

Integrated Rural Development and U.S. Baselands in the Philippines: The Sacobia Project*

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A lake now occupies the valley that used to shelter the farming village of San Vicente, Bamban, Tarlac in the central plains of Luzon in northern Philippines. In 1991-1992, massive volcanic (*lahar*) flows from Mount Pinatubo drained the nearby Sacobia River and diverted its waters toward this once thriving farming community of 200 families.

Similarly dislocated was the Sacobia Development Authority (SDA), a government agency which managed the integrated rural development (IRD) project comprising three villages and 2,500 people of which San Vicente was part. For most of the residents, however, the Mount Pinatubo

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calamity was simply the extension of the human-induced disaster which they have come to identify with the coming of the IRD project many years earlier.

The Sacobia Area

Prior to the Mount Pinatubo eruptions, more than 500 households resided in Sacobia, Bamban, Tarlac. Sacobia occupied 5,612 hectares of rolling and mountainous terrain five kilometers west of the national highway from the junction of the Bamban Bridge which marks Tarlac's southern boundary with Pampanga. It comprised three *barangays* (villages): San Vicente, Sto. Niño, Calumpang and their respective sitios.

Of its 2,366 inhabitants, 22 percent belonged to the indigenous hill tribe ethnic group collectively known as *Aytas*. They lived in three settled communities: San Martin in Barangay Sto. Nino and Sta. Rosa and Burog in Barangay San Vicente. However, there were an undetermined number of other *Ayta* families in less permanent settlements located in the higher areas. They still hunted, gathered, and roamed the volcano's slopes as their ancestors had done generations before them.

The 1,700-meter high Mount Pinatubo defined Sacobia's southwestern boundaries. To the southeast stood the giant American military complex, Clark Air Base, home of the U.S., 13th Air Force. The area's westernmost settlements, *Ayta* communities such as Burog and Matabâ, were only 11 to 12 kilometers from the volcano. In hunting for wildlife and gathering fruits, however, the *Aytas* would often reach close to the mountain's top.

Reverted Baselands

Sacobia was part of the 40,000 hectares of lands turned over by the Clark Air Base Command to the Philippine government in 1979. A year later, it became the site of a government-sponsored integrated area development project which, following the IRD concept of site-specific and integrated management, was autonomous of the local governments in the area.

From 1979 to 1980, various proclamations and executive orders, issued by then President Marcos, formed the legal basis for the creation and operationalization of the rural development plan for Sacobia. In essence, Sacobia was to be an experiment in IRD under two of Imelda Marcos' programs: BLISS, an acronym for *Bagong Lipunan* (New Society) Sites and Services and KKK (*Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran*, or Movement for Livelihood and Progress).

Despite the existence of an independent government agency with a corporate character directly responsible for the welfare of the residents, poverty and unemployment were widespread while basic social services were critically wanting. Livelihood projects set up by the SDA failed to generate adequate income for the people and most of them were later leased to private business persons. A great majority of residents simply relied on their own meager efforts to eke out a pitiful living.

Three quarters of the population were either peasant farmers or workers engaged in wage labor. More than half of the residents was unemployed. One fourth of the residents were illiterate while nearly half of the youth population was out of school.

History

The area, however, with its undulating terrain, possessed an innate charm and beauty which stood out in contrast to the surrounding flatlands of Central Luzon. Elevation ranged from a low of 100 meters (328 feet) to a high of 670 meters (2,200 feet) above sea level. The scenic green rolling hills, verdant meadows, and farm-dotted valleys on the eastern side and the more mountainous parts leading into denser foliage and near-virgin forests on the western part lent the place a paradise-like aura. Three medium-sized rivers and a major tributary snaked through its villages — enhancing the land's natural allure and providing water for homes and irrigation for farms.

Before the entry of the Intergrated Area Development (IAD) project, and notwithstanding the military reservation character of the place, the land was open to virtually any settler who wished to clear the area and cultivate crops. According to older residents, neither the Clark Air Base officials nor the Philippine government interfered with their colonization of the area.

Prior to the coming of the lowland settlers, slash and burn (*kaingin*) farming predominated with rice, corn, sweet potatoes, cassava, and tomatoes as regular crops. *Ayta* natives also farmed the valleys with their own upland rice strains, fished in the rivers, and grew vine vegetables. Along the slopes of Mount Pinatubo and other mountains, they hunted animals such as deer and wild pig (*baboy damo*). Traditional land use rights prevailed and the natives followed guidelines established since pre-colonial times.

Some *Aytas*, however, engaged in more permanent cultivation of crops. They planted *binundok* (mountain rice), bananas, fruit trees, and root crops such as sweet potatoes, yam, and cassava. The rice was mainly for home consumption but a large share of the root crop harvests were

sold to buyers in Angeles City. Other activities were the gathering of banana blossoms and the cutting and selling of *buhò* vines in the market.

In the plains of Tarlac and Pampanga, immediately after the Second World War, agrarian unrest was escalating in the countryside as massive dissatisfaction over sharing arrangements grew. The Communist-led People's Liberation Army (HMB, *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan*) and other radical peasant and working class organizations rose to confront the landowners and the Philippine government.

A number of peasants, however, chose to look for other lands to farm where they would be relatively free to cultivate crops and keep the entire produce for themselves. The Clark Field-Fort Stotsenburg area was one of the frontier areas in the Pampanga-Tarlac area settled by peasants fleeing from oppressive landlords and anxious to avoid the increasingly violent encounters of the full-blown class war.

In the early 1950s, more lowland settlers moved into the reservation area. The new entrants purchased land rights from the *Ayta*s at bargain prices. One old settler claimed to have bought his six hectares of land for only P800 (US\$400). This settler migration and corresponding pattern of land acquisition continued until the 1960s, although by this time land rights were fetching higher prices.

In any case, the indigenous *Ayta* families had to surrender the valleys and move further up the mountains. In what is now San Vicente, a settler community emerged with about fifty farmhouses scattered over a farming area. Later, as word of the new land got around, relatives and friends arrived to join the pioneers.

Some of the old settlers in Sto. Nifò claimed that during the early 1950s, the Magsaysay administration had granted them permission to till the land despite its being under the jurisdiction of the American military authorities. After all, this part of the reservation was not used for any military purpose by Clark Air Base except as a passageway to the Crow Valley firing range or the forested areas along the slopes of Mt. Pinatubo where they underwent jungle survival training.

The early lowlander-settlers built irrigation canals which tapped the rivers as water sources. They cultivated a variety of crops such as rice, corn, sweet potatoes, squash, eggplant, string beans, and *ampalaya* (bitter melon). Permanent crops such as mango, star apple, *santol*, jackfruit, bananas, and calamansi were also grown. Palay was rain-fed (*sahod-ulan*) and planted using the broadcast (*sabog-tanim*) method. Though mainly subsistence-based, the economy produced a modest

surplus which was sold in Mabalacat and Bamban. Since there were no roads, residents walked the long distance to the town markets along carabao trails and foot paths.

In 1964, San Vicente and Sto. Niño became full-fledged barrios of Bamban, Tarlac. Calumpang, already an established barrio, was earlier considered a part of Bamban but came under the jurisdiction of Mabalacat, Pampanga.

In the early 1960s, the 'sugarcane capitalists' (*mga kapitalista ng tubuhan*) entered the scene. This coincided with the establishment of a sugar central in Bamban to add to the already operating Pasudeco mill in Pampanga and Tabacalera in Tarlac. The settlers were organized to plant sugar by the *palsoneros* (overseers) of the 'capitalists.' Other sugar financiers from the towns would follow the same sharing arrangements. Soon, sugar became the main crop in Calumpang and Sto. Niño while San Vicente farmers intercropped it with rice.

During the late sixties and early seventies, the Bamban-Mabalacat area was the scene of intense and, sometimes, bloody confrontations between four armed groups — (1.) the government military troops and its allied paramilitary group, a notorious right wing death squad nicknamed the 'Monkees'; (2.) the Sumulong Group known as the 'Beatles,' which had broken away from the PKP-HMB and degenerated into an underworld criminal syndicate; (3.) the Maoist New People's Army (NPA) under Bernabe Buscayno, alias *Kumander Dante*, who first entered the area in 1968; and, (4.) the remnants of the pro-Soviet HMB (under Mariano 'Kumander Diwa' de Guzman).¹

The people feared the 'Beatles' and 'Monkees' death squads the most for these groups did not appear to be accountable to anyone for their actions.² Many town residents wishing to escape the conflicts and avoid being caught in the crossfire moved to the interior barangays of San Vicente, Calumpang, and Sto. Niño. But as the conflicts spread, even these barangays were not spared. Some settlers even had relatives who joined or were sympathetic to either the NPA or the HMB.

