

THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE FOR ANCESTRAL DOMAIN

KARL M. GASPAR C.S.s.R.

Introduction

The fate of the remaining indigenous peoples (IPs) in our country who have maintained links with the cultural legacy of Filipino ancestors has been appropriately described as one of minoritization (Scott, 1977). Colonization that dates back to the mid-1500s and persisted until the mid-1900s would transform those in the lowlands who embraced the colonial masters' governance and legal systems, cultural and religious practices, language and lifestyle as "the cultural majority." Whereas, those who rejected these, even as they sought sanctuary in the highlands, would be labelled "cultural minorities."

The transformation of the Tagalog, Ilocano, Pangasinense, Bicolano, Cebuano, Bol-anon, Waray, Ilonggo and other lowlanders would later distinguish them from the country's IPs, those who retained their precolonial identity. As the former became more colonized, Christianized and westernized, they found themselves no longer able to identify and associate with those they began to consider as "pagans and uncivilized." This name-calling and labelling would be an instrument of the further marginalization of the IPs (Rodil, 1994).

One effective and insidious manner by which the Spanish *conquistadores* would institutionalize the IPs' disenfranchisement was through the imposition of their own worldview of land and the corresponding system of ownership and use of land. The *conquistadores* armed themselves with the *Jura Regalia* feudal theory which led to the introduction of the Laws of the Indies and the Royal Cedula. This theory was the basis of the infamous Regalian Doctrine. Once the colonial laws were in place, all land not privately owned became public land. What used to be the ancestral homeland of the

IPs was no longer theirs to own. In the words of many IP leaders, they became squatters in their own land.

Those mainly affected were the IPs in Luzon and the Visayas where Spanish colonization was in full force from the late 1500s to the end of the 19th century. Owing to the Moro resistance in Mindanao, the encroachment of the Spanish colonial government in the south was limited to a few coastal areas of Mindanao. Thus, the widespread impact of colonization on Mindanao's *lumad* (native) would only take place during the American colonial period.

Table 1 shows the laws promulgated by the American colonial government that would have tremendous consequences on the lives of future Mindanaoans—whether Moro, *lumad* or settler.

With these laws, the United States asserted its power to have full control over the Philippines' resources, and eventually, its future. This would be especially true for Mindanao and Sulu. Once the above laws were implemented, Mindanao-Sulu would never be the same again. Many of Mindanao's social problems today could be traced back to the implementation of these laws.

The American colonial government's land policy was naturally influenced by their own practice at home. This involved "the American ideal of a stable democracy of small property holders, rooted in the philosophy of John Locke [which] found expression on the Western frontier in the Homestead Act of 1862... based on the Torrens system of land law first introduced in South Australia as the Real Property Act of 1857-58." (Collier, 1997)

Through its superior arms and technology the American colonial government was able to temporarily subjugate the Moro people by neutralizing the power of the sultanates. Having established a foothold in Mindanao, the United States reached more areas than did the Spaniards and at a much faster pace. Eventually, there were *lumad* communities who succumbed to the aggressive colonizing drive. However, there were also those who fled the lowlands and moved to the rainforests or the higher mountain ranges. The

Table No. 1
Laws Enacted by the American Colonial Government

Title of Law and Year Enacted	Description
Land Registration Act No. 496 of 1902	Declared all lands subject to the Torrens system and empowered the State to issue to any legitimate claimant an indefeasible proof of title over a parcel of land.
Philippine Commission Act No. 178 of 1903	Forbade the Moro sultanate to parcel out land without the State's prior approval.
Public Land Act of 1905	Ordered all unregistered lands become part of the public domain and that only the State had the authority to classify or exploit the same.
Mining Law of 1905	Gave the Americans the right to acquire public land for mining purposes.
Public Land Act No. 926 of 1903 and those of 1913, 1919 and 1925. Also the Commonwealth Acts 2254 and 2289 of 1913	Made available all unoccupied, unreserved, or otherwise unappropriated public lands in Mindanao to homesteaders and corporations.

subsequent arrival of wave upon wave of landless migrants from the Visayas and Luzon worsened the *lumad*'s being pushed to the margins.

