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GEOGRAPHICAL VIEWPOINT

YOUR CAREER AND GEOGRAPHY

by

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In presenting this subject, it is not my intention to tell you to be a Geographer or study Geography for geography's sake or geography per se. Whatever profession you have planned, taking geography courses as many as your course of study can afford will be very good and useful investments in your career in the future. And if you have majored in geography during the undergraduate course — geography courses in your graduate study will be indeed easy for you and will profit you immensely as a career man. As a matter of fact, you will never realize how important geography education is until you have established yourself in your profession.

When I took geography study in University of the Philippines at Manila in 1933, I was already Assistant Soil Technologist in the Bureau of Science, being a graduate of UP College of Agriculture with Agriculture Degree in 1928. While in UP College of Arts and Sciences, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree, major in Geography with Geology as a minor subject in 1935.

Working in the Bureau of Soils, Irrigation Service Unit (A Pump Irrigation Program) and finally Supervising Scientist and Chief of Agricultural and Natural Resources Research Division, National Science Development Board (1960-1968), my knowledge in Geography had given me advantages over those who did not have the knowledge of the subject.

WHAT IS GEOGRAPHY?

Geography is a science as wide as the world and about as general and broad as any body of knowledge can be. It is a so comprehensive

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and all embracing that this had been divided into as many as twenty or more disciplines or branches of sciences. The fragmentation of this science is grouped into physical science, biological sciences and social sciences. A student of geography has to take some of these sciences to enable him to analyze and synthesize geographic facts and factors in order to arrive at the desired objectives.

"Geography has been called the 'Mother of Sciences', since the fund of collective knowledge of parts of what the Greeks called Geography has been large enough to constitute discipline in themselves, such as biology, astronomy, geology, anthropology and others. New discipline have in turn developed from this making geography a grand-mother but grandmother becomes more vigorous all the time." (1)

"One of the main objectives of geography is to interpret man's habitat and show his relationship to it. Analysis of human habitat shows that its nature result from the co-existence and inter-relation of host of different elements. Geography attempts to picture man's habitat at a given specific time through the study of arrangement of natural and human elements over the earth. The effect of the past in creation of the present is recognized; the effect of the present on the future is implied. Part of the task of Geography is to answer the general question: What is, Where is and why and what difference does it make?" (2)

To most geographers their subject is indeed, intriguing. As youngsters, some collected stamps; not only to satisfy that squirrel complex all children seem to have, but because each little magic scrap of colored paper conjured for them a picture of some far-off land. Most geographers were map lovers from days of youth, spending hours enjoying maps. Some folks may have stars in their eyes; but surely a geographer has places in his. And of course he always wanted to travel and probably read travel books. What young person doesn't. It was happy day when such person found he could make a living working with information, ideas and things he loved so well.

You may want to know about what a geographer does. Geography is an exceedingly large subject. It covers the earth and many aspects of it.

Because of its large dimensions, most geographers concentrate on some parts of the world and on some topics in the broad field. Some of the subdivisions are:

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|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Agricultural Geography | 6. Demography |
| 2. Economic Geography | 7. Geomorphology |
| 3. Political Geography | 8. Bio-geography |
| 4. Climatology | 9. Cartography |
| 5. Cultural Geography | 10. Oceanography |

11. Industrial Geography
12. Marketing Geography
13. Historical Geography
14. Regional Geography
15. Resources Geography
16. Settlement Geography
17. Urban Geography
18. Rural Geography
19. Military Geography
20. Conservation of Natural Resources
21. Environmental Geography
22. Population Geography

Let us look at some of these in detail.

AGRICULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

There are many forms and problems that can be studied by geographers and some of them really did go into this field. Again it is a question of **where** and **why** and **how** and **what** of it. Where do crops grow, why do they grow there, and when are they harvested and where are they marketed? How will these crops support the farmers who grow them? Is the land wisely utilized both for present and future welfare? What economic and practical problems arise there from? (3)

Agricultural geography is a huge field in itself, with many different aspects. There are geographers who specialized in tropical agriculture and others whose prime interest is in the problems of farming at its poleward limits, in temperature regions and in tropical areas and on tropical crops.

Agricultural geographers find jobs in a variety of places. Many work in government agencies. Some teach in University and make agricultural geography their field of specialization.

