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## Zamboanga — Rising Metropolis of the Southern Philippines

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Zamboanga seems to epitomize "far away places with strange sounding names," and the "monkeys have no tails in Zamboanga" — there are no monkeys. The setting of the city on the southwestern-most tip of Mindanao places it close to the exotic island of Borneo. Pirates still ply the adjacent seas, and bandit raids immediately in the interior are commonplace. Colorful Moros walk the streets, and colorful tropical flowers bloom in profusion.

Zamboanga is very easy to reach. Philippine Air Lines (PAL) runs regular flights (twice weekly this service is by 4-engine Viscount) from Manila and other Mindanao points, such as Cotabato, Davao, Lanao, and Cagayan de Oro. In addition a number of passenger-carrying merchant vessels make the city a regular port of call. Land transportation is, at present, unavailable.

The city is surprisingly clean and prosperous. The hinterland is limited because roads end abruptly at the selva edge not far away from the urbanized district. However, a new road being built across the island will ultimately link it with the Lake Lanao district in the north. At the moment the city looks to the sea for sustenance.

The present population of Zamboanga is estimated at about 105,000, and Christians outnumber Muslims more than two to one.<sup>1</sup> Population is expanding rapidly, and Zamboanguenos claim that their city has exceeded Davao in size. This claim is vehemently denied by the good citizens of Davao. The municipal administration of Zamboanga has been quite good if one may judge such things by the general appearance of prosperity and

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<sup>1</sup> All statistical material included in this paper was obtained from the mayor's office, City of Zamboanga. Grateful acknowledgement is hereby made to the mayor and his staff for invaluable assistance.

sense of well-being which seems to characterize the residents. The city is well lighted, boasts a new market, possesses adequate tourist accommodations, and emanates a kind of charm which is difficult to resist. The city land use pattern is heterogeneous, reflecting little similarity to a western urban area.

The citizens of Zamboanga are sustained largely by agriculture, fishing, lumbering, and trade. Thousands of coconut trees flourish in the immediate hinterland of the city, and Zamboanga normally exports more than 60,000 long tons of copra and 14,000 long tons of coconut oil each year. In addition, large amounts of coconut products are consumed within the immediate area, and the coconut tree is very significant for building material and fuel.

Excellent hardwoods growing in nearby forests are an important source of wealth. More than 23,000,000 board feet of logs and more than 225,000 board feet of lumber are exported annually. This wood finds a ready market in Europe and North America, as well as in Japan.

Zamboanga's significance as a trade center is indicated by her position in the inter-island and international movement of goods. In inter-island trade the city has a decided trade deficit. In 1957, 44,287,755 pesos (one peso = \$0.50 American) worth of goods were received from other ports of the Philippines, while Zamboanga shipped 13,219,637 pesos to other Philippine Islands. On the other hand international trade shows a decidedly favorable balance. In 1957, 50,144,046 pesos worth of goods were exported and only 253,382 pesos in value was imported. The sum total of all exports and imports shows a strong favorable balance. This situation is likely to obtain for the immediate foreseeable future. The pattern of trade shows an exportation of raw materials and an importation of finished products.

The fishing industry is pursued by Zamboanguenos in small boats in the adjacent seas. A great variety of tropical fish is caught, and the catch is sold daily in the local market. In addition, fish farming is becoming increasingly significant in fresh waters and brackish waters near the shore. Mangrove swamps are being cleared and shallow hatching and raising ponds are developed. Formerly such ponds were stocked with tilapia, but these cannibals are being replaced with the vegetarian milkfish. It is believed that such fish farms will add significant quantities of protein to the diets of the local citizenry, and perhaps it will add a cash income for a few.

Subsistence farming, grazing, charcoal making, and evaporative salt production tend to supplement the economy. When road connections come and hinterland population expands, Zamboanga is likely to manifest a further significant growth.

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