By the 1970s, however, the NPA had established a dominant position in the Sacobia area. Dante Buscayno saw the relatively

¹In 1967, a split occurred within the PKP-HMB which saw the establishment of a rival Maoist-oriented Communist Party (CPP) and its military wing, the New People's Army.

²The people named the armed groups after the two most popular and rival rock groups of the day because, just like the rock stars, members of the former also wore their hair long.

inaccessible villages as a natural sanctuary. The absence of wealthy landowners who would feel threatened by their presence also facilitated their entry into the area. The place also provided them a westward escape route across the mountains towards the less-turbulent towns in Zambales.

Enter Imelda Marcos

In the late seventies, Sacobia was deemed an ideal site for a rural development experiment by First Lady Imelda Marcos and her 'super' Ministry of Human Settlements (MHS) based on her much publicized vision for human development. The presence of indigenous *Ayta* families provided an opportunity for the high profile First Lady to be identified with efforts to address the problems of the most disadvantaged ethnic groups in the country.

Much of the groundwork, however, was laid down by other government agencies such as the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, which drew up the first survey and initial Sacobia resettlement feasibility plan, and the Development Academy of the Philippines, which headed a multi-agency task force that created a framework plan for Sacobia.³ The final blueprint was contained in the Sacobia Human Settlement Plan for 1979-1983 which was put together in 1979 by a formidable 21-member technical coordinating committee representing seven cabinet ministries, nine ministry bureaus, four government corporate-type agencies, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

These documents reveal that a major consideration for the transformation of the San Vicente, Calumpang, and Sto. Nino barangays into a resettlement area was the security problems posed by two slum communities, oddly named Marcos and Macapagal, which were situated on the northwestern periphery of the Clark Air Base complex. A significant percentage of the population of these two villages were indigenous *Ayitas* or of mixed parentage.

As early as 1973, government agencies were already discussing with Clark officials plans for solving the American military's problems with its unwanted slum communities. A decision was made to relocate the squatter families to the area later named Sacobia after a major river flowing along its southern boundary and separating it from Clark Air Base proper. Approval was immediately given by the 13th US Air Force and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

³Marilyn Alferez, "Sacobia Resettlement Project." University of the Philippines School of Urban and Regional Planning, 1983.

After the official turnover of the 40,000 hectares of unused U.S. baselands to the Philippine government in January 1979, the Ministry of Human Settlements assumed jurisdiction over the Sacobia Resettlement Area from the Ministries of National Defense and Agrarian Reform. The SDA was formed in March 1980.

Principles of Integrated Area Development

Integrated area development (IAD) has been defined as an attempt to ensure the interlocking and coordination of factors critical to the socio-economic development of depressed areas in the areas of infrastructure, farm-to-market roads, rural electrification, institutional arrangements, research and development, credit, marketing, and social services.⁴

[M]ulti-disciplinary in approach; multi-sectoral in operation; focuses on the rural poor; adopts a total systems approach; is to be implemented in a defined geographical area; implies a package program; [and] requires changes in the target group population as well as in the change system...⁵

The following are considered the more innovative features of the IAD strategy:⁶

- 1.) The IAD approach is carried out within a defined geographical unit. Political boundaries and ecological units (river basins, watersheds, flatlands, foothills, and uplands) are synchronized for planning and management purposes;
- 2.) IAD is interdisciplinary in approach and multi-sectoral in operation. Different government agencies come together and their individual sectoral programs are integrated and packaged as one whole. This is akin to a 'systems approach,' where political, social, economic, and technical factors work together and reinforce each other;
- 3.) The IAD administrative structure has the full authority to coordinate with various government agencies within the defined geographical area and be autonomous from local governments

⁴Zenaida A. Manalo, "The Integrated Area Development Approach to Rural Development: The Zamboanga del Sur Experience." in *Rural Development in Southern Philippines: Evaluation Report* (National Economic Development Authority, National Council on Integrated Area Development. Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, February 1989).

⁵Gelia Castillo, "How Participatory is Participatory Development?: A Review of the Philippine Experience" (Makati, Metro Manila: Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 1983).

⁶J. Andres Limcaoco, "The Integrated Area Development Approach to Regional Development," *Philippine Planning Journal*, Vol. XV, No. 2, (April 1984), pp. 17-18 and Castillo, *ibid.*, pp. 358-359.

"Integrated area development, however, refers to more than just an administrative mechanism for bringing about rural progress. Rural development programs have to be situated within the context of the existing agrarian socio-economic structure and the change-oriented processes that have impinged on it over a given period of time. To do this, an analytical framework needs to be utilized."

in order to avoid being transformed into a tool of political patronage. To achieve this, the project must have the full support and highest level of commitment of the national government;

4.) Rural and urban areas are spatially integrated. This is based on the hypothesis that "economic development occurs in a specific locational matrix which is primarily rural-industrial in composition." This is to be undertaken through improved market systems and industrial projects;

5.) IAD is designed to generate grassroots participation in both the planning and decision-making process. Through this bottom-up process, instead of the more traditional top-to-bottom approach, the needs of the people and the government's

development plans are merged. Participation by the rural poor in all aspects of the IAD is considered vital to its success; and,

- 6.) The IAD project office is meant to be a temporary administrative fixture. Based on the goal of building self-sufficient and self-reliant communities, a realistic time frame must be set which programs the gradual withdrawal of the IAD implementing team from the area.⁷

Almost all writers also agree that there has been no established and rigid blueprint for IAD. Indeed as late as 1983-1984, or after a decade of the strategy's introduction, the concept was still regarded as evolving.

⁷This last principle is not specifically identified in the literature but can be logically inferred from the planned withdrawal of the special project mode of management upon completion of the program.

Dilemmas of Rural Modernization

Integrated area development, however, refers to more than just an administrative mechanism for bringing about rural progress. Rural development programs have to be situated within the context of the existing agrarian socio-economic structure and the change-oriented processes that have impinged on it over a given period of time. To do this, an analytical framework needs to be utilized.

The theoretical framework for the research study I conducted on the Sacobia project from January to August 1991 was based mainly on Alain de Janvry's political economy framework.⁸ Like Payer⁹ and Feder¹⁰, de Janvry sees rural development programs (RDPs) as aiming at the modernization and commercialization of Third World agriculture. A dilemma arises because of 'functional dualism,' the term de Janvry uses to refer to the interactive but lopsided relations between the peasant sector and commercialized agriculture, i.e., the rural bourgeoisie. The more successful peasant farms are unable to cash in on 'functional dualism' by exploiting in turn marginal peasants because they lack the resources to do so.

Left unattended, this situation leads to untenable economic as well as political instabilities. The strategy to manage the conflict situation is to identify specific 'target groups' among the peasantry who are the more successful producers and provide them with the support needed to overcome the constraint of 'functional dualism.' Instead of venting their ire on the commercial sector, poorer peasants would be made to realize that, with hard work and a modernized outlook, they too can be as successful as their petty bourgeois neighbors.

RDPs may be categorized into 'political' or 'economic' RDPs. The clientele of political RDPs are the small upper strata of successful farmers who are expected to buffer the widening class conflict between the rural bourgeoisie and the marginalized peasants and semi-proletarians. Political RDPs also serve the economic purpose of delivering cheap wage foods to the market. Economic RDPs, on the other hand, are aimed at the marginalized peasantry and semi-proletarians, who are to be recipients of social programs under the so-called 'basic needs' framework. With their

⁸Alain de Janvry, *The Agrarian Question and Reformism in Latin America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

⁹Cheryl Payer, *The World Bank: A Critical Analysis* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1982).

¹⁰Ernest Feder, *Perverse Development* (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1983).

essential needs provided for, these subsidized peasants would be expected to render cheap labor¹ for various sectors of the economy. The economic RDP then achieves the political purpose of "maintaining the *status quo* of social relations in the countryside." Bello, et al. also emphasize the counter-insurgency motive behind both the political and economic RDPs.¹¹

A major assumption is that redistributive strategies like land reform have become unfeasible both for economic and political reasons. Payer believes that strong landowner opposition has forced a backtracking on the promises of agrarian reform. The old rationale which accompanied land reform programs of the past are now being repackaged under the catch-all umbrella of 'rural development.'

The combination of political and economic RDPs in terms of strategies and clientele makes up the framework for an integrated rural development (IRD) approach for addressing agrarian conflicts.

The Pre-IRD Framework

Sacobia settlers were not strangers to government-initiated rural development programs. Community Development (CD) strategies were tried in the fifties and early sixties, but with negligible results. The 'Green Revolution' technology crept in as farmers started shifting to high yielding rice varieties (HYVs) in the early seventies, a condition for participation in a government-subsidized small farmer credit program.

The entry of commercialized agriculture, represented by sugar interests, had a far deeper impact on the forces of production in the Sacobia villages. 'Sugar capitalists' supplied the financing while the settlers provided the land and labor.

