



# MEASURING PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL INDICATORS PROJECT

EDITED BY  
MAHAR MANGAHAS



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## FOREWORD\*

When we speak of “national goals”, I ask myself whether they are not already comprised by the “areas of social concern” that our writers in the Social Indicators Project have focused on. Despite their differing terminology, there is evidently a high degree of coincidence among their formulations. However, I would like, by looking ahead to the year 2000, to restate those goals or social concerns for a country like the Philippines and suggest, without attributing values to them, four major areas of policy.

One major concern has to do with the viability of the Filipino nation upon a planet with a rather uneven distribution of resources, in a world of growing interdependence among nations in which tensions erupt from the most unpredictable sources. Such a concern happens to be in line with the various projects of the Academy. (This is the reason why the same group, the SIP research team, will later on look into the Philippine population, resources, and the environment, and also, I hope, our institutions, from the perspective of the year 2000.) The question of viability has become very important. In the light of the social concerns set forth in the SIP papers and those other objectives that may emerge in the years ahead, what kind of institutions, for instance, do we foresee would be required to help our people attain general well-being by the year 2000? By that time, our country will have reached a certain population size of a particular structure, and will have attained a certain level of competence in the resource management of its environment.

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\*From an Address delivered at the Social Indicators Project Workshop on January 10, 1975, at the Development Academy of the Philippines in Tagaytay City.

A second major area of policy has to do with a very traditional concern, that is, with productivity. It is just as foolhardy to belittle productivity as a national goal as to discount gross national product or GNP as one of its measures. A country's efficiency in producing those goods and services which are required for an acceptable quality of life already reflects a human capability. Our concern for productivity derives from our concern for efficiency. This concern for efficiency, to my mind, in turn arises from the fact that efficiency as a value is a legitimate aspect of our nature as intelligent beings — in the same way that we are concerned with equity because of our nature as social beings.

A third area of concern is, of course, the general area of the Filipino well-being which subsumes such social concerns as health and learning. This area, which engages the SIP research team, has to do principally with the end and the environment of the Filipino way of life.

Our fourth area of concern may be aptly identified by the term *community*. Having looked after the nation's productivity, the Filipino well-being, and the end and environment of his way of life, we must look also after the community. Perhaps, this is one of the most important areas in which the New Society aims to distinguish itself rather clearly from the previous order because it stresses the strengthening of the Filipino nation *as a community*. *Communis, communitas* — the sharing of some or all things in common. A group of persons who do not have anything in common cannot be a community. They share nothing; they are separate entities, but not a community. One major concern at present from the national perspective is precisely that, though we have a community, we must make it *more* of a community. That is to say, we must strengthen the ties that bind the members of the group so that the values or the benefits that result from their cooperative endeavor may be shared more justly, more equitably. However, it is not only the *sharing* that is important. Just as important is the *contribution* of the members of the group to the production of those values and benefits that they share. Some emphasis has been laid on the idea that we aspire towards a broader sharing of the benefits and values. That is certainly right, but, to my mind, it is even better to try and achieve a broader basis for positive contribution to those values and benefits by which, precisely, we achieve in turn a broader sharing in their enjoyment.

Ideally, such a sharing should hold not only among the income classes but also among the different regions of the country. The idea is that, when there is regional equity through a dispersal of development, there is a more consolidated community. Our own view here in the Academy is that we must do much more than disperse industry to achieve regional equity. You may, for example, establish a very large paper industry in some province and rest content with the fact that you have dispersed industry, that you have generated employment. Yet, from the point of view of regional equity, we

can very well see that the paper industry would use up some of the valuable resources of the province — its river, soil, forests, labor, time; and when the profits are siphoned back to Makati, no regional equity shall have been achieved at all. Clearly, such an exploitation of the province would be merely one other form of colonialism. Therefore, we must go beyond the bare act of dispersing industry, beyond the illusory hope that it is spreading development more widely. We must think in terms of resources used, in terms of how the profits and the values from the development are shared.