As the Americans aimed to establish their presence in Mindanao, it did not take so long for them to take control over landholdings which expanded into full-scale plantations producing both traditional export crops (sugar, hemp, copra) but also new export crops (pineapple and rubber) (Ofreneo, 1980; Edgerton and Edgerton, 1982).

In 1926, the Philippine Packing Corporation (Philpak) was set up as a subsidiary of Del Monte Corporation for the production and canning of pineapple. It subleased almost 2,000 hectares from the US Navy for this purpose. American businessmen also went into cattle ranching when Dean C. Worcester, then Secretary of the Department of the Interior, opened up Bukidnon pasture lands for leasehold to American capitalists and his chosen Filipino allies (Lao, 1987).

American corporations also invested in logging and sawmill operations e.g., Weyerhaeuser Corporation (72,000 hectares in Basilan) and the Georgia Pacific Corporation (92,800 hectares in East Mindanao). On the other hand, B.F. Goodrich and Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. were able to set up rubber plantations in Zamboanga and Basilan.

Such initiatives in the early years of the American colonial era would determine the nature of Mindanao's political economy for the rest of the millennium and beyond. In Mindanao today, there are still a wide stretch of fertile lands that continue to remind us of this colonial legacy. While the corporations operating such plantations are no longer solely American, nonetheless, they are foreign-owned or controlled. In many cases, the lands involved used to belong to the *lumad*'s ancestral domain. Such is the case of the B'laan in South Cotabato where Dole's pineapple plantation continues to hold control over a sizeable area.

These initiatives led to the legal institutionalization of a colonial policy that goes back to the Regalian Doctrine. It would be enshrined in the 1935 Constitution which, in essence, made the *lumad* squatters in the land that their ancestors occupied since time immemorial. The text that sealed the fate of the *lumad* for decades to come is as follows:

All agricultural, timber, and mineral lands of the public domain, waters, minerals, coal, petroleum, and other mineral oils, all forces of potential energy, and other natural resources of the Philippines belong to the State, and their disposition, exploitation, development, or utilization shall be limited to the citizens of the Philippines, or to corporations or associations at least sixty per centum of the capital of which is owned by such citizens, subject to existing right, grant, lease or concession at the time of the inauguration of the Government established under the Constitution. (Sec. 1, Art. XIII).

The 1935 Constitution was ratified on 11 March 1947, a year after the Philippines became independent. However, the country's independence, ironically, gave birth to political institutions that retained the chains binding the *lumad* to a legal system that imprisoned them within a colonial framework. It would have made such a difference if the Filipino leaders who took over from the Americans rejected the colonial legacy and reclaimed the more compassionate provisions of the *ips*' customary laws. That would have made possible the genuine independence of all Filipinos, including the Moro and *lumad*. But it was not to be, considering the maneuverings of the United States government committed to keeping a neocolonial control over the Philippines.

The encroachment into the ancestral domain of all the ethnolinguistic groups in Mindanao from the Subanen in Zamboanga to the Manobo in Agusan-Surigao would become more and more vicious. These involved not only foreign capitalists and big businessmen. Soon, the Filipinos who got elected into government positions would be involved in landgrabbing. A few would get involved or be in partnership with companies engaged in logging operations in the interior. Once the logging roads were built, the *lumad* became more vulnerable. As logging operations expanded further to the interior, landless peasants took over the cultivation of the logged-over areas. Acquiring the right to own such land from the *lumad* meant exchanging the land for a few cans of sardines, salt and other commodities. Small businessmen operating in newly-established towns were also able to gain control over the land of the *lumad* through exploitative business transactions (Manuel, 1973; Garvan, 1931).