Because of its commercial value, sugar occupied the best level lands (*patag*). It is likely that the introduction of sugar was responsible for breaking down the basically subsistence-oriented agriculture that the settler-farmers had established. Only the *Aytas* who had been driven to the hinterlands were left to pursue a mainly, though not entirely, pre-capitalist mode.

While a few cane sugar cultivators reported high incomes, the majority languished in a marginal existence. A classic peasant differentiation pattern was emerging. A few farmers with larger plots and

¹¹Walden Bello, David Kinley, and Elaine Elinson, *Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines* (San Francisco, California: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1982).

greater surpluses were hiring wage workers and recruiting tenants from among their neighbors. On the whole, however, a condition similar to de Janvry's 'functional dualism' existed between the Sacobia peasant producers, on the one hand, and the sugar industry elite of financier-traders and mill owners on the other.

The family-based peasant production mode was a source of cheap labor as most cultivators engaged in self-exploitation to supply the cane for the sugar mills. The 'sugar capitalists' reaped double profits as responsibility for the land's upkeep remained with the farmers. They even utilized the unpaid labor of the settlers to build the farm-to-market roads. For most farmers, the sugar incomes had to be supplemented by growing food crops to cover their basic subsistence needs.

Sugar, being at that time the country's major export commodity, facilitated the Sacobia settlers integration into the international economic order. This interconnection, however, was limited as it did not result in the monocrop-type of agriculture characteristic of fully integrated economies.

Within the socially volatile situation in the late sixties, peasant unrest entered a period of resurgence with the New People's Army (NPA) at its helm. Being the military wing of the Maoist-oriented Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the NPA probably interpreted the socio-economic situation they encountered as dominated by pre-capitalist social relations. Thus, in organizing among the settlers, NPA chief Dante Buscayno raised only anti-feudal issues such as rent reduction and shifts in harvest-sharing.

But no matter how the NPA viewed the mode of production issue, their mere presence was enough to upset the 'functional dualist' nature of relationship in the area. In the mid-seventies, the 'sugar capitalists' started to withdraw. By the late seventies, or just about the time the Sacobia project was being conceptualized, sugar cane had been reduced to a secondary crop.

At this point, the settler communities were ripe for an economic alternative. The CPP-NPA group — the most logical catalyst for such a turnaround — failed to set the economic dynamics moving. The guerrillas had established alternative local governments in the villages but neglected to address the question of economic options. Undoubtedly, the civil war situation was one factor which prevented the development of what would have been a more sophisticated level of struggle. The other factor may have been the dominance of a form of ideological blindness on the part of the CPP which focused the entire struggle on the singular overriding objective of seizing political power through armed struggle.

Rural Development 'Imelda-Style'

After Sacobia was selected as the site of the state-initiated relocation and resettlement project, it became imperative to purge it of the insurgents. Accordingly, two battalions of military troops were ordered to encamp in San Vicente, the pilot barangay for the IRD project. Known rebels and sympathizers were identified and 'persuaded' by typical torture methods to return to the fold of the law.

To establish a strong administrative structure, the SDA was placed under the command of a retired Army major general. The slum dwellers from Marcos and Macapagal villages were initially relocated to San Vicente.

The original settlers were forcibly deprived of their landholdings. They were assured of a rapid government-initiated development of their area that was calculated to turn them into self-sufficient and prosperous farmers. In the meantime, the soldiers took over the operation of their farms. Some of the settlers were hired as wage laborers. Others simply left the area in disgust.

The BLISS strategy was touted by government as the most comprehensive of all IAD programs and was supposed to bring together 11 basic needs, a cluttered and redundant laundry list of services which included "power, water, food, shelter, clothing and cottage industry, economic base, education, culture and technology, sports and recreation, medical services, and mobility and ecological balance."¹² In 1990, the SDA reported that it engaged in programs aimed at developing the area. These were:

- 1.) Livelihood projects such as agro-forestry, livestock raising and dispersal, crop production, and small business ventures;
- 2.) Community development projects including social services and organization and leadership/management seminars; and,
- 3.) Infrastructure development projects including housing, irrigation and water supply, roads, and livelihood building projects.

It was obvious, however, that many of the family livelihood projects were initiatives of the local population with little or no assistance from any government agency. This was the case with rice and other crop farms and small ventures like community *sari-sari* stores.

¹²Castillo, *op cit*.

One tangible project was the shelter program which consisted of 100 BLISS-style cottages in San Vicente. There were also 50 semi-brick cottages constructed for *Ayta* families in San Martin. The houses were provided rent-free although a dispute would later arise between the occupants and the SDA over their ownership status. Given the 528 families living in Sacobia, however, this housing program was obviously inadequate to meet the shelter needs of the entire population.

But as a pet program of Imelda Marcos, Sacobia generated enough showcase projects and was provided with almost unlimited funds. Total expenditures for the Sacobia project was estimated to have reached one billion pesos (US\$100 million in the early eighties). The project's main attraction was the goat breeding, dispersal and dairy farm, under the KKK program located in Sto. Niño. These programs inexplicably operated independently of the SDA. The farm imported 1,200 Anglo-Nubian goats from Australia as initial breeding stock. Also brought in from Australia were planeloads of Napier grass to feed the goats.

Social and political problems arose over time. While the farms were eventually returned to the original cultivators after a year or two, the loss of control over their lands and the insecurity of tenure engendered by the SDA's near absolute authority over the entire area bred dissatisfaction among the population. Some of those relocated from Macapagal and Marcos villages were provided with jobs as 'emergency laborers,' receiving less than the mandated minimum wage — a situation that would remain unchanged over the years.

The Underlying IAD Agenda

The major economic plan of the Sacobia IRD project was to create an enclave of agro-industrial development in the countryside to serve as a module, where new methods of production and processing would be devised, tested, and then farmed out to the rest of the country. In this way, the technological improvements in agricultural practices would bring the settler-farmer into the modern world. The economic aspect was not exclusively centered on production. It also covered the marketing of products.

The project's political agenda was two-fold. First, it would extend to the Americans the authority to resolve security problems in neighboring Clark Air Base. Secondly, it was considered a means of purging the area of left-wing guerrilla influence. Counter-insurgency operations were a precondition for kickstarting the development project.

A subsidiary goal was to introduce certain values by remolding the minds of the Sacobia settlers to be more receptive to government projects and programs, in general, and to new non-traditional economic undertakings, in particular.

The initial strategy for achieving these objectives was to extinguish the last vestiges of subsistence agriculture and, during the first stage, organize a government-managed integrated corporate farm. The livelihood projects would provide the settlers with a hands-on experience in wage labor. Three dendrothermal plants, combined with a tree plantation and an agro-industrial estate, were to complete the scenario. Private business concerns were to be encouraged to participate as investors in the project by permitting them to rent land or lease 'functional structures.'

The government would take on the role of a rural capitalist class while the peasantry was to be converted into a wage earning rural proletariat. Capitalism would be brought about by government decree; and the self-provisioning peasant households would be forced into a working class existence. A new and more manageable 'functional dualist' relation was to grow between the Sacobia rural working class and an entrepreneurial government bureaucracy.

During the second stage, more specific target groups among the settler population were to be identified as a form of social differentiation begins to take place. Peasant-settlers, who had a taste of cash crop agriculture and were familiar with new technologies, would qualify for the short list of targetted beneficiaries. The vehicle for their participation would be the government-organized 'cooperative.' The livelihood projects were to be turned over to the settler cooperative and its members reconstituted into a rural middle class primarily assigned to 'buffer class conflict.' Among the settler communities, they would form the upper strata of successful producers. The lower strata would be composed of the wage workers in the industries run by either the government or private capital.

Sacobia economic enterprises would consist of two types, classified according to the social class managing them and the level of technology adopted. At the high end would be enterprises introduced by private capital, utilizing complex and capital-dependent technologies which could amass huge profits. At the low end would be the projects managed by the community cooperatives which would be more agriculture-based, require cheaper technological know-how, and generate less profits.

De Janvry's notion of an economic agenda to "deliver cheap wage foods to the market" would be fulfilled by the livelihood projects selling their output in neighboring towns and villages. Indeed, one success

claimed by the SDA in 1983 was the alleged fall in the prices of broiler chickens due to the market interventions of Sacobia products. The industrial projects were meant to deliver cheap energy and affordable manufactured goods. As for "slowing down the collapse of peasant agriculture," this would be achieved by ensuring the success of the transferred livelihood projects.

The absence of a traditional big landlord class facilitated the choice of the area for the IRD project. Since these were public lands, there were no legal landowners except the government. It also follows that agrarian reform was not to be on the agenda.

Land reform was canceled as an option available to the settlers by the convenient trick of retaining the military reservation character of the reverted US baselands. With the land classified as inalienable and undisposable, demands for redistribution could easily be sidestepped.