It is, then, a strong sense of community that leads us to a more discriminating idea of equity — equity not only among the income classes but also among the regions of the country. It is our sense of the community that leads us to ask whether regional equity shall contribute to the viability of the Filipino nation in the kind of world that we live in, whether it shall contribute to productivity and disperse, as it were, human well-being. But since such a concern involves a longer time dimension with, perhaps, a middle-term time perspective, the type of social indicators that our SIP research team recommends may not be the most appropriate. What would be needed is, perhaps, the kind of social indicators which would enable our leaders to monitor fairly middle- and long-term structural changes in the community. The social indicators system now being proposed is capable of depicting in a more or less objective manner what the state of well-being is at a particular year or during a particular short-term period. But it might not, since the time frame alone is much longer, monitor long-term structural changes in the community.

The proposed social indicators system is, needless to say, very useful. We ought to have it. But, perhaps, for policy objectives of longer and broader range, we would need a companion or similar social accounting system attuned to the higher level of policy and the longer time frame that is required. It is imperative to maintain such a system of social accounting at this time since we live in a world of growing interdependence among the different human communities, a world whose resources are very unevenly distributed and in which changes take place rapidly and tensions arise from the most unpredictable sources.

There has been a very encouraging hospitableness to the idea of a social indicators system from the national leadership. There has been a direct expression from the President of general moral support of the Social Indicators Project. The extent to which the idea of a system of social accounting has been accepted is also reflected in the fact that the January 30 referendum, contrary to popular expectation, may not be the basis for retaining or removing local government officials. The chief basis would rather be an actual performance audit of the local government officials. Serious efforts are now underway to design such an audit as would reflect the spirit of the social indicators system. In other words, the areas of social

concern listed in the SIP papers would as much as possible be linked to or matched by specific government programs in the region or jurisdiction of the local government. On the basis of such a linkage or matching, a sincere effort would then be made to assess the actual performance of the local government leaders. Thus, there already obtains an advanced and, perhaps, even a premature application of the idea of social accounting to government offices. It is a very encouraging sign because the experience may well lead to greater interest in the gathering of data relevant to the various areas of social concern, and promote a more sincere and objective effort at judging government programs on the basis of actual performance.

Finally, I would like to stress a small point. An explicit statement should perhaps be made that there are various types of social indicators which are addressed to different purposes. As I said earlier, the social indicators system proposed by the SIP research team is not the most appropriate for monitoring longer-range structural social change. It is a system of social accounting for recording or telescoping the state of national well-being at a particular time, although it also includes certain measures that reflect not the state but the perception of human well-being. I think, then, that if the distinction were made clearer, it may in fact help in the design and the adoption of the other type of social accounting that, as a companion to the SIP system, would be useful for national leaders in formulating high policy objectives.

ONOFRE D. CORPUZ

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The Social Indicators Project held a series of workshops to elicit ideas, suggestions, comments and information from various people from universities, research institutes, the private sector, and the government: a Workshop on Social Indicators, January 19-20, 1974; a Workshop on Statistical Methods for Social Indicators, April 30, 1974; and a Workshop on the Measurement of National Welfare, January 10-11, 1975.

The project staff, having benefited greatly from both the written and verbal comments of the workshop participants, would like to thank all of them:

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This collection of papers is unavoidably littered with equations and weighed down by a large number of charts and tables. It was felt that the SIP Report as finally published should be as complete as possible for the benefit of future students of the subject. At the same time, this imposed great strains on Dr. Gémino H. Abad, of the U.P. Department of English, and Mr. César F. Dizon, of the APO Production Unit, who as a team went through the ordeal of preparing the materials for final printing.

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# CONTENTS

<i>Tables</i> . . . . .		vii
<i>Charts</i> . . . . .		xiii
<i>Foreword</i> . . . . .		xviii
<i>Acknowledgments</i> . . . . .		xxii
 1. The Measurement of Philippine National Welfare		
	<i>Mahar Mangahas</i>	1
1. Introduction . . . . .		1
2. Ethical Considerations . . . . .		2
3. Philippine Social Concerns . . . . .		6
4. Welfare Indicators . . . . .		8
5. Modes of Disaggregation . . . . .		15
6. Trends in Philippine Welfare . . . . .		17
7. Summary and Recommendations . . . . .		30
Postscript on Social Indicators . . . . .		33
 2. Social Indicators for Health and Nutrition	<i>Vicente Paqueo</i>	41
1. Introduction . . . . .		41
2. Re-examination of Community Health Measurement . . . . .		42
3. Major Dimensions and Indicators of Well-being in the Area of Health . . . . .		49
4. Quality of Health . . . . .		50
5. A Broad Indicator of the Health Status of the Community: Infant Mortality Rate . . . . .		59
6. Historical Perspective . . . . .		60
 3. Indicators for Learning	<i>Ruperto P. Alonzo</i>	117
1. Introduction . . . . .		117
2. Indicators for Learning . . . . .		119
3. The Indicators and the Post-War Philippine Experience . . . . .		129
4. Some Caveats and an Agenda for Future Research . . . . .		159
 4. Indicators of Economic Well-Being	<i>Leonardo Sta. Romana III</i>	165
1. Income and Consumption . . . . .		166
2. Employment . . . . .		180
3. Non-Human Productive Resources . . . . .		203

