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**ESTABLISHING CRITERIA FOR THE DELINEATION  
OF METROPOLITAN ILOILO**

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**Abstract:**

Local government units (LGUs) have been trying to adapt to the challenge of decentralization locally and of globalization externally by clustering together and fostering collaboration between and among themselves. One such approach to local management, especially for urban areas, is the metropolitan arrangement.

Metropolitan arrangement encompasses several areas, such as metropolitan delineation, governmental structure and processes. This thesis focuses on the aspect of delineation, in particular the establishment of criteria for the delineation of the proposed Metropolitan Iloilo. Through interviews, the study likewise solicited the views of local officials and key stakeholders on the Metropolitan Iloilo proposal.

The proposed Metropolitan Iloilo encompasses the city of Iloilo and the four contiguous municipalities of Leganes, Oton, Pavia, and San Miguel. It was delineated based on a 15-km radius from Iloilo city. Past efforts at promoting the Metropolitan Iloilo proposal, however, were stalled following concerns over the absence of a process of public consultation, lack of technical study to provide the basis of the proposal, and apprehensions over certain aspects of the metropolitan arrangement, such as sharing of financial resources among local government units. While these concerns threaten to stifle the initiative altogether, this does not necessarily call for a reassessment of the entire Metropolitan Iloilo concept but a study that could provide empirical bases for the delineation of the metropolitan area would be very useful.

Six criteria for the delineation of the metropolitan area were compiled from several studies. The criteria are total population, total land area, population density, non-agricultural employment, interdependence, and contiguity.

While the Metropolitan Iloilo municipalities are still very much rural and agriculture-led economies, based on the more important criteria of interdependence and contiguity, the study provides sound technical bases favoring an expanded Metropolitan Iloilo comprising Iloilo City, the four Metropolitan Iloilo municipalities of Leganes, Oton, Pavia, and San Miguel and the contiguous municipalities of Sta. Barbara and Zarraga. Commuting patterns show a considerable degree of interdependence between Iloilo City and these municipalities. The jeepney terminal data likewise reveal that Sta. Barbara and Zarraga are already integrated with Pavia and Leganes, respectively, which are included in the proposed Metropolitan Iloilo grouping.

In many ways, the delineation of a metropolis is a projection of the possible urban growth patterns that will occur, rather than a description of the existing situation. Thus, some areas may be included in a metropolitan area although there may be more rural than urban at the present.

Meanwhile, the LGUs have raised several concerns regarding the proposed Metro Iloilo. These pertain to issues of power-sharing arrangement, division of functions and sharing of financial resources. Some of these could be addressed by adopting a metropolitan structure that is acceptable to all parties concerned. Other concerns, however, are acknowledged policy issues that could be addressed through appropriate policy interventions such as of basic laws.

Both the delineation criteria and local officials' views on the Metropolitan Iloilo arrangement provide empirical bases in evaluating the current Metro Iloilo, particularly with regard to its delineation and other concerns surrounding its creation. These empirical bases for the Metropolitan Iloilo proposal may assist local officials in whatever policy actions they may wish to take regarding the proposal.