The indigenous *Ayta* communities represented the sub-family farms that were in many ways external to the dominant mode of production in Sacobia. Although mention was made of the need to understand their distinct culture and develop them economically and socially as other ethnic groups, no special economic program was created for them. It was understood, however, that because of their sub-marginal existence, they would have to be targeted for extensive social programs.

Within the five-year time frame of 1979 to 1984, Sacobia was to have emerged as 'an economic growth node' whose achievements would 'radiate' to surrounding areas. The vehicle for transformation would be the tripartite efforts of 1.) government as combined lessor-landowner, land developer and part investor; 2.) private business persons as capitalist entrepreneurs; and, 3.) the settler-residents as both an agro-industrial labor force and petty agrarian capitalist class.

The IRD Agenda Self-Destructs

Notwithstanding the grandness of the Sacobia development plan, formidable problems were immediately encountered in its early implementation. Although expropriation of peasant holdings was easily undertaken and the livelihood projects generated the jobs to partially absorb the 'de-peasantized' labor, the smallholders were never entirely sold on the soundness of the 'grand plan.' Deeply suspicious of any government undertaking, they had to be coerced into participating in the experiment with a slight nudge from the two-battalion strong military contingent.

Turning them into wage workers was harder, especially for the more successful farmers. Some long-time settlers refused to demean themselves by working as wage laborers and left for the towns. Interestingly, these settlers half-expected the project to fail and simply bided their time in anticipation of their return at a later date. Most of those who signed up as underpaid low-skilled farm workers were relocatees from the two Clark Air Base villages. What was unraveling was a classic case of consciousness and social relations lagging behind the material development of the productive forces. In rather tortured syntax, an SDA official in 1983 identified the problem in this manner:

[An] anti-government attitude of beneficiaries due to several years of unfulfilled promises and commitment. The people have been calloused to unsubstantiated promises given out to them years ago. It takes time to convince people to believe and be hopeful again.¹³

In time, however, these constraints could have been overcome. Even the results of Imelda Marcos' image-driven idiosyncracies could have been minimized. Given her short span of attention, she would later have left Sacobia alone to pursue its goals unmolested. But economic problems at the national level resulted in large budget cuts for the project and forced major adjustments. Infrastructure, like housing, was scaled down and the major projects, including the agro-industrial estate and the three dendrothermal plants, were canceled. When the livelihood projects 'turned over' to the settlers floundered, there was no choice left but to return to the *status quo ante* of small family farms. The most marginalized settlers even went back to subsistence production.

The capitalist agenda for development based on developing a strong rural middle class came to an embarrassing halt. As jobless settlers unilaterally started going back to small-scale farming, the project management recognized the hopelessness of the experiment and changed gears. And if only to remind the settlers that it still had legal control over the land, the SDA started distributing land awards to the *de facto* resident-landholders. However, the SDA's jurisdiction and prerogatives over the area, propped up by military support, remained unquestioned.

Instead of private investors coming to establish their own economic activities, the entrepreneurs that finally settled in were those who simply took over the livelihood projects meant originally for the settlers' 'cooperative.' Their relationship with the SDA was the result of a pure business agreement. These capitalists had no stake in the Sacobia

¹³Alferez, *op cit*.

experiment as a whole and were only concerned with accumulating profits. They paid rent to the SDA for the use of the land and the facilities and sold their products in surrounding towns and cities.

These business persons were said to have been profiting handsomely from their operations. According to informed sources, the fishpond leaseholder, for example, was calculated to be earning net profits of at least P3 million a year. He provides employment for some 10 to 15 residents but at low wages ranging from P1,000 to P1,500 a month. The leaseholder also gives a token P300 a month to sitio San Martin. The broiler and layer projects were not doing badly either. This answers the question of which social classes eventually benefited from the Sacobia project.

If the project was not in accordance with the IRD agenda of development and most settler-residents were already being left to fend for themselves, why was the experiment not immediately discontinued? The answer to this puzzle lies in the realm of politics. Though it no longer provided the economic opportunities it had promised to the residents, Sacobia still had a few resources to be dispersed as a form of political largesse. The generously-funded KKK goat project for one, fulfilled this purpose well (at least until 1985) as its stock of prized Australian animals were distributed among favored barangays in Tarlac and Pampanga especially during elections.

For a substantial number of the residents, the project management acted as a patron who dealt out land awards, provided housing, water, electricity, and other amenities. Once a year, during a Christmas party, the SDA would distribute goods such as canned sardines, rice, sugar, coffee, and junk food. In Marcos' time, they got more stuff such as pots and pans and cooked chicken. Thus, a dole-out mentality was cultivated among the people. Despite these, the residents were also fully aware that they were not getting the social services that were promised them in line with Imelda's notion of the 'eleven basic needs.'

The Sacobia project was reduced to a 'paternalistic' model of land settlement and was described in this manner:

Experiences with these approaches indicate first of all the heavy investments required. The sponsoring agency...has had to assume financial and technical responsibility both for the initial organization (clearing of land, construction of roads, wells, irrigation facilities, schools, health centers, etc.) and for the administration and upkeep of the colonies until such time that they are fully emancipated. The resulting costs are out of

proportion with respect [to] both...the economic possibilities of the settlement and...the needs of the nation for social and economic projects in other fields.¹⁴

Government paternalism "reduced significantly the spirit of sacrifice, personal initiative, and willingness to work among the settlers...and created a false sense of security among [them] in their expectations of government patronage." The need to develop "a community, based on solidarity and mutual aid, capable and willing to run its own affairs in the future without continuous support from outside" was also neglected.

Without sufficient resources to distribute, the SDA was reduced to simply mimicking the 'paternalistic' model. But its efforts, in this regard, served only to alienate large numbers of the settler population who were not recipients of its gratuities.

The economic malaise accompanying this socially dependent relationship was fortunately not equally distributed among the barangays. San Vicente, the original pilot barangay, and the *Ayta* sitios of Burog and San Martin were the most severely affected. Sto. Niño had a little more autonomy. Calumpang, on the other hand, where the 1979-1980 land seizures were resisted, maintained a relatively independent existence and its farmers were more productive and self-reliant. Before Mount Pinatubo's eruption, it was known as the 'vegetable basket' of Mabalacat, Pampanga.

After Imelda's Fall

After the Marcoses fled the country in February 1986, the new administration of Corazon Aquino abolished Imelda Marcos' Ministry of Human Settlements. Six of its forty or so attached agencies, including the Sacobia Development Authority, were temporarily placed under the Presidential Management Staff pending their final disposition.

The SDA's budget from the central government shrunk to the barest minimum and this totally eliminated any chance of realizing Imelda's 'grand' rural development plan for Sacobia. In January 1991, Aquino certified a bill to the Philippine Congress dissolving the SDA and transferring the jurisdiction over the Sacobia area to the appropriate local governments. This bill sat in the legislature for months and was overtaken by the May 1992 national elections.

During the first half of 1991, Sacobia became the object of a 'tug of war' between various government and private concerns. Those who

¹⁴United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *The Community Development Approach to Land Settlement* (New York: United Nations, 1966), pp. 6-7.

showed interest in taking over the area included the Departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, and Natural Resources, the provincial governments of Tarlac and Pampanga, and the former NPA leader turned cooperative manager Dante Buscayno.

Quality of Life

Household surveys conducted by SDA community workers in 1990 gave an indication of the life conditions of the Sacobia residents prior to the Mount Pinatubo eruption. The surveys covered a total of 521 families and 2,492 persons. These represented 92 percent of the number of families and 95 percent of the total number of persons officially reported by the SDA as the area's population for 1990. The total population of 2,635 persons constituted an increase of 32 percent over the estimated 1979 population of 2,000 in the three barangays. However, it was 45 percent lower than the peak population of 4,760 reported in 1983.

Figures on educational status revealed little improvement in the educational levels of settler-residents compared to the pre-1979 period. For the four barrios (San Vicente, Calumpang, Marcos, and Macapagal), elementary school level education even declined by 2.2 percent (65.2 percent vs. 63 percent). In the secondary level, the 1990 figures showed a slight improvement with 20 percent as against 11.7 percent. For college education, it was 1.6 percent for the pre-1979 period compared to the 1990 share of 4 percent. Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare the number of those who actually finished a certain educational level as this information was not available for the pre-IRD period.

Literacy rates for the surveyed population of 1,950 was 76 percent. Incredibly enough, this also showed a deterioration from the pre-IAI literacy rate of 80 percent for the lowlander population. In 1982, the SDA actually reported an improved literacy level of 88 percent. The 1990 school participation rate for the youth was just as bad. Of the 701 young people of school age, only 58 percent (407) were in school while 42 percent (294) were out-of-school. There were no equivalent figures for the 1970s.