5. Philippine Poverty Thresholds	<i>Ma. Alcestis S. Abrera</i>	223
1. Issues in Poverty Definition		224
2. Previous Philippine Poverty Standards: Review of the Literature		229
3. The Social Indicators Poverty Levels: The Food and Total Thresholds		236
4. Implications		243
5. A Community's Perception of Poverty		250
6. The Physical Environment: Welfare Indicators	<i>Felipe Medalla and Reynaldo Tabbada</i>	275
1. Introduction		275
2. Welfare Indicators for the Physical Environment		277
3. Selected Statistics on the Physical Environment		282
7. The Measurement of Public Safety and Justice in the Administration of the Law	<i>Eleanor Elequin and Barbara Jo Lava</i>	319
1. Introduction		319
2. Review of Literature		320
3. Public Safety		321
4. The Pilot Survey: Other Measures of Public Safety		328
5. Results of the Pilot Survey		333
8. Indicators of Political Opportunity and Political Welfare	<i>Elsa P. Jurado</i>	357
1. Introduction		357
2. The Variables		357
3. The Indicators		359
4. Data and Measurements		360
5. Findings and Analyses: A Case Study of Batangas		365
6. Conclusions		378
9. Indicators of Social Mobility	<i>Jennifer Lauby</i>	405
1. Introduction		405
2. Historical Trends in Social Mobility		411
3. The Construction of an Occupational Prestige Scale		432
4. Development of a Stratification Scale.		447
10. A Pilot Survey on Social Indicators	<i>Georgina K. Ochoa and Cecilia Carreon-Eco</i>	465

## TABLES

### Table

1/1.	A Proposed Set of Indicators of Philippine Welfare	11
1/2.	PSSC National Survey of 1974: Respondents Classified by their Perception of Present (1974) Socioeconomic Conditions as Compared to those of 5 Years Ago (1969)	37
2/1.	Infant Mortality Rate, Philippines: 1951-1972	68
2/2.	Infant Mortality Rate, Philippines, Regional and Urban-Rural Location, 1973	68
2/3.	Life Expectancy at Birth, Philippines 1918-1973	69
2/4.	Estimated Crude Death Rate, Philippines: 1903-1969	69
2/5.	Life Expectancy at Birth, Philippines, Regional and Urban-Rural Location: 1973	70
2/6.	Number of Employed Persons Not at Work During the Week due to Temporary Illness per Thousand Employed Workers, by Sex and Sector, Philippines: October 1956-1973	71
2/7.	Number of Employed Persons Not at Work During the Week due to Temporary Illness per Thousand Employed Workers, by Sex and Sector, Philippines: May 1958-1973	72
2/8.	Number of Persons Not Wanting Work due to Permanent Illness or Disability per Thousand Working Age Population, by Sex and Age, Philippines: October 1959-1973	73
2/9.	Number of Persons Not Wanting Work due to Permanent Illness or Disability per Thousand Working Age Population, by Sex and Age, Philippines: May 1961-1973	74
2/10.	Persons Who Were Suffering From Permanent Illness and Could Not Work per Thousand Population, by Sex and Age, Philippines: October 1962	75
2/11.	Percent Distribution of Persons Suffering From Permanent Illness and Could Not Work, by Type of Illness and Sex, Philippines: October 1962	75
2/12.	Persons Suffering From Selected Physical and Mental Disabilities, Philippines: October 1962	76