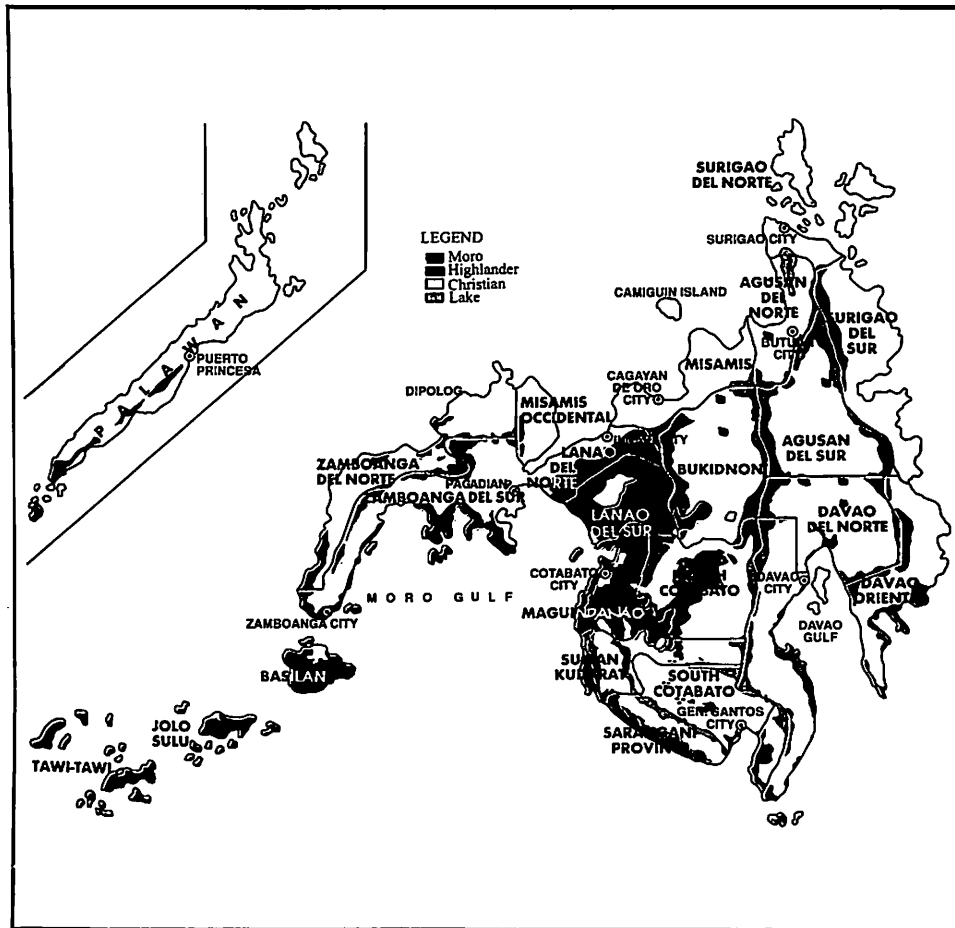


Fig. 1. The population distribution of the peoples of Mindanao (from the Ethnographic map of the Philippines of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines-The People's Action for Cultural Ties, the Mindanao-Sulu Population distribution of the Muslim communities, 1990 Census, and the HEAR Enterprise Company 1996 Political map of the Philippines).

The *Lumad* Responses and Support Groups

The *lumad's* response to their disenfranchisement varied according to various factors including their governance system, the type of leadership and how they dealt with outsiders. If they belonged to what Scott (1977) referred to as "classless communities," e.g., Teduray, Mananua and Ata, they evaded contact with the powerful outsiders to avoid subjugation. This was not true of the warrior societies e.g., Manobo, Mandaya, Bagobo, Tagakaolo, B'laan and Subanen. They fought back through their *pangayaw* including "suicidal one-man forays."

