

Non-Metropolitan Universities as Potential Enclaves of Development**

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One phenomenon which commonly plagues most developing countries in their efforts for national development is the plight of the regions or provinces as contrasted to the excessive growth of the metropolitan city or cities. This is the result of many interrelated forces of which the main ones are:

- 1) Industrialization policies which place heavy emphases on urban industrial sector as against the agricultural sector;
- 2) Concentration of political and bureaucratic powers which draws principal business offices of various commercial and social organization to the center cities;
- 3) International network of trade and communication which greatly favors the center cities in terms of information access and contacts;
- 4) Pyramidal educational systems which greatly exalt the primate educational institutions in the center, causing a chain reaction of brain drain from the regions to the center;
- 5) Population migration from the rural to the urban centers partly attracted by the higher wages and better educational opportunities and partly pushed by rural poverty.

In the initial stage of developmental efforts, these forces were allowed to have free play in most countries mainly because of their preoccupation with accelerated economic and industrial development. But serious consequences have soon begun to appear due to unbalanced development policies. Usually they appear in the form of violent interregional

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grievances and, in some acute cases, even in secessionist movements. Initial gaps in economic development have thus brought to the fore social and political development gaps of serious proportion.

New policies are being conceived and implemented in many countries to remedy this situation. These measures include various regional development schemes, and other direct and indirect policies such as zoning, taxes, credits, industrial licences-all designed to coerce and induce dispersal of industries and educational and scientific facilities to the non-metropolitan regions. In some cases, counterpole cities are deliberately established. Against this general background, non-metropolitan universities are receiving increasing attention as potential enclaves of regional and national development. In this paper, we shall consider some the conditions which would facilitate the developmental role of a regional university.

Conditions for a Development Enclave

A developmental enclave is basically a pool of individuals covering in a locus sharing a general sense of innovation and commitment toward a common goal of achieving something worthwhile for themselves, and their region and the country. Members of such an enclave must feel that they are all engaged in an exciting innovational venture which has a reasonable chance of success, and, when successful, will become a suitable model for others to follow. There can be no question as to the value of such enclaves in regions and provinces. The question is how a regional university can become one.

Below we shall consider some of the conditions under which a regional university could become an enclave of development.

Sociological condition

Initially, there must be some innovational ferments to start with. A developmental enclave in a region must have some individuals with potential for growth. These individuals must possess basic capacities that are equal to their counterparts in the metropolitan centers, although they may feel deprived of opportunities to display them fully in comparison with their more fortunately situated contemporaries. The number can be small initially but it is important that an atmosphere is created in which these individuals can feel that their potentials are recognized and will be permitted to become actualized.

Geographical condition

A regional developmental enclave must be located in a place with some special geographical advantages. It can be a port city with special access to foreign borders or a provincial center in an important resource area, or a communication and transportation juncture. At any rate, there must be some special geographical potential which is either comparable to that of the metropolitan center or even offsets some apparent disadvantages of the latter. One important aspect in this regard is the access to various communication and information sources beyond the national center.

Resource base

A developmental enclave must have some free resources at its disposal. The need for initial presence of individuals of potential was mentioned. Existence of other academic and scientific institutions in the same region can constitute a good intellectual infrastructure. In addition, some financial resources are necessary to help the developmental process to get started. In case local financial resources are not available, some external resources in the form of innovation fund can be of invaluable assistance when matched by local human resources. A judicious combination of free human and financial resources, however modest, is often the critical divide between a successful start and continued stagnation.

These are among those conditions which are considered necessary for a regional university to become a developmental base. But existence of these conditions alone does not guarantee a developmental outcome. There are a few key elements which must be added to give substance to the potential. Principal among these are government policy and institutional leadership.

Policy environment

In a developing country, government policy regarding the pace of development of different regions has a very important bearing on the pattern of national and regional development. Priorities in sectoral planning and choices regarding industrial locations, railroad and highway networks, port development, river basin development have important impacts upon the relative development of particular regions. Hence, a government policy to pay serious attention to the regions and an explicit decision to develop a particular region is an important condition for a regional university becoming a developmental springboard.

Institutional leadership

Even a propitious combination of suitable conditions coupled with a favourable policy environment does not automatically produce a developmental enclave. There is another crucial element which makes such combinations effective. This is the critical function of institutional leadership.

Leadership performs that crucial function which identifies and fosters innovational individuals within the university, brings relevant local resources to bear upon the accumulation of precious creative elements and brings them to better access to necessary external stimuli and finally links the operation and performance of the local institution with favorable trends of government policy. Thus, in the context of a regional university a creative leadership makes the synergic combination that makes development occur.

Possible Leadership Actions for a Regional University

Let us now consider some ramifications leadership function in the context of a regional university.

Articulation of goal

It is preeminently the function of the leadership to crystalize the goals of the regional university over the future. These goals must be imaginative but also attainable. This means that they must be built upon some strengths which the institution already possesses. Identification of institutional strengths would require a careful self-analysis by the members of the institution. It is the responsibility of the leadership to initiate such a process, to articulate commonly acceptable goals upon which individuals can mount their own aspirations which and to weave them into an integrated whole.

