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# Brain Drain and Nationalism

by jed pensar and herb  
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There used to be a lot of talk in the Philippine General Hospital of the University of the Philippines System regarding brain drain. The issue was that up to 60% of PGH medical graduates proceed to work as doctors in foreign countries.

The training of PGH doctors is subsidized by taxpayer money but, in the end, most of them serve the medical and health needs of foreigners. Considering that half of them are honor graduates of pre-medical courses, you can just imagine the waste of local talent deserting this country.

Shifting the above brain drain paradigm to the provincial level, the net loss suffered by the provinces is even more severe. Manila, which hosts the PGH, is the beneficiary. Note that most PGH graduates who have provincial origins will eventually practice in Manila and not in their native province. No wonder that few provinces have enough general and specialist practitioners.

Examine also the contradiction of the University of the Philippines. Taxes generated by economic activity in all provinces fund it. Yet its biggest and most prestigious campuses are in Manila. Each year, hundreds of valedictorians and salutatorians from provincial high schools

are accepted to the Diliman campus. Most of them will end up working as professionals in Manila. The same with the Philippine National Science High School.

Manila gets the creme de la creme of the provinces' young generation in addition to the money sent for their scholastic and living expenses by provincial parents. Undeniably, brain drain has doubly benefitted Manila at the expense of its provincial colonies.

The educational system assures that the public will meekly accept internal brain drain. The educational curriculum itself has been cooked up by Manila-based social institutions over the generations. History is taught from the point of view of Manila and its language, Tagalog, is forced on all as a medium of instruction. All students are brainwashed to be nationalistic, to worship the nation and sacrifice the province.

At one point, the administrators of U.P. made plans for raising quotas of provincianos to be accepted to Diliman. Always on the look-out to "improve" brain drain, are they not?

But as we are admittedly pro-province, here is our counterplan:

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- Build better schools in the provinces and improve the existing ones.
- Use provincial languages in school. By having Tagalog-Filipino as medium of instruction, students suffer inferiority complex and aspire for life in Manila.
- Reverse taxation of the provinces by Manila. This will stimulate local industrial growth which will in turn

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provide local jobs for local  
graduates.

The familiar story of provincial families selling their carabaos to support a child's education in the colonial capital of Manila is not funny at all. The myths of nationalism have long conditioned us to believe the lie that what is good for Manila is good for the rest of the Philippines. What has been and is still true is that the more the provinces enrich Manila, the poorer they will become. Thanks to pro-Manila nationalism.

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Jed Pensar and Herb Mantawe. Philippines.