2/13.	Selected Morbidity Data by Sex, Location, Employment, Poverty, and Marital Status: For a Reference Period of Two Weeks, Batangas: September 1974	77
2/14.	Percentage Distribution of Diseases, Batangas: September 1974	78
2/15.	Percentage Distribution of Mortality by Leading Causes, Philippines: 1961 and 1971	78
2/16.	Reported Cases of Morbidity by Ten Leading Causes, Philippines: 5 Year-Averages, 1961-1965 to 1966-1970, and 1971	79
2/17.	Percentage Distribution of Reported Deaths due to Notifiable Diseases Relative to Total Reported Deaths, Philippines: 1960-1971	79
2/18.	Available Daily Supply of Calories and Protein per Capita, by Origin, Philippines: 1953-1972	80
2/19.	Average Daily per Capita Intake of Calories and Protein Compared to Recommended Allowance, by Region	81
2/20.	Percentage of Households in Different Adequacy Levels for Calories and Protein, by Region	82
2/21.	Percent Distribution of Malnutrition in the 1-4 Age Group, by Sex	84
3/1.	Elementary School Enrollment, Population of Elementary School-Going Age and Ratio by Sex, Philippines: 1956-1957 to 1970-1971	131
3/2.	High School Enrollment, Population of High School-Going Age by Sex, Philippines: 1956-1957 to 1970-1971	134
3/3.	College Enrollment, Population of College-Going Age by Sex, Philippines: 1958-59 to 1970-1971	137
3/4.	Annual Flow of Graduates From Elementary Schools as a Percent of the Relevant Population: School Years 1954-55 to 1970-71	141
3/5.	School Retention Rates by Level of Education, Philippines	143
3/6.	Comparison of Physical and Educational Investments in 1972 Million Pesos, Philippines: 1956-1970	148
3/7.	Years of Schooling per 1000 Persons, for the Household Population 25 Years Old and Over, by Level of Education and by Sex, Philippines: 1948 to 1965	151
3/8.	Annual Replacement Costs of Schooling per Person (Estimated by ILO and Danielson) by Level of Education, Philippines: 1960 and 1971	155
3/9.	Equivalent Years of Elementary Schooling per 1000 Persons, for the Household Population 25 Years Old and Over, Weighted by Relative Schooling Costs, by Sex, Philippines: 1948-1965	157
3/10.	Total and per Capita Educational Capital, for the Household Population 25 Years Old and Over, Philippines: 1948-1965	158
3/11.	Distribution of Educational Capital Between the Highest Quintile and the Lowest Quintile for Selected Age Groups (Assuming ILO Weights), Philippines: 1948-1965	159
3/12.	Years of Schooling per 1000 Persons, for the Household Population 25 Years Old and Over, by Level of Education and by Sex, Urban, Rural & Philippines: 1961 & 1965	160
3/13.	Years of Schooling per 1000 Persons for the Household Population 25 Years Old and Over, in Equivalent Years of Elementary Schooling Weighted by the Relative Costs for Each Level of Education, by Sex, Urban and Rural, 1961 and 1965 (Assuming ILO)	161
3/14.	Percentage of the Household Population (25 Years Old and Over) by Lowest Level of Education Completed, by Sex, Philippines: 1948-1965	162