If you want to be an agricultural geographer, you will have to take some courses in climatology, soils, statistics and agricultural economics, in addition to the usual subjects in geography.

URBAN GEOGRAPHY

This kind of geography has been attracting many geographers lately due to the need in the city administration, study of city planning and location of dwellers in heavily congested areas of the city.

What does an urban geographer do? He studies cities of course. But cities are many and their problems are varied, he is likely to specialize on certain aspects of cities or upon a particular city or group of cities. A few geographers are working at different problems of describing and defining the parts of a city accurately. Every one knows that a city has a central business district, but just how large is it in any particular city and what business does it contain? Others would like to know how to find which industries and businesses actually support the city and which ones are there merely because the people are there.

Some study the inter-relation of the city and its supporting region or hinterland. Finding the answers to these problem is intriguing, but difficult. Because of these, urban geographers find their jobs quite largely in city planning offices, though few teach in university and make urban geography their field of study.

What does urban geographer need to know? In addition to his regular geographic training, he needs to know all he can about cities — their physical, demographic and political structure, their engineering problems, their economic problems and their social problems. Economics, sociology and political sciences are all good additional training. (1)

MARKETING GEOGRAPHY

An increasingly large number of American geographers are using their geographic training in the business world. Every business firm whether manufacturers, wholesalers or retailers is faced with the **where** problems. Where will its raw materials come from; **where** should they be produced or stored; **where** can its yields and services be sold? Since geographers are specially interested in the **where** problem, their services can be particularly valuable in finding the answers to these questions. (1)

In a rapidly developing country like the Philippines, a geographer with expertise in marketing geography can readily find a good executive position in any company that produce consumer's goods.

A geographer who works for a chain store that wants to locate a new supermarket along a busy highway can really solve the problem. If it is to be a drive-in, the company is more interested in the population of the outlying suburbs than of the immediate neighborhood.

Marketing geographer knows the world at large than the average employee. Products that can be distributed in other countries, the geographer can certainly pin point the places where there are potential areas for exports.

A would-be marketing geographer while still in school, should arm himself with basic courses in economics, accounting, marketing, marketing research and statistics. But he must be well trained geographer too, and he will need considerable imagination when it comes to using or making maps. (1)

REGIONAL, ECONOMIC AND CONSERVATION GEOGRAPHY

The specific divisions of Geography that are being given in selected public and private universities includes, economic, physical, regional, human, political and conservation geography. Some geographers use climate as the basis for regions, still others prefer to describe economic or human use regions.

In regional geography the factors of environment, such as location, climate, relief features, natural vegetation, soils, minerals, water re-

sources, etc. are considered by descriptions of agriculture, mining, manufacturing and other industries of man together with distribution of population, location and functions of cities, and problems of importance to various nations. Regional geography provides superior means of helping students learn about the races and countries of the world and the factors that influence the occupation and culture of people and the international relationships of countries. Political and military geography are founded on a firm foundation of regional geography. (4)

Economic or commercial geography is widely taught in higher institutions and may be the only geography course offered in a college or university like the Philippine Women's University. When the only course given is the economic geography, this is usually included in a school or department of Commerce or Economics. Economic geography has a high cultural value in making students conscious of the location and concentrations of industries and of varied ways man has of making a varied living. It will be of use to students all their lives in helping them to understand mankind and his ways, besides having the practical purpose for future business men of learning the facts concerning sources of materials, their utilization and factors affecting production, processing and marketing of goods. (4)

A course in the Conservation of Natural Resources is of great practical and social value to the future leaders of opinion in our country. There is a need of conservation measures which will help insure the maintenance of acceptable living standards for the people. In general, conservation is a cooperation between man and nature that will bring about the most efficient use of the world resources. The ideal of conservation is to have a proper balance or adjustment between man's utilization of resources and the environment so that the resources will be used without waste. Certain institutions now require conservation to be taught in school and demand for trained teachers and accurate information about conservation is increasing. (4)

WHERE GEOGRAPHERS WORK

Geographers may be classified into three groups: One who teaches geography in colleges and universities, and the other who is actually employed as geographer or in other designation where geography education is used, and the third one who is employed in civil service or in private institution and teaches geography part time in colleges and universities. (It is in the third group where I belong)

There are not many of these groups in the Philippines, in fact you can count them with the fingers of your hands. At one time a soil technologist of the Bureau of Soil was teaching in the evening, Economic Geography at the Philippine Women's University. There are few cases where an employee with general training in geography find teaching part time position in college and universities.

WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT

What can a geographer expect to do in Metro Manila?

He may find work in the Department of National Defense, Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Public Works, Transportation and Communication. Any career man with good background and grounding in geography certainly, everything being equal can fit well in any of these departments.

What does a geographer do in the various places? Perhaps more than half are engaged in map making, or in gathering information for maps or other classified matters, or acting as map librarian. Geographers, whether they are cartographer or not never get away from maps.

In the field of geographical service to governments, geographers can and some have done so, assist in such activities as conservation, use—classification of lands, highway planning, analysis of the geographic facts of the economy or of the distribution of component groups in the population or of the location and nature of agricultural and industrial enterprises. (5)

In scientific and research institutions like the National Science Development Board or National Research Council of the Philippines or the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Resources Research, geographer can always fit in such subject as: Agricultural geography, resource geography, regional geography, economic geography, in the job of planning, programming and evaluation.

Since geography is a synthesizing discipline, the geographer is always at home in the field where other are confused and lost in the middle of the problem. He can evaluate the physical and economic resources of the country and indicate reasons for its success or failure in the economic development. As a basic and foundation subject, it can be used by different specialists such as a physicist, oceanographer, economist, engineer, chemist, biologist, forester, climatologist, ecologist, military strategies, politicians and science promotion officer.

GEOGRAPHY IN GREAT BRITAIN

For the last four (1968-1971) years, geography has been one of the subjects most in demand, coming behind are mathematics and English but ahead of the other are humanities, science and social studies. As a result, geography departments have grown to be among the biggest departments; in some instances they are the biggest in British universities, graduating between 50 to 100 honour students each year, few are now graduate less than 25 a year. Thus geography is expanding its impact throughout higher education and is preparing people for an ever widening range of careers.

School teaching and town planning are important outlets and accounts for about a third each of the geography graduates from all universities. Environmental research and management, government research and administration and finance business are now taking an increasing numbers of geography trainers, from all universities and from a few the greater number of geography graduates enter one or other of these careers. During the last four years, many geography graduates have moved up into senior positions in universities and other educational institution and administration officials in government departments. In this way geography has come into its own in its power to shape decisions at the highest level. (6)

GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Geography education in the Philippines lost its glamour and position in our educational system that started during the Philippine Commonwealth Government in 1935, when nationalization of our government officials and educational institutions took place. American educators were substituted by American educated Filipino educators. They abolished geography and in its place, introduced several subjects under the heading of **Social Studies**. However, colleges and universities offered higher geography as elective subjects, thus depriving the students of fundamental knowledge of the basic elements of geography. (7)

However, the College of Arts and Sciences, University of the Philippines at Diliman offers undergraduate and graduate courses in Geography for BSc, MS and PhD degrees. Compared with other countries in America and Europe, United States has many as 35 state universities where undergraduate and graduate courses are offered. In the Philippines, the other universities that offered courses as elective subjects are the Philippine Women's University where Economic Geography and Earth Sciences (Physical Geography) are offered, Philippine Christian University offers Economic Geography and De La Salle University, Conservation of Natural Resources in Masteral Degree. (7)

The Philippine Geographical Society has been in existence for the last twenty-seven years and its official publication, the Philippine Geographical Journal, a quarterly publication is now in its 22nd volume, 1977. (8)

The National Committee on Geographical Sciences of the National Science Development Board (NSDB) was organized in 1968 when the Philippines became member of the International Geographical Union with the NSDB as the adhering organization. The Chairman of the Board, NSDB in creating the Committee established the terms of re-

ference of the Committee as per NSDB Office Order No. 09 Series of 1971 as follows:

1. "To promote and stimulate researches in geography as one of the effective instrument of nation-building;
2. To promote geographic knowledge to all sectors both government and private; and
3. To act as international liaison or adhering body to such international organization as the International Geographical Union and the International Council of Scientific Union."

The members of this National Committee attend congresses, conferences and seminars of the International Geographical Union and other international organizations. In June 1976, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Committee attended the Silver Jubilee Symposium Hongkong University on the subject of: Geography and Environment in Southeast Asia. (9)

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