for conversation and conviviality, women seem to exchange much of their gossip at the local sari-sari store. However, in the light of the general commercial orientation of the town, and especially of its women, this interpretation must be further examined.

The other presumably peripheral aspect of the town's economy which must be studied is gambling. Although there is no cockpit in the town, gambling is apparently very popular

and takes a variety of forms. One suspects it has been both the source and the destruction of more than one local fortune. Its nature, scale, and extent must be investigated to determine both its contributory and inhibiting effects on local economic development.

While an unusually high proportion of Estancia's population is in the poblacion, the majority still resides in the barrios. Any study of economic development in the town must include its effects on the barrios and the extent to which the town's development has depended upon human skills and material resources provided by them. Has commercial and productive development in the poblacion stimulated or drained comparable activity in the barrios? What effect has it had on barrio organization or identity? Physical proximity to the poblacion and ownership of barrio lands by poblacion entrepreneurs are likely to be significant variables in these matters. Patterns of migration in and out of the barrios, their formal and informal organizations, and variations in general living standards over the past 20 years should provide clues.

Among the fishing barrios, two that immediately flank the poblacion were small in 1948 (populations of 442 and 487) but have rapidly grown quite large (about 1,600 and 1,325, respectively, in 1966). These two may be compared with two other barrios which were comparably small in 1948 but have grown slowly since then. They can also be effectively compared with another fishing barrio whose population has long been relatively large and stable (1,030 persons in 1948, about 1,260 in 1966). The following table may make these potential comparisons clearer.

Relative size (1948)	Population growth rate (1948-66)	
	S l o w	R a p i d
Large	One barrio	Poblacion
Small	Two barrios	Two barrios

Estancia sample communities classified by relative size, cross-classified by population growth rate.

Estancia seems to provide an almost ideal situation for analyzing the preconditions, processes, and formal outcomes of economic growth in small fishing communities. The agricultural barrios appear almost equally promising for utilizing the comparative approach to these problems. None can be considered very large, but they do seem to demonstrate highly differential rates of economic and demographic growth. The situation is ripe for following Eggan's recommendation (1954:474):

... for the utilization of the comparative method on a small scale and with as much control over the frame of comparison as it is possible to secure ... to utilize regions of relatively homogeneous culture or to work within social or cultural types, and to further control the ecological and historical factors so far as it is possible to do so.

Concomitant social change

Once we have completed this analysis of economic changes in Estancia's poblacion and barrios, we hope to face some more general problems concerning the relation of economic development to social change. Specifically, we will be interested in the extent to which the increasing general level of productivity and commercial activity alters traditional patterns of income distribution, social organization, and value patterns.

The problem of income distribution is crucial, for it determines the rapidity and extent to which the increasing total wealth of a community benefits its various members. In the rice-to-sugar conversion area described above, there was no visible improvement in the economic resources of the field workers, despite the vastly increased income of the planters and millers. In that situation, wealth has remained concentrated in a few hands, and no share of the increased profits has reached the workers. The system of income distribution is stable and so organized that the field hand receives sufficient income to survive, while the landowner keeps all the rest. In poor years the

workers are assured of the minimum of subsistence, but in good years their gain is little.⁵

There is evidence that a similar situation exists in Estancia, for many share tenants and fishing boat crewmen are involved in a similar type of economic system. However, given the town's rapid growth and the number of independently owned commercial enterprises, the situation appears somewhat more open. The continually growing demand for fish has provided many opportunities for initially poor men to rise to the top of the economic ladder. The two most obvious avenues to economic success are in fishing and marketing or some combination of the two—although a few families have made their fortunes as suppliers of fishing outfits. Marketing fish does not require a large initial capital outlay. A man willing to travel to interior towns can almost always sell fish at a price somewhat higher than the market rate at Estancia. The difference minus transportation is his profit, and many such "buy-and-sell" distributors operate out of Estancia. They sometimes gain a further margin by buying fish directly from the fishing boats while still out at sea. The fishermen are often willing to give a good price to save themselves the trouble of marketing the fish personally. While the major volume of the fish in Estancia does not pass through the hands of these small dealers, there clearly has been room in the interstices of the distribution network for a number of small fortunes to be made.