4/1.	Gross National Product (GNP), GNP Less Investment, and Net Beneficial Product (NBP) 1960, 1964 and 1968-1972	171
4/2.	Gross National Product (GNP), GNP Less Investment, and Net Beneficial Product (NBP): Growth Rates, 1960, 1964 and 1968-1972	173
4/3.	Ratio of the Mean Family Income of the Richest 20% to that of the Poorest 20%: Philippines, 1956, 1961, 1965 and 1971	175
4/4.	Ratio of Mean Income of Each Fifth of Families to the Mean Income of All Families: Philippines, 1956, 1961, 1965 and 1971	177
4/5.	Annual Rate of Inflation of Consumer Prices (All Items): Philippines, Manila, and Outside Manila, 1957-1974	179
4/6.	Open Unemployment Philippines, 1956-1973	184
4/7.	Total Unemployment: Philippines, October 1956-1973	187
4/8.	Open Unemployment Rate: Urban and Rural, 1965-1973	189
4/9.	Unemployment Rate by Sex and Age: Philippines, 1956-1973	191
4/10.	Unemployment Rate By Level of Educational Attainment: Philippines, 1961, 1965, and 1968	195
4/11.	Distribution of the Unemployed by Number of Weeks Looking for Work: Philippines, 1956-1973	197
4/12.	Wage Rate Indices of Skilled and Unskilled Labor, 1951-1973 (1965=100)	200
4/13.	Value of Physical Capital Stock: 1950-1973	205
4/14.	Total Land Area Under Cultivation: Philippines, 1946-1972	207
4/15.	Distribution of Agricultural Land-Ownership: December, 1973	209
4/16.	Total Forest Area and Commercial Forest Area: Philippines, 1957 and 1968-1973	212
4/17.	Known Metallic Ore Reserves: Philippines, 1957 and 1968-1972 (In Metric Tons)	214
4/18.	Known Non-Metallic Ore Reserves: Philippines, 1964 and 1968-1972	216
5/1.	Previous Poverty Standards, 1971	231
5/2.	Cost of Living Deflators, Regions II-X, Other Urban Areas, Rural Areas, Manila and Suburbs: 1972, 1973, January-May 1974	240
5/3.	Families, With Expenditures or Incomes Less Than Food Threshold and their Proportions to All Families, by Area: 1961, 1965, 1971	245
5/4.	Persons With Expenditures or Incomes Less Than the Food Threshold, by Area: 1961, 1965, 1971.	245
5/5.	Families With Expenditures or Incomes Less Than the Total Threshold, and their Proportions to All Families, by Area: 1961, 1965, 1971	246
5/6.	Persons With Expenditures or Incomes Less Than the Total Threshold, by Area: 1961, 1965, 1971	246
5/7.	The Current Income of the Poor, the Poverty GAP, and the Proportion of the GAP to Total Family Income, by Area: 1971	247
5/8.	The Effect of Poverty Elimination on GINI Ratio, by Area: 1971	248
5/9.	Mean Income, the Food and Total Thresholds, by Area: 1961, 1965, 1971, 1974	249
5/10.	National Average Family Size, Average Family Size of Poor Families, by Area: 1965, 1971	249
5/11.	Means of Perceived Minimum Incomes and Expenditures in Order that a Family Consider Itself as Non-Poor (Batangas, June, 1974)	252
5/12.	Perceived Minimum Income in Order that a Family Consider Itself as Non-Poor, by Family Size and Age of Family Head (Batangas, June, 1974)	253

5/13.	Perceived Standards for Shelter and Clothing in Order that a Family Consider Itself Non-Poor (Batangas, June, 1974)	256
5/14.	Comparison of Perceived Needed Utilities in Order that a Family Consider Itself Non-Poor With Actually Available Utilities (Batangas, June, 1974)	257
5/15.	Perceived Degree of Adequacy in Food Intake and Floor Space (Batangas, June, 1974)	257
5/16.	Respondents' Actual Income With Self-Rating Relative to the Poverty Line	259
6/1.	Distribution of Respondents by Ranks Assigned to Permanence of Structure, No Crowding, and Toilet Facilities	281
6/2.	Median Required Number of Rooms by Size of Household and by Respondent Class	282
6/3.	Distribution of Occupied Dwelling Units by Water Supply, Urban, Rural, and Philippines: 1956, 1960, 1967, and 1970	283
6/4.	Percent and Number of Dwelling Units With Adequate Water, Philippines: 1956, 1967, and 1970	285
6/5.	Percent Population Served With Electricity, Philippines: 1960, 1967, 1970, 1971, 1972, and 1973	286
6/6.	Cumulative Distribution of Households by Number of Persons per Room, Urban, Rural, Philippines, and Tondo Foreshore: 1967, 1968 1973 and 1974	287
6/7.	Distribution of Household Dwelling Units by Type of Construction Materials, Urban, Rural, and Philippines: 1956, 1967, and 1970	290
6/8.	Percent of Occupied Dwelling Units Without Toilets, Urban, Rural, and Philippines: 1956, 1960, 1967, and 1970	291
6/9.	Percent of Respondents Disturbed by Air Pollution, Water Pollution, Noise, Congestion, Filthiness of Surroundings	293
6/10.	Number and Percentage of Samples Which Exceeded the National Pollution Control Commission (NPCC) 1-Hour Tolerable Limits, Metro-Manila, 1971, 1972, and 1973.	296
6/11.	Four Quarter Moving Averages of Pollutants by Monitoring Stations, Metro-Manila: 1971, 1972, and 1973.	297
6/12.	Extreme Value Index, Metro-Manila: 1971, 1972, and 1973	298
6/13.	Dissolved Oxygen Levels (mg/l) by Monitoring Sites, Pasig River: 1973 and 1974	299
6/14.	Approximate Length of Polluted Rivers, Meycauayan River and Its Tributaries: 1972 and 1973	310
6/15.	Percentage Average Dissolved Oxygen Concentrations, Below 5 mg/l, Meycauayan River and Its Tributaries: 1972 and 1973	310
6/16.	Classification and Approximate Length of Meycauayan River and Its Tributaries: 1972 and 1973	310
6/17.	One-Hour Pollutant Concentrations in Excess of NPCC Tolerable Limits, Metro-Manila: 1971, 1972, and 1973	311
7/1.	Crime Rates (Number of Offenses per 100,000 Population), Philippines and Metro Manila: 1967-1973	326
7/2.	Product Moment Correlations of Item Scores and their Respective Sub-Group Scores: Batangas, June 1974	333
7/3.	Distribution of Responses to Various Questions on Public Safety and Justice DAP Social Indicators Pilot Survey, Batangas, June, 1974	335