A total of 2,423 persons were included in the 1990 surveys on employment. The Sacobia labor force numbered 1,362 persons or 56.21 percent of the surveyed population. Total employment was 588 persons or 43 percent. Unemployment was 56.83 percent or 774 persons. The following unemployment rates were registered per barangay or sitio (labor force number in parenthesis):

San Vicente	50.81 percent	(492)
Sto. Niño	60.00 percent	(315)
Calumpang	70.32 percent	(219)
San Martin	57.49 percent	(167)
Burog	47.32 percent	(112)
Sta. Rosa	56.14 percent	(57)

Once again, things turned from bad to worse for the settlers since the IAD project came. In the late seventies, San Vicente and Calumpang had unemployment rates of 40 and 42 percent, respectively. The villages of Marcos and Macapagal had pre-IAD unemployment rates of 41 percent and 19 percent, respectively. Even the SDA-tabulated results show an unemployment rate for all barangays and sitios in 1990 of 51 percent.

In terms of sources of direct employment, the official figures show that 46 percent (or 272 persons) of those employed worked with the SDA while the rest (316 persons) were mainly self-employed, e.g., farmer-cultivators, although a few were hired by other government agencies or private employers. By the fourth quarter of 1990, the hiring of 43 additional emergency laborers pushed the number of SDA employees among the residents to 315, or 54 percent of the working labor force. This momentarily lowered the total unemployment rate to 53.7 percent.

The already bleak situation turned gloomier after the December 1990 retrenchment of 263 emergency laborers. The Sacobia unemployment rate then reached macabre proportions with 1,037 persons or 76 percent of the labor force out of work! Even if we exclude the 41 SDA laborers who also engaged in farming, we still arrive at a figure of 996 unemployed, or 73 percent of the labor force.

Monthly family incomes for the survey period showed that 47.41 percent (320 families) had incomes below P1,000. Of those in this income category, 26.5 percent (179 families) had incomes below P800 while 339 families (50.22 percent) had incomes of P1,000 or higher. Sixteen (16) families (2.37 percent) reported no incomes. Most of the 339 families (50.22 percent) reporting incomes of P1,000 and above were those with SDA emergency laborers. Their gross wages would average P1,266 a month with a low of P1,170 and a high of P1,500.

Among the various occupations engaged in by the employed population, workers/laborers were on top with a 38 percent share followed by smallholder farmers with 31 percent. About 7 percent combined farming and wage labor activities. Persons engaged in service occupations such as domestic helpers, salesladies, laundrywomen, and waitresses

comprised 5.3 percent. Transport occupations (tricycle and other drivers) comprised 4 percent. Petty traders and storekeepers comprised another 4 percent. The following are the major occupation groups among Sacobia's employed residents:

1. Workers/Laborers	223	(37.93 percent)
2. Smallholder farmers	185	(31.46 percent)
3. Farmer/laborers	41	(6.97 percent)
4. Service occupations	31	(5.27 percent)
5. Transport occupations	22	(3.74 percent)
6. Storekeepers/Petty traders	22	(3.74 percent)
7. Employees	13	(2.21 percent)
8. Military personne	11	(1.87 percent)
9. Overseas contract workers	11	(1.87 percent)
10. Hunting and gathering	8	(1.36 percent)
11. Others	21	(3.57 percent)

There was really no major overall shift in occupations among the Sacobia population. In the pre-IAD period, the percentage of peasant smallholders for San Vicente and Calumpang were 66 percent and 70 percent respectively. But this was offset by the situation in Marcos and Macapagal where 57 percent and 84.6 percent were non-farmers. The non-farming population worked as domestic helpers, tailors/dressmakers, laborers, security guards, drivers and mechanics, storekeepers, and carpenters. These are virtually the same types of livelihood that present-day settlers are engaged in.

Furthermore, the greater figure for workers is deceptive because of the large numbers employed by the SDA in an emergency status. These wage workers performed menial and low-skilled agro-forestry work with no hope of advancement. Without the SDA jobs, most of them would most likely be participating in farming and other family-based agricultural labor.

As it became obvious that the promise of a better life in a modern progressive rural community was turning into an empty hope, many settlers and relocatees started leaving the area. Furthermore, the many restrictions imposed on their lives were getting to be more oppressive. According to one informant, of the original 500 settler-families, 300 eventually left. From the peak population of 4,760 in 1982, only 2,419 persons (51 percent) remained by 1988.

The Damage from Mt. Pinatubo

The destruction wrought by Mount Pinatubo in 1991-92 put on hold the brewing inter-agency dispute over the area. Indeed, the extensive

damage to the once charming rolling hills of Sacobia had now made it a less attractive prize. A preliminary report issued by the SDA towards the end of June 1991 estimated the total damage to infrastructure and livelihood projects at P24 million. This figure, however, does not cover the personal and livelihood losses of individual families who were rendered homeless and stripped of all their belongings or the projects managed by other government agencies.

In the immediate aftermath of the eruption, houses and buildings collapsed from the weight of accumulated volcanic sand and ash on their rooftops. Families in San Vicente managed to save their homes by either refusing to evacuate or returning periodically to clean their rooftops. But farmhouses along the banks of the rivers were swept away by the deadly lahar flows.

Some fields were buried in one to two meters of volcanic sand and mud. Farm animals drowned, houses were swept away, and trees were uprooted. Tens of hectares of fruit tree orchards, sources of livelihood for many residents, were all covered with thick mud which hardened overnight and destroyed the year's crop.

The SDA estimated that 150 hectares of ricelands were completely buried under sand and ash up to two meters deep. About 236 hectares of SDA-managed tree orchards, planted mostly with mango and cashew, were damaged. An additional 750 hectares cared for by residents and planted with fruits and forest trees and income-earning root crops such as cassava, sweet potato (*kamote*) and yam (*gabi*) were damaged by heavy ashfall.

Approximately 400 heads of cattle were severely affected. Some were killed when the roofs of the SDA cattle ranch collapsed on them; others died of disease and hunger as grasslands disappeared under the ash and sand. Most of the 2,000 heads of Mallard ducks distributed to the residents were swept away by lahar flows. Two fishponds in San Martin and Sta. Rosa were also washed out.

All bridges crumbled as their foundations were eroded by the lahar-induced widening of river banks. This cut off the entire area for weeks. Heavy rains turned the rivers into lakes that spilled over into both primary and secondary roads and deposited tons of volcanic sand, ash, and mud, some 10-15 centimeters thick, which hardened when the water receded. Drainage canals were also clogged. For a time, the only means of travel to Bamban town proper to get supplies were canoe-like transports pulled by hand.

The few functioning irrigation systems, including, minidams in San Martin and San Vicente were totally damaged. Most of the deepwells, which had anyway been providing a less than adequate water supply for residents, ceased to operate. The SDA attributed the latter to the series of earthquakes which could have lowered the water table. The privately-operated poultry projects consisting of layer and broiler facilities were heavily damaged as their buildings collapsed. Other SDA facilities were totally wrecked.

"Nowhere was the failure of the Sacobia experiment more dramatically illustrated than during the period of relief operations after the volcanic eruption....[P]eople were left to fend for themselves....The SDA, on the other hand, showed more interest in clearing the roads and rehabilitating its projects than in responding to the immediate needs of the people....[I]t acted more like a corporate entity than a people-oriented service agency."

During the rainy months of 1992, massive lahar flows from Mount Pinatubo caused the waters of the Sacobia River to inundate the valley where half of San Vicente lay. Sixty houses were completely submerged under the newly-formed lake. The SDA itself had to move out of the area and set up its office in Tarlac town, 30 kilometers away.

The Lack of Relief Operations

Nowhere was the failure of the Sacobia experiment more dramatically illustrated than during the period of relief operations after the volcanic eruption. In what could be viewed as bureaucratic rigidity in interpreting its mandate, the SDA showed a lack of initiative in soliciting and coordinating relief operations. On the whole, the people were left to fend for themselves. Other agencies and outside individuals exhibited more concern. The SDA, on the other hand, showed more interest in clearing the roads and rehabilitating its projects than in responding to the immediate needs of the people. In short, it acted more like a corporate entity than a people-oriented service agency.

"Within the context of a rural environment such as that which prevailed in Sacobia, statist models of development, based on the overwhelming role assumed by the governmental apparatus, do not work. The bureaucracy, even when it takes on a 'special project' status, is too inflexible to deal with the varied problems that arise with area-based development projects."

It is true, as its report indicated, that the SDA did not have the resources to undertake relief activities. However, this does not justify the agency's virtual surrender of its social service functions to an already overburdened Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD). It must have realized early on that the DSWD's resources were itself limited and thinly spread. Furthermore, the department's relief distribution policies discriminated against most of Sacobia's inhabitants.

