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# Why Calabar? Why not Samar?

by jed pensar and herb  
mantawe

One need not wonder over the program of the Manila government to develop and industrialize the CALABAR (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Rizal) zone. These provinces comprise the southern suburban corridor of Manila to which it has historically accorded the highest priority when it comes to welfare and security.

At the start of the century, CALABAR has already cornered the lion's share of industrial estates and technology parks in the country. As a measure of its success, jobseekers from far-away provinces have flocked in droves to the factories of CALABAR. Jobseekers driven from their impoverished lands to the relatively wealthy suburbs of overcrowded Manila.

Real Gross Value Added  
Per Sector (1998)

Sector	Rest of Philippines	NCR
Agriculture	98.14%	1.86%
Industry	65.99%	34.01%
Services	58.54%	41.46%

1999 Phil. Statistical Yearbook

Frighteningly, Manila has grown over the decades not only in economic and political dominance but also territorially. Some proudly call this hideously bloated creature Mega Manila. As its growth demands strain the resources of the rest of the country to the limit, one can only

helplessly count the years prior to its annexation of Quezon and Bicol. Who can tell, Samar and Mindanao will follow not long after in this scheme of absurdity.

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For your comments:  
[mantawe@pacific.net.ph](mailto:mantawe@pacific.net.ph)

It is a shame that we have some of the most narrow-minded development planners in this part of the world. Ask them to spread development outside of Manila and the farthest they can come up with is CALABAR. Not while we continue to tolerate governments addicted to overcentralization can there be hope for economic growth in the provinces.

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Jed Pensar and Herb Mantawe. Philippines.