Scanning of local needs

One obvious source of strengths for a regional university is its access to regional resources and problems. Thus, a continuous study of community needs and potentials is an important prerequisite for planning for development. The leadership of a regional university must constantly inspire its faculty and students to turn their eyes to the community and region in which it is located. The leadership must also seek personal contacts with community leaders and actively participate in local activities designed to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the region. The leadership should parti-

cularly emphasize the identity and convergence of the goals of the university with those of the region.

Building educational programs around regional needs and potentials

Local needs and potentials, once identified, must find their ways into the educational programs of the university. This touches upon courses and curriculum. However, as curriculum is always a very formal and rigid thing and most non-metropolitan universities have a strong tendency to emulate curricula of metropolitan institutions, it is very difficult to make major changes in them at a regional university of a developing country. Hence, the aim should not necessarily be major curricular changes. Even minor revisions injecting some community relevant aspects into the skeleton of existing courses could be important beginning of academic improvement. The art of curricular reform does not lie in a wholesale change of curricular structure but in experimenting with numerous minor changes in the content and contour of the courses.

Building up faculty

Setting in motion of a continuing process of curricular reform which involves a number of minor changes and experiments would require a concurrent process of continuous build-up of faculty. This is perhaps the single most important task of the leadership of a regional university. This is something which the institutional leadership in a region should take a personal charge.

There are basically three ways of faculty development for a regional university. The first is reorienting the existing faculty; the second is sending them for retraining in foreign or metropolitan institutions of advanced study; the third is recruiting new faculty who possess promising qualities. In reality, some differing combinations of all of these steps would have to be taken, the differences depending on the particular circumstances of the university. Given the relative initial unattractiveness of non-metropolitan places for academic employment, the third step is extremely difficult to implement, but the success of faculty development in a regional setting would depend largely on the extent to which new recruits are secured and then welded into productive alliance with some of the progressive elements of the existing faculty.

Restructuring the university through new units

Regional universities, like any academic institutions, normally suffer from chronic

departmental rigidity and academic bureaucracy. There is therefore always the need for injecting new flexibility into the university structure. And inasmuch as the perennial emulative tendency of non-metropolitan universities makes their faculties extremely conservative, the initiative for structural adaptation must normally come from the leadership in a non-metropolitan situation. The merit of a regional university developing a few strong departments in the traditional sense is not questioned. These bases of strength are very important, but the problem is a general tendency toward departmental rigidity. One way to overcome such rigidity while adding viability to strong departments is the idea of theme or problem-oriented institutes within a regional university. Institutes of Regional Development emerging in several non-metropolitan institutions with considerable collaborative interaction with the East-West Technology and Development Institute are good examples.^① Such institutes have the merit of identifying and bringing together talents and interests from different departments while assisting the university to come into productive interaction with the community.

Translating local performances is national and international terms

Members of provincial institutions generally feel some sense of intellectual isolation. Thus, even when they are engaged in region-oriented activities which have genuine academic merits, they must be assisted to feel that by virtue of their performance they are respectable members of the national and universal intellectual community. This mental reinforcement is again the function of creative leadership. This involves exposing the members of institution to the national and international academic currents. Academic seminars and conferences are useful means of exposing faculty members and students to the broader world outside. This is particularly effective when the local talents are encouraged to present the results of their researches and experimental programs to larger academic audiences. Linking the institution onto a nationally sponsored or recognized cooperative schemes—pilot curricular experimentation, graduate cross-registration, accreditation plan, etc.—is another potent means of giving larger meanings to local efforts and events. In the long run, an institution grows as much as the perceived meanings of its members regarding their own activities increase.

^① See, for example, the case presentations from the Mindanao State University, Marawa City, Philippines and Young Nam University, Taegu, Korea. Soong Jun University has also created a Regional Development Institute at its Taejon Campus in spring 1973 and plans to follow up by establishing a new College of Regional Development from 1974. This theme-college will eventually include the following departments: Local Administration, Regional Economics, Agribusiness, Rural Sociology, Town and City Planning, and Landscaping.

The Art of Confidence Building

The essence of turning a regional university into a developmental enclave is the art of building confidence among the its constituents. This involves a whole series of human processes, including indentifying innovative elements among local individuals by exposing them to the pressing problems of the region, revamping and expanding the pool of human resources by adding new talents, engaging them in constantly restructured and readapted substantive programs and exposing them to larger contexts to secure larger meanings for their activities. This is basically a creative human process. Marshalling financial and physical resources and allocating them rationally to selective program priorities to invigorate those creative programs which promise meaningful results is the other part of leadership. These two processes are interlocked. When creative human processes are set in motion, new financial resources can be generated to sustain the creative momentum. This is the crux of developmental process. It is the ever-expanding and ever-deepening process of newly-felt self-confidence among the faculty and students that makes a regional university rise up to a level of continued viability and relevancy. Such a swell of confidence never fails to inspire positive responses from various elements of the community with which a regional university chooses to interact.