Issues of Concern

The Sacobia experience in rural development raises several issues with respect to certain basic concerns in rural development from both conceptual and administrative perspectives. These are: 1.) the role of the state; 2.) counter-insurgency; 3.) role of the military; 4.) the livelihood projects; 5.) generating jobs; 6.) productivity issue; 7.) agrarian reform; 8.) the ethnic dimension; 9.) the IAD concept; 10.) administrative structure; 11.) self-sufficiency; and, 12.) popular participation.

The Role of the State

Within the context of a rural environment such as that which prevailed in Sacobia, statist models of development, based on the overwhelming role assumed by the governmental apparatus, do not work. The bureaucracy, even when it takes on a 'special project' status, is too inflexible to deal with the varied problems that arise with area-based development projects. It also does not possess the creativity and innovativeness that are required in an experimental environment. It is too beholden to the status quo and frequently obsequious to local and national political power holders.

This, however, does not mean that everything should be left to the 'private sector' if by this term one simply refers to 'private capital.' The

market is too oppressive a mechanism to be left unattended. Often in fact, the interests of government and the private sector coincide and this conspiracy-like alliance creates an environment which leaves the labor sector in a highly disadvantaged situation.

Ideally, a truly tripartite relation should arise among government, private capital, and the labor sector. However, given the initial advantage already held by the first two, a more sound proposition would be a dual partnerships between the government on one hand, and either the private sector or labor on the other.

Counter-insurgency

Whether as a chief component or an incidental outcome of a particular development strategy, an anti-insurgency agenda always leaves gaping wounds in the social system which are difficult to heal. Since it is the people who become deeply scarred by this experience, the prerequisite of gaining their hearts and minds is immediately 'counter-effected.'

While government certainly has the prerogative to preserve itself against all threats to its existence, there is no doubt that insurgency problems arise mainly because of the public sector's neglect of and inability to address brewing social problems. The government is often beholden to those who have vested class interests. This bias towards the preservation of the prevailing socio-economic environment causes social and political unrest. The only solution is to free the government from these particular class interests and establish a preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged.

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Role of the Military

The most glaring aspect of the implementation of the Sacobia IAD project was the role played by the military. Assigning the lead role to the military could have been the biggest mistake the government made in Sacobia. In the eyes of the residents, the project became initially identified with the military and its high-handed behavior. Thus, any chance of getting the residents' cooperation or sympathy was immediately lost at the start.

Following its own logic, the government may have thought it justified to use the military because of the presence of rebel guerrillas and the strong influence the latter exercised over the population. However, even this particular type of reasoning breaks down because the troops were not placed under a civilian authority. This was, after all, officially a development project, not a military operation. The choice of a recently retired army general to head the SDA was also questionable as this prevented any chance of the people getting any justice from the state authorities for what they suffered under the military.

Of course, the heavy military presence achieved the goal of counter-insurgency as the NPA practically abandoned the area. Occasional sightings of guerrilla movements continued to be noted although in a more modest scale than in the past. Despite the success of the counter-insurgency effort, the SDA still deemed it necessary to maintain the army camps as late as 1983.

That the project site was surrounded along its north, western, and southern flanks by areas actually used for military purposes was a factor that aggravated the concern for security by the project implementors. Access by both the US and Philippine military to their respective training areas through Sacobia had to be assured.

It is thus evident from the Sacobia experience that the military can never be an effective or efficient agent for development. It is just not cut out for this type of work and only a foolishly naive planner or a perverse political leader will think otherwise. The military establishment's role in society is clear — to protect the country from external threats. Where they belong in times when such threats do not exist is also clear — within high-walled barracks.

Livelihood Projects

Given the manner in which the livelihood projects were handled, it is also not clear how much importance the SDA really placed on these activities. The most important aspect of the livelihood plan was their turnover to the community.

When this plan did not succeed and the projects started experiencing difficulties, the SDA all too quickly abandoned them with the lame excuse that its budget could no longer support the projects. The SDA was supposed to have undertaken skills training programs. Since the livelihood projects faltered, it is safe to say that the training programs were not adequate to meet the needs of the residents.

One informant pointed out that, in the first place, the cooperative the SDA organized, the Bagong Lipunan Community Association (BLCA), never really operated as a functioning cooperative. The people were pooled together but they continued to be dependent on the SDA for everything. The informant expressed no surprise that the BLCA lasted less than two years.

In terms of alleviating the poverty of the resident-beneficiaries through increased incomes, the livestock dispersal program was a failure. If anything, it merely provided some transitory relief for the rural poor of Sacobia.

The dispersal program was not confined to Sacobia-based beneficiaries. The BAI for one dispersed cattle in Capas, Tarlac and in Bulacan. Politics again played a role here. Thus, even before the program's benefits within the Sacobia area could be maximized for its residents and the model actualized, the project implementors' sights were already being turned elsewhere.

As a former KKK official intimated, the program lacked an efficient monitoring and follow-up component. Achievements were recorded merely in terms of the number of heads dispersed. Because of the inability of many beneficiaries to meet the conditions under the contract of agreement, the program in effect became a dole-out and did nothing to instill self-reliance and self-sufficiency among the residents.

Generating Jobs

As of December 1982, the SDA claimed to have generated 450 jobs among the settler-families. As pointed out above, these consisted entirely of low-skilled and low-paying work classified as emergency labor. Most of the work consisted in land clearing, and ring weeding. A typical work contract would be for only three months after which a new appointment had to be made. There was no security of tenure and no work benefits.

The plan to 'proletarianize' the population fell through as it was originally premised on the development of modern rice corporate farms. This project did not take off. Other projects that could have created a

working class, such as the dendrothermal plant and the mini-agro-industrial estate, also failed to advance beyond the planning stage.

Not only did a working class not materialize, the SDA even tried to establish landlord-tenant type arrangements with the rice farmers who were granted usufruct rights. The certificates of award contained a provision for determining the rent to be paid by the farmer-awardees to the SDA.

The Productivity Issue

What the Sacobia experience tells us is that small-scale economic activities managed by families can work. They can even work better with the proper and adequate governmental assistance. The only precondition is that the economic unit must be empowered to make its own decisions free from any external constraints.

Again this does not imply that only family-based livelihood activities are to be pursued. There is a limit to this type of operation and it can reach a point where exploitation by one family over another ensues. Given this possibility, cooperative ventures are preferable although the numerous problems that arise from this economic format still need to be resolved.

Agrarian Reform

The continuing lack of appreciation of the land issue was consistent with the 1979 Sacobia Human Settlement Plan. The issue was often dealt with in a cavalier fashion. For example, an SDA promotions brochure produced in 1980 or 1981 shuts the door on the residents' aspiration by emphatically pointing out that,

[The] SDA cannot award land titles to the settlers (although they have been tilling the lands for a number of years), it being a military reservation area owned by the Philippine government. These lands have been declared as inalienable and indisposible [sic]. However, the beneficiaries are given rights to till pieces of land under the usufruct concept.

The government, obviously, underestimated the importance of the land tenure issue for the residents, especially the original settlers. The practice of giving land awards with a multitude of conditions attached to the usufruct rights was not appreciated by many farmer-settlers and only generated additional hostility towards the project.

The ownership and control by the peasant producer (either individually or collectively) over the means of production is absolutely necessary and essential. The rationale lies in a multi-faceted context of cultural tradition, political necessity, and economic viability. Of course,

ownership alone is not sufficient to bring about successful livelihood projects. However, without a secure land tenure arrangement, the peasantry cannot even be expected to begin the process of maximizing productivity for their progress and society's benefit.

The *Aytas* and the Ethnic Dimension

The policy with respect to the indigenous *Ayta* population was never clarified. Although one preliminary study raised the question as to whether the *Aytas* should remain separate or be assimilated into the lowland population, the SDA seemed to have leaned towards the latter as the agency encouraged the "evangelization and mission work" which had been taking place. Eventually, a large majority of *Aytas* in SDA villages were converted to Christianity and turned their backs on their indigenous culture.

A former Sacobia KKK official thought that the idea of setting up *Ayta* villages went against their culture. He remarked that "if you force them to stay in a house with cemented four walls, they would feel imprisoned and escape because that is not their culture." In the end, a number of *Aytas*, mostly those who were Christianized, came to adopt the lowlanders' ways of settled agriculture and permanent dwellings.

A KKK official says that there was really no effort to undertake a close examination and study of the *Aytas*' distinct cultural traits. For instance, the projects for the area did not attempt to distinguish among the possible beneficiaries, i.e., whether they were lowlanders or *Aytas*.

The *Aytas* were also incorporated into the counter-insurgency campaign. The formation of Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF) units in Sacobia was concentrated among the different tribes. They were given World War II vintage Garand rifles for their defense. With the military battalions stationed in the area, there was really no purpose in the recruitment of the *Aytas* into the military ranks save to create an illusion of assimilation. But as one official put it, they simply wanted the *Aytas* to feel important; and besides, the perception was that the natives were gullible people who could easily be 'sweet-talked' (*madaling bolahin*).