While the Moro wars against the American troops are well-documented, this is not so with the armed resistance of the *lumad*. There are a few stories that are retained in the local oral history of a few *lumad* communities e.g., the incident involving the Arumanon Manobo in Pikit, Cotabato. Garvan (1931) and Elarth (1949) cited some incidents involving the Mandaya of Davao Oriental, the Tagakaolo of Davao del Sur, the rise of the Tungud movement in 1908 among the Manobos living along the Libuganon River in Davao which spread to Davao Oriental, the Subanen uprising in Zamboanga from 1909 to 1914 and the Bagobo resistance to the entry of the Japanese which lasted from 1916 to 1935 (Rodil 1990).

The *pangayaw* continues to take place today (Soledad 1998). There have been instances of *lumad bagani* joining the New People's Army at the height of the Marcos martial rule. There are still such linkages today in the mountain ranges of Davao, Agusan, Surigao, Bukidnon and Zamboanga. Even among those who would rather not establish tactical alliances with the NPA, continuing discussions are held among *lumad* leaders about the need to re-establish their *bagani* system, if only to defend themselves from those who would grab their remaining ancestral domain. At PANAGTAGBO assemblies, some of them openly express such sentiments. There is no doubt that such sentiments are fuelled by what they consider to be the Moro people's source of strength, namely, that they have armed groups like the MNLF and the MILF. Some *datu* would openly tell their civil society supporters from the lowlands: "If only we have arms, we will be like

the Moro who are not as easily oppressed and exploited by the powers-that-be.”

In time, the *lumad bagani* realized that the war instruments they used in their *pangayaw* were no match against those in the arsenals of the State's military force. If there were still spaces in the interior, they moved further away from the lowlands. When this was no longer possible, they tried their best to live peacefully with the settlers. In many cases, intermarriages took place between *lumad* and settlers.

As the life of the settlers improved, that of the *lumad* deteriorated. The government established the Commission on National Integration (CNI) in 1957 in the hope of responding to the needs of the non-Christian Filipinos also called national cultural minorities. However, the CNI was unable to alleviate the *lumad's* poverty as well as protect their ancestral domain from further landgrabbing. When the CNI was abolished in 1978 to give way to the Presidential Assistance to the National Minorities (PANAMIN), the situation went from bad to worse. Not only was the government unable to assist the *lumad* in terms of their urgent needs, but the government abused and exploited them (Salgado 1990; Miclat-Cacayan 1993).

The nascent civil society in Mindanao would begin to play a role in supporting *lumad* concerns at a time when there were very few links between and among *lumad* communities and no one had yet imagined the possibility of the *lumad* organizing themselves along nontraditional lines, that is, outside of the *datu* system. The key players of this civil society were both the Catholic and Protestant churches. Through the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference Secretariat (MSPCS), the Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos (ECTF which later became the EC on Indigenous Peoples or ECIP), the National Council of Churches in the Philippines' People's Action for Cultural Ties (NCCP-PACT), and the Mindanao-Sulu Conference on Justice and Development (MSCJD), the churches evolved a progressive orientation of solidarity work on behalf of the *lumad*. These were concretized in terms of campaigns, projects and activities at the local grassroots level sponsored by religious congregations, dioceses and parishes.

Once they rejected the traditional pastoral orientation of proselytization, they began to be more active in facilitating education and organization work among the *lumad* communities.

The first churches to penetrate the interior were Protestant evangelical and fundamentalist groups, e.g., Seventh Day Adventists, Southern Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses and the like. They were mainly involved in proselytizing activities which explains why in the interior *barangay* in Mindanao today, these groups have many chapels and local pastors. From the 1950s to the 1970s, many religious congregations (the Jesuits, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Passionist Fathers, PME Fathers, Good Shepherd Sisters, Columban Fathers and Sisters, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Missionaries Sisters of Mary, Society of the Divine Word, the Scarboro Fathers, among others) began establishing mission stations in the interior. At first, they, too, were engaged in proselytization.