The other common means to new wealth in Estancia has been through the growth of new fishing outfits. Fishing requires a very small capital investment. A *banca*, or outrigger canoe, costs little and with luck can provide a steady income. Savings may permit a fisherman to purchase larger, more sophisticated boats, until he becomes the employer of one or more crews of fishermen. While luck, as well as skill and determination, unquestionably contribute to the poor fisherman's economic success, several men in Estancia have proven the feasi-

⁵As mentioned earlier, this description is based on a relatively brief investigation of the situation. While we are confident of its general accuracy, we hope to substantiate it more fully in a similar rice-to-sugar transition area near our current research site.

lity of this route to wealth. Unlike the land, no one owns the sea; it is an open resource for all to exploit. The son of a tenant farmer is fortunate if he has as much land to till as his father. Most land is owned, and what little is sold demands a price far beyond his meager resources. The fisherman, on the other hand, has free access to the sea. And while fishing has its own special risks and does not produce wealthy men every day, the ultimate "democracy of the sea" provides a continuous economic opportunity, much less readily available to land-oriented labor. It will be extremely interesting to discover if the commercial approach of the "buy-and-sell" merchant or the productive approach of the fisherman has contributed most to (1) the increase of total wealth in the town, and (2) widening the distribution of income among its residents.

The effect of increasing wealth on traditional modes of social organization also demands study. In traditional Visayan communities a very small number of families often dominate local economic resources. Poorer individuals and families tend to develop long lasting dependency relationships towards one of them, if only to protect themselves in time of crisis or major need. Fox (1956) described this pattern in terms of the "patron-client relationship." In Estancia, with many independently wealthy families and individuals, we might expect people to be less rigid in their allegiances, willing and able to switch from one source of help to another. Thus along with—or thanks to—unusual opportunities for vertical mobility, Estancia may be allowing a more than traditional amount of horizontal mobility as well. If so (and this remains to be seen), it may perhaps mean major changes in the traditional system, so prevalent in Visayan communities, of economic and ultimately social and political dependency on the wealthy elite.

Estancia also appears to present an ideal situation for testing the following hypothesis concerning changes in lowland values. In traditional Visayan society an intelligent young man of ambition was likely to seek his fortune through essentially political means. If willing to directly enter local politics he would attempt to organize and affiliate with people whose

allegiance he might depend upon for his political or social activities. This might require capital outlays on his part, but these would be "investments," compensated for by the percentage of the local income that might accrue to himself for favors and services as a man of power. If, on the other hand, he wished to avoid direct political exposure, ownership of land and control of tenants would be the traditional means to status and power. As a landlord he would receive his legitimate share of the crop, and repayment and interest on loans to his tenants for their subsistence during the lean months before harvest. In either case, his primary concern would not be to increase total wealth or productivity of his dependents but simply to garner for himself an increasing proportion of what was already being produced. As politician or landlord, his approach was the "political" manipulation of a relatively fixed quantity of resources. This value on the "political" approach to wealth and power might well derive from the fact that prior to the advent of modern agricultural techniques, the produce of the land, the ultimate source of wealth, was in fact reasonably stable. It varied more with acts of nature than acts of man. Wealth was not amassed by producing more on a given piece of land, but by gaining control of increasing quantities of land.

If this hypothesis is correct (and it certainly requires confirmation), Estancia would appear to be an ideal place for the study of its potential transformation in a changing economic system. While it is possible to amass wealth in Estancia by gaining control over fishing boats or their catch, the nearly infinite resources of the sea permit — almost encourage — increasing total productivity, rather than simply increasing one's share of a fixed product. The owner of a small boat who works his way up to a large one or several, is catching and marketing more fish than when he started — and that, without impinging on anyone else's catch. Productivity can be effectively valued as a potential route to wealth, and concomitant power or social esteem. Until recently, only the sea with its communal ownership and almost endlessly expandable resources provided this sort of opportunity. Today, however, Estancia's experience may well prove relevant to more

purely agricultural communities which, as a result of modern scientific techniques, are discovering the land to be potentially far more productive than ever before. If Estancia can clearly demonstrate a change in values from the traditional "political" to a more modern "productive" approach to gaining wealth and social status, it may disclose the basis for transforming the Philippines' economic potential into a reality.

These at least are some of the approaches, questions, problems, and hypotheses we will be probing in Estancia during this year's research.

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