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# Productivity and Luxury

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by jed pensar

The provinces are more important than Manila. To see why, let us go back in time.

Once, there was a nomadic tribe whose healthy adults engaged in hunting animals and gathering plants for food. Since these involved taking raw materials from the ecosystem, hunting and gathering are classified as productive work. One day, some wiseguy planted the seeds of wild rice around the campsite and thus invented agriculture.

With this powerful discovery, the tribe was soon overproducing food. This freed some of them from hunting and gathering work in order to become specialized artists, doctors, priests, etc. Since the latter jobs are neither productive nor industrial (transforming raw materials into finished products), let us call them luxury jobs.

The point is that the true wealth of a society is based first on the raw materials it produces and next on its industrial output. The professional and service segment of the economy are only manifestations, not the source of the country's wealth. There is nothing wrong with being a professional but one just can not be if nobody took care of basic production.

It is the provinces that produce raw

materials and are, therefore, the origin of wealth of Philippine society. Manila, on the other hand, produces nothing as its ecosystem has been transformed into cemented roads, buildings, cars, people and smog. Most of Manila's economy is based on luxury work. Manila is nothing more than an economic parasite feeding on the surplus of the provinces.

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To prove this point, let us completely cut off trade between the provinces and Manila. The provinces should continue to subsist as they do now or even manage to prosper. But Manila would not survive at all.

Yet, in our country, it is the parasite that dictates to the host.

It is high time to build a Philippine confederation wherein the provinces have fiscal, political and cultural autonomy. Freed from Manila's parasitism, they can produce enough finished products to ensure a prosperous Philippines.

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