In the wake of a new missiological and pastoral orientation that came with the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Catholic missionaries slowly shifted from solely doing proselytizing work to being engaged in social action and development work. With the help of lay cooperators, they implemented adult literacy, agriculture, health and sanitation and other community development projects. However, this orientation again shifted with the impact of Marcos' martial rule especially in terms of human rights violations. As PANAMIN became an instrument of State repression and oppression among the *lumad* communities, the Church groups working among the *lumad*, in collaboration with the MSPCS, ECTF and the MSCJD, began to shift towards conscientization and organization.

The organizing efforts centered on the *silingang dapit* (*lumad* neighborhoods adjacent to one another) scheme which aimed to establish indigenous people's organizations (IPOS) Gradually, the Subanen, Manobo, B'laan, T'boli, Mandaya, Mansaka, Talaandig, Higaonon, Teduray and others began to be in touch with one another. They began to share what was happening to their people under the dictatorial regime, how they were being driven away from their

ancestral domain owing to development projects, how they were being forced by the military to join the CHDF/CAFGU, how they were arrested and tortured if suspected of supporting the NPA and how PANAMIN were driving a wedge between them and their *datu* through cooptation and manipulation. These abuses led to some *lumad* communities, especially those with the *bagani* tradition, to be supportive of the NPA troops who established their guerrilla base in the interior.

In time, the local organizing work among the *lumad* progressed towards regional clusters. After the Aquino assassination, when the anti-Marcos movement expanded and deepened, the *lumad* organizing work developed a Mindanao-wide network supported by the Mindanao Tribal Resource Center (MINTREC). This was no longer solely a Church effort. While priests and religious engaged in *lumad* work were still part of this network, it began to encourage the *lumad* themselves to provide leadership. Other civil society actors began to be part of this network. The MINTREC helped established the *Lumadnong Alyansa Alang Sa Demokrasya - Mindanao* (Tribal Alliance for Democracy - Mindanao) or *LUMAD MINDANAO*.

With People Power and Cory Aquino's ascendancy to the Presidency, major changes would take place in the arena of *lumad* social movement. *LUMAD MINDANAO* gave way to a new expression of this movement as the IPOS and their solidarity groups parted ways owing to various internal conflicts, including differences in ideological outlook. Organizing work began to be more focused locally towards organizing and consolidating IPOS. Two groups emerged as Aquino's government began to deal with the ancestral domain discourse. One group, maintaining a radical left position, was not interested in engaging the State in the wake of the Mendiola massacre that took place at the beginning of Aquino's presidency. The other group was willing to give her government a chance and would be engaged in advocacy work to push the *lumad* agenda. They would become the new actors in civil society who would push the government to pay attention to the *lumad*'s sorry plight.

A new chapter in the *lumad* social movement emerged which would have profound consequences in terms of their continuing struggle to have their voices heard, especially in terms of their interest to reclaiming their ancestors' abode.

In the hope of dismantling all vestiges of the Marcos era, Aquino convened a Constitutional Convention immediately after taking power. The ensuing 1987 Constitution brought about positive amendments of the 1973 Constitution which saw the light of day right after Marcos took power. A major amendment that would manifest the center's commitment to reach out to the *lumad* at the margins of Filipino society was on the question of ancestral land. This was to be the center's expression of being in solidarity with their age-old dream of reclaiming their ancestral land. The text in the 1987 Constitution is as follows:

The State, subject to the provisions of this Constitution and national development policies and programs, shall protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social, and cultural well-being.

The Congress may provide for the applicability of customary laws governing property rights or relations in determining the ownership and extent of ancestral domain. (Art. XII, Sec. 5).

The State shall recognize, respect, and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions and institutions. It shall consider these rights in the formulation of national plans and policies. (Art. XIV, Sec. 17).

Unfortunately, despite the popularity of Cory Aquino, government legal processes remained quite slow. Even as the advocacy work of the *lumad* social movement went into high gear, this was not forceful enough to move the people in Congress to enact an appropriate law. By the time her term of office ended, there was still no law passed in Congress that would implement the Art. XII, Sec. 5 and Art. XIV, Sec. 17 of the 1987 Constitution. Fortunately, Mrs. Aquino had an astute Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, Atty. Fulgencio Factoran Jr. In the absence of a law

enacted by Congress, he issued the Department Administrative Order No. 2, Series of 1993 (known as DAO-2), obviously a stop-gap measure to respond to the IPs' demand for control over their remaining ancestral domain.