At the same time, the indigenous tribes were also used for 'mobilization' purposes and as showcase project beneficiaries. If an important public official were to visit the area, the *Aytas* would be gathered in large numbers and constituted into a 'captive audience' for the dignitary who would of course be accompanied by media personnel. The *Aytas* of Sacobia seemed to have been doubly victimized — 1.) by the settlers who bought their land rights at give-away prices; and 2.) by

the IAD project which never understood nor tried to understand their cultural uniqueness. Sensitivity to tribal cultures is only one aspect of the problem. The other point is that such cultures contain elements which are probably more advanced than dominant lowland civilizations. The need for certain changes are of course recognized. Unfortunately, in the meeting of the two cultures, tribal societies are often completely transformed in the image of the lowlanders and the elements that are useful and superior are swept away indiscriminately.

The IAD Concept

It was obvious that the IAD strategy was drastically altered in the Sacobia experiment. The Sacobia project was in practice neither an integrated project, with several government agencies coordinating their assignments under a central authority, nor a site-specific and inward-looking project.

While the SDA was concerned with generating livelihood projects for the Sacobia community, its brick-making facility was producing for government construction projects outside the area. The KKK goat farm and the BAI livestock dispersal program also had clientele outside of the project site.

It was, therefore, no small wonder that by the time a new SDA leadership was appointed by the Aquino government in 1986, the new IAD administrators were totally disoriented on the nature of the Sacobia experiment. Integrated rural development as a concept was conveniently forgotten in the mess of bureaucratic wranglings, political interference, the use of resources for patronage purposes, high handed management, and widespread disaffection on the part of the target beneficiaries.

In discussing the project's impact on the area's total development, then SDA Deputy Executive Director Alferex could only cite two things: 1.) the unverified theory that the prices of chicken broilers in the Bulacan-Pampanga-Tarlac had fallen as a result of SDA's lower broiler prices; and 2.) the expected benefit to accelerated area development with the choice of Sacobia as the site of the Agro-Industrial Estate for Region III. The industrial estate, of course, never saw the light of day.

Administrative Structure

The SDA had ultimate responsibility for the area's development and had the most number of projects. But the existence of four other simultaneous and independent agency programs within the IAD area naturally undermined the concept of integrated development.

Furthermore, the practice of having two SDA offices -- the *main* one in Manila and the *secondary* field office in Sacobia -- was, at best, a curiosity, at worst, a serious lapse in sound administrative structuring. SDA Executive Director Nazareno was based in Manila as he had to attend to other government functions such as that of Luzon Area Manager for Human Settlements. He commuted to Sacobia on a daily basis either by car or by helicopter. One can easily guess the effect of this arrangement on the management of the development project. The lack of a full-time coordinator who was based in the area could only have had negative repercussions on the day-to-day decision-making process of the project.

It is also difficult to see how the different projects and programs could have been efficiently managed by a technical and administrative team holding office in Manila. In financial terms, the need to commute daily between Manila and Sacobia raised travel expenditures needlessly. The stress of constant traveling would also have affected work efficiency. As it turned out, the distance between the project site and the main office encouraged many project officers to conveniently stay away for long periods. The projects were thus left in the hands of minor field employees (the so called 'leadmen') or the daily-wage laborers themselves.

The Issue of Self-Sufficiency

This brings us to the issue of self-sufficiency. According to the SDA, it was never meant to be an income generating agency and, therefore, could not be expected to be profit-oriented. These protestations, however, are easily belied by the Sacobia Human Settlement Plan which projected yearly returns on investment (ROI) of 41 to 58 percent on an investment of P92 million in income generating projects. In its 1981 and 1982 Annual Reports, the SDA actually reported incomes from sales of project outputs such as broilers, tilapia, and crop produce.

Officials maintain that only the area was to be self-sufficient, not the SDA. This distinction, however, becomes irrelevant as the attainment of self-sufficiency by the communities came to depend on the success of the livelihood projects upon their turnover to the residents.

But the SDA's continued dependent attitude with respect to national government allotments may have also infected the residents who were, in the first place, lured by promises of a better life with the entry of the development project. A dole-out mentality was fostered from the start as exemplified by the distribution of food rations to the settlers for almost one year.

The top-down approach in project implementation and the SDA's patronizing attitude towards the settlers also strengthened the relations of dependency it had with its supposed beneficiaries.

The Executive Order creating the SDA invested it with the authority to generate funds for its own operations and for livelihood projects. Except for a P5 million loan from the Human Settlements Development Corporation (HSDC), the SDA never undertook to raise its own funds. This is an indication of the lack of management foresight that eventually led to the breakdown of the development experiment once the government slashed the SDA's budget.

In the three year period between 1980 to 1982, the SDA spent only 75.3 percent of its approved budget with over P12 million in unspent allocations reverted to the national treasury. This low availment record does not coincide with the SDA's rationale that the lack of budget forced it to abandon direct support for the livelihood projects.

The overall plan for the shelter program was the construction of 1,800 units of housing. This program was also sacrificed and scaled down from the planned 763 to only 100 BLISS units in San Vicente. In the *Ayta* village of San Martin, only 50 of the planned 100 housing units were built. The majority of residents were, thus, left out of the shelter program.

At the same time, large capital outlays were spent for incongruous infrastructure such as the two-storey brick office building, a brick-walled training center with function rooms, a large dormitory, and a 100-seat cafeteria. Located on top of a hill overlooking the San Vicente BLISS houses, these glamorous urban-type buildings stood in stark contrast to the poverty and lack of progress of the 'beneficiaries' of the Sacobia project.

Popular Participation

While everyone agrees on this particular issue, there is hardly a consensus on how to bring it about and what constitutes its practical aspects. In Sacobia, of course, it was never given a chance to take root. The 'top-to-bottom' approach was assumed to be the best strategy, and over the years, was never re-examined.

Strange though it may seem, the issue of participation was never raised by any of the settlers I interviewed. No one complained that they were not consulted on decisions being made by the SDA. The near unanimous objection to most of these decisions did not lead them to demand participation in the process. This is surprising, given the area's history of agrarian unrest and participation in popular movements. What

this tells us is that there is more to the issue that has not been adequately addressed. My guess is that the clue lies in the realm of consciousness and how people react to ideological inputs.

The IAD Concept Revisited

The Sacobia IAD strategy was similar to the regional development investment programs (RDIPs) launched during the same time.¹⁵ It was supposed to be different from the traditional programs which relied almost exclusively on government support and funding. The RDIP concept was deemed non-traditional because of its "private sector interface component which consists of profit-making projects actively promoted" by the government. Agricultural projects and industrial projects would be linked at both the forward and backward levels. To achieve this, the industrial projects would have to be of the cottage and small-scale processing type.

The required articulation between the industrial and agricultural sectors would have to be based on a long-term commitment aimed at sustainable and manageable growth. For private capital, this entails higher risks. As the management authority of the RDIPs soon discovered, private sector participation within such specified parameters was less than enthusiastic. Obviously, Filipino private capital was more interested in profits that guaranteed 'windfall gains' at the shortest possible time.

On its own terms, therefore, objections can be raised against the IAD concept of the Sacobia variety simply because it cannot work. The government, given its financial vulnerability and desperation for private investments, will eventually give in to the private sector's demand for a risk-free investment regime. Rural class conflict may be neutralized and a new and more intense social disharmony will take its place. Rural poverty will disappear but an even more insidious urban impoverishment will develop. A middle class will appear, but not among the successful farmers, and certainly not in the agricultural sector.

Though IAD has now been displaced as a major development strategy of the Philippine government, the new model called Countryside Agro-Industrial Development Strategy (CAIDS) is in reality a natural offspring of the IAD approach. The Calabarzon Project, a prototype of this new strategy, aims to establish industrial enclaves in the provinces

¹⁵ Joseph M. Alabanza, "The Regional Development Investment Program of the Ilocos Region", *Philippine Planning Journal*, Vol. XV, No. 2, (April 1984).

of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon over a ten-year period from 1990 to 1999 and will convert thousands of hectares of farmland into industrial use.¹⁶ Unlike the Sacobia project however, government is committed to spending P19.13 billion in foreign loans to establish the infrastructure for the project.

Sixto K. Roxas calls this development strategy the 'enclave approach' to industrialization and describes it thus:

Take a block of real estate, develop the infrastructure, roads, gutters, power, water, waste disposal, build up a central organization to administer the facilities, promote investments in plant and operating capital and you have instant industrialization.¹⁷

Roxas further notes that the experience of the enclave type of industrialization has been marked by the 'bi-modal approach' which entails "high valued development for the elite with spontaneous slum settlement for the marginalized masses."

