

Modernization in the Philippines

The Substitution of Enterprise for Community as the Central Unit of Social Organization

[Sixto ROXAS](#)

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The real problem was that community was rendered obsolete, and the balance that a community finds with its habitat. When market behavior is determined by entities organized as profit-seeking product-specialized enterprises - the market fails to arbitrate between individual gain and the imperatives of social and communal and even ecological optimization. The "enclave" approach, with its atomistic, autistic, sectoral specialization is inherent in the Western business philosophy. Private enterprise business is basically sectoral in its viewpoint and its organization. Business is organized into specialized product lines: consumer products, industrial products, food, mineral, etc.

Each business looks at a geographical territory, not as a natural system with its own integral unity, with which human communities must find a symbiotic relation, but as a market for its product lines, as a source of raw materials as a source of cheap manpower, etc.

The assumption is that the atomistic viewpoints are brought together by the invisible hand of market competition so that they result in the maximization of welfare for the communities as well.

Very often, governments as well are organized sectorally. They do their own "businesses" defense, agriculture, industry, trade, banking, health, public safety, etc. These are specialized departmental viewpoints that cut across the nation.

These are the two most powerful participants in economic life. They are both sectorally organized.

In nature, communities are formed in families, villages, towns that find their natural balance with their environments. Livelihood systems, integrate with social, religious and political systems. When powerful business and government forces take a sectoral view, they in fact disintegrate these natural forms and attempt to regroup them into sectorally oriented and specialized institutions into sugar towns, logging settlements, mining villages, industrial and commercial centers, export processing zones. This process never succeeds in completely reintegrating the natural communities that are first dis-integrated. Entire segments of the original population in a natural habitat become marginal to the new communities.

The process itself, recruits the prime talent of every community to the ranks of business and management with this style. The natural communities lose all of their leadership to this process either through business or government.

The capacity of a country to tolerate this distortion is a function of the ratio of the rural population to agricultural land. Sparsely populated countries that are largely urbanized offer the possibility for the sectoral enclaves to exist side by side with relatively small traditional organic societies. The city states are already enclaves where the marginal population may be numerically minor. Countries with large traditional populations suffer the greatest distortion from this style of business and management. Here typically we find the widening gap between the enclave and the traditional habitats - the ever brightening light of enclave prosperity and modernity and the ever deepening shadow of rural poverty and urban slums.

But certainly the historical success of modern business must be proof of its basic soundness. The application of its techniques in the country where it developed to its present stage of professional maturity, the United States, has produced the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth. How does anyone dare challenge that record?

a)"To remain vigorous, coherent, and acceptable, an ideology must fit harmoniously with the characteristics and needs of the community it is supposed to serve. It must be appropriate to the surrounding geography, population, technology and history, and to the community's hopes and fears". Thus wrote George Lodge in analyzing the relevance of the American ideology to the U.S. in its early period.

b)"It is clear," he continued, "that the aggressive, competitive, possessive individualism which emerged in America was well suited to a society that was during its first one hundred years or so largely rural, agricultural, and dispersed, a nation in which human resources were scarce and natural resources were great." (George Lodge, *The New American Ideology*, page 124.)

There was no large indigenous population here crowding on scarce land, only tribes of Indians. Development was not construed in terms of uplifting the life of these Indians but of finding new settlements for immigrant Europeans. The disastrous effects of this mode of development on the indigenous population was not considered because the focus was on the new colonial settlements. These were the important population.

The application of the same approach to countries in our part of the world is obviously fraught with danger. In most countries of Asia, the indigenous rural population is the principal population. The disintegration of original communities is no minor phenomenon that is remedied by relocation and the creation of "reservations".

The indigenous populations are supposedly the beneficiaries of development. From this perspective, the American model is totally inapplicable. What is relevant for Asia in it is not its success in settling immigrants on a frontier but its utter failure in integrating the indigenous Indian populace into its society.

The experience we must find, the technology that is relevant for our purpose, is one which has demonstrated success in developing countries with large indigenous populations.

The approach to the Philippine problem requires a fresh ideology. We must find a way - and find it quickly - of bringing on a convergence among the activities that make people rich, those that give communities sustainable and adequate livelihood, and those that restore and preserve the natural resources. This will require:

a) A new view of nature as having laws of its own which dictate the poise and balance of self-sustenance, and which man must respect if his use of nature for his own needs is to be sustainable as well.

b) A new view of economic, social and political organization that recognizes the natural human community as the modality nature designed which best molds man's operational institutions to the imperatives of his habitat.

c) The translation of that view into the ethical norms, values, laws, institutions and project modalities that govern man's day to day transactions in society.

Key words

[philosophy](#), [community organization](#)

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Notes

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can contact FPH(Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer, pour le Progrès de l'Homme), 38 rue Saint Sabin, F- 75011 Paris, tel/fax + 33 1 48 06 58 86

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