DAO-2 recognized that the IPs had a right to their ancestral domain and that they were in a better position to manage natural resources in their domain in a sustainable way. But DAO-2 had an inherent inadequacy: while it provided for the issuance of Certificates of Ancestral Domain Claims (CADCS), these CADCS were not titles. These were merely a recognition of the right of claim and therefore open to contesting by any party.

The *lumad* social movement open to engaging the State—including the IPoS within the network of the ECIP, Panlipi, the GZO Peace Institute—was not totally pleased with DAO-2, but it took a pragmatic view of this development. Sensing that the passage of a law would still take time, they seized the DAO-2 and appropriated this for their struggle.

One of the first groups to do so was the *Manobo Lumadnong Panaghiusa* (Manobo Tribal Unity) or MALUPA based in Arakan, Cotabato. Immediately after DAO-2 was issued, the MALUPA began to work on the requirements towards the issuance of CADCS over their remaining ancestral domain. Assistance was provided by two nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that had been their partners, namely, the Tribal Filipino Program for Community Development, Inc. (TFPCDI) and the Kaliwat Theatre Collective. Once the needed survey and consultations were conducted, the applications were submitted to the PENRO on 25 May 1994. Seven CADC applications were approved; the same number of applications were not. The CADCS, covering a total land area of 8,861.08 hectares, were released in April and August of 1995. Table 2 shows the areas which were included in the CADC applications.

Many other IPoS in Mindanao followed the example of MALUPA, especially after the convening of PANAGTAGBO, which was to become the new expression of Mindanaoan *lumad* networking in the

Table 2
Area Applied For and CAD Granted

Villages (Barangay/Sitio)	Area Applied for (Has.)	Area Granted (Has.)
Tumanding and Lanao Kuran	2,200	2,148.29
Ganatan - Giapat	3,500	878.47
Kinawayan	1,000	432.48
Ganatan - Datu Makati,		
Panguandig	2,500	1,070.10
Katindu	720	720
Sundungan	Total Application	3,111.74
Lamalama - Mihangawan	2,500	Not Approved
Batobaato		Not Approved
Datu Ladayon	500	500
Sto. Nino	3,500	Not Approved
Kabalantian	500	Not Approved
Kisupaan	300	Not Approved
Lamalama - Biglot	500	Not Approved
Ganatan - Kurabok	1,000	Not Approved

