

OPEN FORUM

Participant: The paper of Prof. Palongpalong is very significant in view of the proposal to limit migration to Metro Manila and other urban centers. I would like, however, to comment on three points, First, I believe the housing program implies more capital outlay and it is not even economically productive. Second, it will facilitate the growth of population since programs like this encourage early marriages. Third, our housing program is basically reactive rather than prospective.

Tadena: I would like to disagree with our colleague on the first point. Even in the case of many Western countries one of the indicators of growth in cities is growth in construction activity. Construction of housing units generates the growth of industries and paves the way for the construction of other facilities in the area. Another factor to consider is its contribution to the solution of health and sanitation problem. Poor health conditions contribute to unproductivity of manpower resources, which is considered an economic loss.

Palongpalong: On the first point raised: I have discussed earlier the nature of the problems in the three case studies. It is true that in the case of Paoay and Andam-Mouswag projects, you cannot evaluate their economic benefits unless you look at it within the context of the tourism and industrial programs for the regional area of the tourism and industrial programs for the regional area of location. Regarding the second point: I think the problem of preventing young couples to marry at the age of 15 is beyond the housing program. As to the point that housing planning is reactive rather than prospective, this is largely true in the case of programs in the 1950's not in the 1970s. For example, recently NEDA came out with two volumes on housing in the Philippines sometime in 1976 which outlines housing needs by the year 2000. I don't think that is reactive.

I agree with Dr. Tadena that my paper failed to come up with the socio-economic and political factors that should have to be considered in housing. To a certain degree I touched on the political aspect when I mentioned in my paper about the participation of local governments in the program. But it is true that I have not come up with an overall mechanism for evaluating how much we should give for political, economic, social forces in the formulation of housing policy. I think that is a gargantuan task.

Tapales: Housing projects are really reactive. For instance, in the case of the Escopa project did you consider the environment? I think the government's people-centered approach wherein the affected dwellers, are consulted, proves my point that public housing is reactive. If it were not so, the NHA should have developed by now the proper guidelines for all requirements of housing development. Second, on the example of Prof. Palongpalong about the people and the use of toilets, I think that the people's refusal to use the toilets is not so much because they are not prepared to use them but rather it is a manifestation of their resistance to the project.

Palongpalong: I am not blaming the people for not using the toilets. All I am saying is that there must have been something wrong with the project

because it failed to make the beneficiaries psychologically prepared for modern-type of housing. To be honest with you, I believe in the people-centered approach: However, as I said earlier, it is not an absolutely reliable approach. If you have to use it, you also have to make use of other approaches.

Participant: First, what can you say about the abolition of GSIS/SSS individual housing loans? I noticed that the government is concentrating on community housing projects. Second, what is its implication on the national leadership's goal to achieve social justice?

Palongpalong: It was found that if you disperse funds through individual housing loans the government will not be able to ensure that the funds will go to the lowest stratum of society. I do not know if you can call that social justice or not. In the first place it is hard to define social justice. Plato said that give every man what is due him. But in case of emergency the government is inclined to consider the welfare of the greater majority of people.