Possible Alternatives

Critics of enclave-type development contend, however, that the IAD organizational structure is a feasible one. But it will have to embrace a whole new concept of development. Roxas proposes an industrialization strategy based on the "highest and best use of the land."¹⁸ He envisions a "community-based agro-industrial development plan" that will "provide management, capital, tenure reform and support services so as to induce intensive and diversified cultivation of land, to provide the inputs for the packing of food, processing of fiber, and other agricultural materials, livestock, and animal products."

In contrast to the Sacobia-type IAD model, Roxas asserts that agrarian reform based on the redistribution of land is a necessary precondition for the success of the agro-industrial community. This would eliminate the rent-seeking sectors, whether these be feudal landlords, agrarian capitalists, or governments.

¹⁶Eduardo C. Tadem, "Agrarian Reform Implementation in the Philippines: Disabling a Centerpiece Program", paper presented at the "International Conference on Agrarian Reform," PRRM National Training Institute, Nueva Ecija, 28 January-2 February 1991.

¹⁷Sixto K. Roxas, "Agrarian Reform and Nationalist Industrialization", paper presented to the "People's Caucus on National Unity, Survival, and Reconstruction," October 13, 1990.

¹⁸Sixto K. Roxas, "Blueprint for a Banana Republic", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 3 and 30, 1990; "Agrarian Reform and Nationalist Industrialization", paper presented to the "People's Caucus on National Unity, Survival, and Reconstruction", October 13, 1990; and *ibid.*

Taking the community as a starting point, Roxas advises that "the measurement of benefits should reflect community income generation per unit of the land" which should represent "high quality income" based on sustainability and stability. "Windfall gains" and "unearned incremental incomes" are low quality incomes. An example of the latter are incomes gained from rising real estate values through no effort by the landowner.

People are to "be viewed in their natural communities" as livelihood generating families, households, and individuals, not as a labor force "waiting for jobs in an employment office." As livelihood systems assessments can then be made as to the natural resources used, the manpower resources demanded, the capital that needs to be introduced, its linkage with other industries, dependence on imported inputs, market linkages, and finally, the pattern of primary income transfers and where they end up with.

Roxas says that "livelihood systems with substantial income payments to the local communities provide purchasing power which makes for a large and growing local market." The bottom line, therefore, is whether development projects generate increased community incomes. Using the sugar industry in Negros as an example, Roxas says:

Sugar haciendas may take most of the richest land in an area. But sugar as a crop will use only 117 adult man-days of labor per hectare in a crop season. Of the P25,000 to P30,000 of gross value added per hectare from sugar, the actual community income per hectare may be only P5,000 to P7,000 per crop year. Furthermore, ... the hacienda provides steady full-time employment for only 10 percent of the labor force. This means 90 percent of the workforce must eke out its living from the poorest 1/3 of the land.

Roxas looks at the country as divided into 'ecological zones,' "each zone being a scientifically identified discrete ecosystem with its own internal and natural systemic integrity and economy." With these zones used as "bio-economic units of analysis, a 'highest and best use' valuation is undertaken taking the usage that would result in the highest returns for the citizens of each zone from the sustainable usage of their natural resources and the application of the required capital, manpower, and other resources."

Citing figures from a comparison of a Cavite "enclave project" and an "agro-industrial project" in Negros Oriental, Roxas concludes that

When resources are valued at their 'highest and best use', it is difficult to find a highly capital intensive enclave project that will offer as high an internal rate of return (IRR) as an integrated agro-industrial project based on intensive and diversified agriculture.

Eduardo T. Gonzalez is a proponent of an integrated area development approach based on the interplay and interlinkages of economic, demographic, and ecological factors. Called the 'Wedge Model,' it is based on the triangular shape which a given land area takes when it is divided into four zones where the three given factors interrelate — coastal flatlands, river basins, foothills, and upland forests.¹⁹ The land mass "cuts inward, like a piece of divided pie, from the coast to the forested mountains." These zones constitute the model's units of analysis and represent graduated levels of economic activities or various land uses.

The Wedge IAD model challenges the traditional land development practice of 'incrementalism' and the resource management pattern of "following the path of least resistance" both of which have proved to be "an environmental curse." As it maintains the "polycausal linkage" between ecology, society, and economic production, the model aims at the reconciliation of a given area's "material, cultural, and human elements."

Gonzalez points out that the Wedge model shuns "sectoralism in production" and instead advocates diversified productive activities within a delineated land area. Crop cultivation can be combined with livestock raising, tree farming, hunting and gathering, indigenous crafts, etc. With the working integration of agriculture and forestry, or of agriculture and other livelihood activities, the project management is necessarily "defined in terms of a natural production area, rather than of administrative and political boundaries with focus on balanced development rather than on administrative routines or commodity flows."

A primary assumption is that rural peoples are endowed with an intimate and informed understanding of their agrarian environment and how to nurture it. That being the case, the main responsibility for rural development must rest in their hands. A strong participatory bias must, therefore, pervade in development strategies and programs.

The model deeply recognizes the *social nature* of development, and its obligation to be dedicated to the devolution of responsibilities to the communities and villages. [It] attaches much significance to community autonomy, under the proposition that the strength of development lies in the community, not in government or any exterior force. Direct popular participation in community projects in the context of the cultivation of

¹⁹Eduardo T. Gonzalez, "Reconstituting the Wedge Model: A Structuralist Perspective",

Philippine Planning Journal, (Vol. XIII, No. 2) April 1982.

qualities conducive to development — self-help, self-management, self-determination — is an important criterion.

For example, the detailed planning process can take place at the village level to “ensure the *social soundness* of development projects, reduce social dislocations, and preserve the integrity of village institutions.” This includes social research where the residents undertake the land capability and land use studies themselves with ‘technical experts’ acting as their consultants. The residents can also map their villages and surrounding areas and “indicate how it should grow” and develop.

But all these must take place within a setting of “equitable social relationships” that are advantageous for all direct producers. To understand why this is essential and necessary, Gonzalez proposes that the Wedge Model be distanced from traditional Western ethnocentric views of modernization and development and reconstituted within a structuralist perspective. This alternative outlook recognizes the historical roots of underdevelopment and Third World poverty as emanating from the ‘unbalanced reciprocity’ between the countries of the North and the South and within the latter between ‘metropolitan regions (core) and the hinterlands (periphery).’

In the disadvantaged countries, social, political, and economic inequities prevail “as articulated through the explosive relationships among and within coexistent modes of production with different organizing principles (capitalism, landlordism, subsistence economy, *etc.*)” This points to the conclusion that “functional planning has reached an impasse, proof of which is continuing social exploitation and impoverishment, the wastage of national resources, and ecological deterioration.”

The task of development planning is to break the crucial junctures of inequitable social relationships which define the social system and connect it to the larger whole. Its threefold mission is to redistribute political power, redistribute wealth and income, and foster self-reliant productivity. To accomplish these, it must rely on mobilization rather than instrumentalist (modernizing) strategies, and on a development model that can mount an effective challenge to the ideology and practice of conventional planning.

The concerns of the two alternatives discussed above seem to coincide with the agenda of a group of 16 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Philippines engaged in rural organizing, advocacy, and

research work. They have formed themselves into a network called Convergence for Community-Centered Area Development (CONVERGENCE). Among its members are the country's largest and oldest NGO, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Enlightenment (PEACE), Sixto K. Roxas' Foundation for Community Organization and Management Technology (FCOMT), the Philippine Peasant Institute (PPI), and the Farmers' Assistance Board (FAB).

Launched on February 7, 1991, the network is united by an orientation that is people-oriented and sensitive to environmental concerns. Its guiding principles are sustainable development and popular empowerment. The work strategy consists of pooling the members' resources and expertise together and directly implementing integrated rural development programs within area-specific and community-based parameters. One major criteria for site selection is the presence of strong and vibrant popular organizations. Project areas have been identified in Nueva Ecija, Bataan, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bulacan, Negros Oriental, and Bukidnon provinces.

Over the past years, integrated area development programs have little to show in order to justify the large expenditures in funds, time, and effort. The rural poor have become more impoverished and more disempowered than ever before. The new strategy for development, based on the wholesale conversion of agricultural lands into industrial use, promises even more 'immiserizing growth' and human deprivation while benefiting only the rich and powerful.

The Sacobia experience provides painful lessons that need to be learned quickly and thoroughly if the marginalized sectors of the population are to be emancipated from their depressed situation. Unfortunately for the Sacobia area, which is bearing the brunt of Mount Pinatubo's seemingly endless fury, the mistakes can no longer be corrected as its lands have been devastated and is now truly turning into a 'wasteland.'

But for other areas, there is always hope. The alternatives are there and more innovative approaches can still be formulated. And if the government lacks the political will, popular organizations and their NGO partners can take the necessary steps to realize the desired vision of a humane social and economic order characterized by class and social equality, sustained and stable growth, creative self-management, and a just and lasting peace.

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