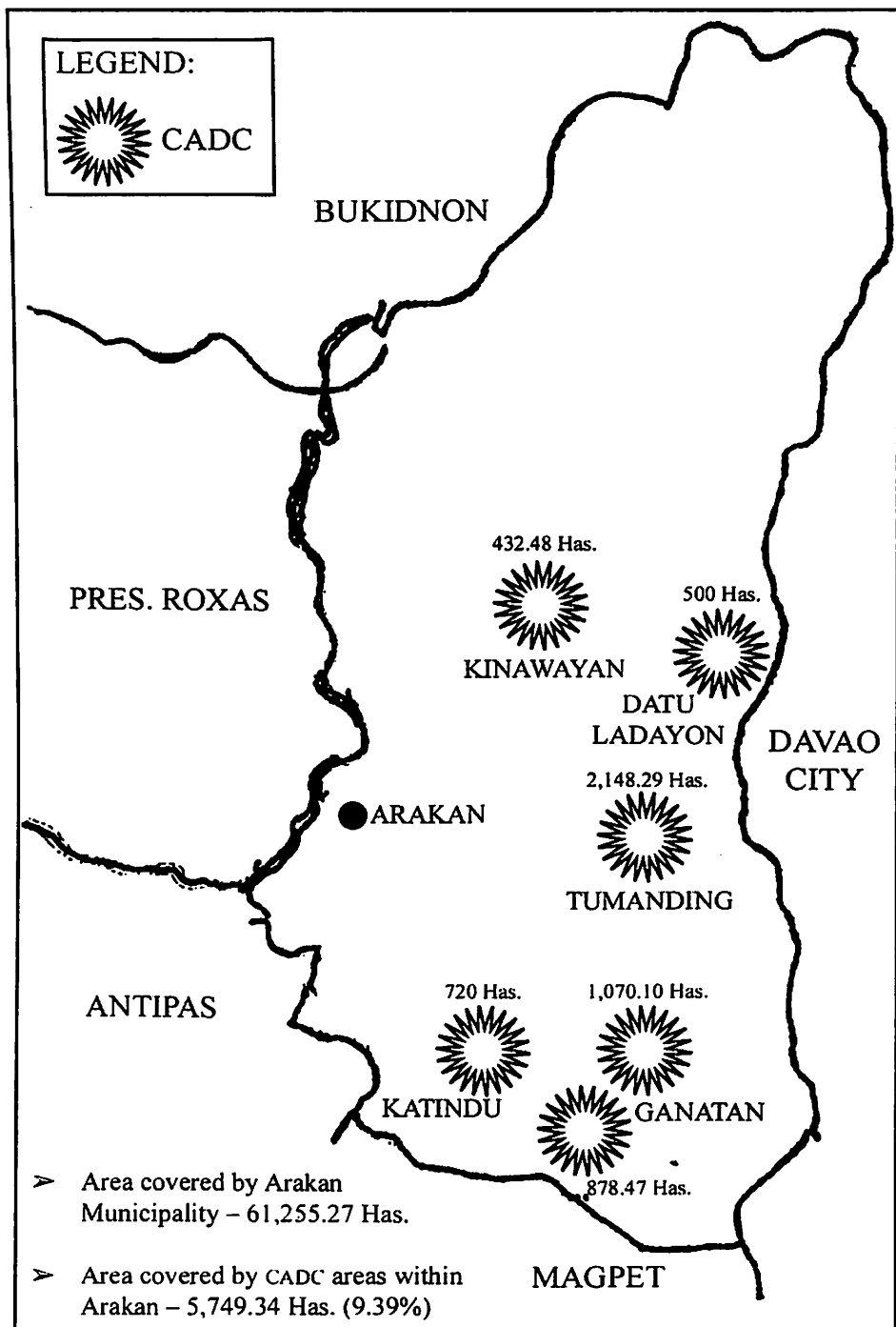


Fig. 2. Location and area of coverage of CADCs within Arakan Municipality.

1990s. The roots of PANAGTAGBO goes back to a consultation held in Davao City on 14-16 March 1995 attended by church groups and NGOs. The Kaliwat Theatre Collective played a significant role in facilitating this consultation; its offices served as the first office of PANAGTAGBO. Government officials from the Office of the Presidential Assistance for Peace Process (OPAPP) and the DENR were invited to this meeting. This consultation convened in Kidapawan City on 6-10 December 1995 where more than 60 IPO/NGO representatives attended. This assembly gave birth to a new broad alliance of IPOs/NGOs who were interested in pursuing the agenda of ancestral domain of the IPs within the perspective of engaging the State which they called PANAGTAGBO (Encounter).

PANAGTAGBO's general principles were the following:

1. For the IPOs: to engage in massive education activities among tribe members, and discussion of issues/threats, and to formulate appropriate courses of action within the framework of their inherent rights over their ancestral domains and resources therein.

2. For the NGOs: to participate in activities originating from the local, provincial and regional levels which would lead to the pursuit of a Mindanao-wide forum, to extend regular services relevant to the IPs' needs, and to have regular sharing of experiences (PANAGTAGBO 1995).