7/4.	Number of Prisoners Dropped, Admitted and Confined in Penal Institutions, Philippines: FY 1955-56 to FY 1967-68	340
7/5.	Backlog of Cases in Lower and Special Courts, Philippines: FY 1962-1963 to 1972-1973	344
7/6.	Judicial Cases Disposal Rate in Lower and Special Courts, Philippines: FY 1962-63 to FY 1972-73	345
7/7.	Number of Cases Filed, Disposed of, and Pending, and Disposal Rate, by Court, Philippines: FY 1962-63 to FY 1972-73	347
8/1.	Leader-Respondents' Profile: Batangas, June, 1974	366
8/2.	Citizen-Respondents' Profile: Batangas, June, 1974	368
8/3.	Perception of Political Mobility Index: Batangas, June, 1974	370
8/4.	Political Information Index: Batangas, June, 1974	371
8/5.	Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Sources of Political Information: Batangas, June, 1974	372
8/6.	Political Awareness Index: Batangas, June, 1974	373
8/7.	Political Awareness Index by Programs and Activities of the Government: Batangas, June, 1974	374
8/8.	Participation in Community Activity Index: Batangas, June, 1974	375
8/9.	Political Dissent Index: Batangas, June, 1974	376
8/10.	Political Efficacy Index: Batangas, June, 1974	378
8/11.	Registration Participation (R/P) and General Voting Participation (V/P) Rates, Philippines: 1907-1971	384
8/12.	Trends in Registration Rate (R/Pq), Citizens' Voting Participation Rate (V/Pq) and Voters' Turn-Out Rate (V/R), Philippines: 1909-1971	387
8/13.	Total Registration Rates (RPq), by Sex, Philippines: 1946-1971	389
8/14.	Citizens' Voting Participation Rate (V/Pq), by Sex, Philippines: 1947-1971	392
8/15.	Rate of Voter Turn-Out, by Sex, Philippines: 1947-1971	393
8/16.	Rate of Voter Turn-Out (V/R), Urban and Non-Urban, Philippines: 1946-1971	394
8/17.	Rate of Voter Turn-Out, by Sex, Urban & Non-Urban, Philippines: 1947-1971	395
8/18.	Total Population, Population 21 Years Old and Over, and Number of Registered Voters and Voters, Philippines: 1909-1971	399
8/19.	Number of Registered Voters, by Sex, Philippines: 1946-1971	400
8/20.	Number of Voters, by Sex, Philippines: 1946-1971	400
9/1.	Intergenerational Mobility: Respondent's Present Occupation by Father's Occupation at Age 40 for All Members of the Labor Force Aged 25 Years and Over: NDS, 1968, 1973	406
9/2.	Intergenerational Mobility: Coefficients of Openness and Other Measures of Mobility: NDS, 1968, 1973 (Based on Table 9/1, Occupations Classified Into Non-Manual, Farm, and Manual)	413
9/3.	Intergenerational Mobility: Coefficients of Openness and Other Measures of Mobility: NDS, 1968, 1973 (Occupations Classified Into BCS Categories: For 1968, 7 Categories; For 1973, 9 Categories).	417
9/4.	Intragenerational Mobility: Coefficients of Openness and Other Measures of Mobility Based on Respondent's Present Occupation by Occupation in 1965: NDS, 1973	419
9/5.	Coefficients of Openness and Other Measures of Mobility for Dumaguete Area (Voth, 1969)	419