PANAGTAGBO's Convenors' Group was set up to organize various activities. These included: paralegal trainings, setting up of a databank, organizing Task Forces to facilitate the conduct of fora, e.g., the Mining Forum, media advocacy, and expansion of its network to involve more IPOs and NGOs. It also participated in lobbying for the passage of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA).

Through PANAGTAGBO, the Kaliwat Theatre Collective was able to showcase the MALUPA experience for those interested in working towards a CADC in their own remaining ancestral domain. In one consultation, other IPOs studied the MALUPA experience in the hope of gaining lessons useful for the time when they, too, would be applying for CADCs. One such group the *Mesaligan sa mga Subanens sa Lakewood* (Trusted Leaders of the Lakewood Subanen) of Zamboanga

Unfortunately, there were individuals who opposed the IPRA and went to the Supreme Court questioning its constitutionality. The government had no choice but to suspend the full implementation of IPRA. Until today, the law remains on hold since the Supreme Court still has to issue its opinion on IPRA. One wonders why it is taking so long for the Supreme Court to pass a judgement, but such is the present reality confronting the *lumad*.

This turn of events has been heartbreaking for the *lumad*. Just when they thought that their future would turn bright, a dark cloud, once more, hovered over their heads. It refuses to go away, leaving them quite disappointed and frustrated. Those who hope that their CADCS could be transformed to Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) have to wait. Those who are applying for the CADTs also have to wait. The waiting has been long; the *lumad* are starting to lose patience. However, it looks like the waiting will still take a long time. If the bill remains frozen for many more years, for sure, there would be IPOs who would lose their patience and would entertain new alternatives in terms of their struggle for self-determination.

The IPOs and their support groups who had rejected the DAO-2 and IPRA feel validated in terms of their position with IPRA's suspension. They claim that they were right after all. For some of them, this has consolidated their option to be open to an alliance with the NDF-CPP-NPA. For others, it means seriously pursuing arming their *bagani* who could go the way of the MNLF-MILF. In either case, they would be more open to waging an armed struggle to protect their ancestral domain.

However, there is also another alternative even as IPRA remains suspended. The main proponent of this strategy is Datu Vic Saway.

The "Cultural Monuments" of the Talaandig

Datu Vic Saway comes from a Talaandig clan residing in Sungco, Lantapan, Bukidnon. Owing to the leadership provided by his family, the Sungco *lumad* community has an organizational set-

up quite advanced compared to others. They have an indigenous governance system that remains operative. They still practice their traditional religious practices. They have built a School of Living Traditions, aimed at retaining their cultural traditions and heritage. They have zealously guarded the integrity of their forests and kept outsiders and prospectors at bay (GZO Peace Institute 2000). They were invited to showcase their rich culture at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. And one among them has been appointed NCIP Commissioner.

Datu Saway is very frustrated in his work as Commissioner. However, out of this frustration he and the Talaandig of Sungco have come up with a strategy that would make the *lumad* the key actor in the implementation of IPRA even if the State is inutile in doing so. They have began to implement it in their ancestral domain that includes part of the Mt. Kitanglad range. They are confident that this is an effective alternative action. Rather than wait for IPRA to be finally implemented, the *lumad* can appropriate IPRA on their own terms and thus, if need be, push the State to honor such an appropriation.

This strategy involves the following assumptions:

1. If the State passes a law beneficial to the *lumad* but can't implement it, it is left to the *lumad* to implement the law.
2. The *lumad* community, however, needs to be organized and to have the needed political will so that they will not only push for the law's implementation but will actually be involved in various aspects of the law's implementation. As much as possible, all the members of the *lumad* communities should be involved in this endeavor.
3. The *lumad* needs to return to their indigenous faith tradition and to practice their indigenous beliefs. Rejecting or ignoring these beliefs would render their moves ineffective and with no force at all.
4. The *baylan* or religious leaders play an important role in such an action since the rituals are integral in the whole process.
5. Other cultural practices and traditions should also be fully integrated into the actions conducted for the law's implementation.

The *lumad*'s appropriation of IPRA centers on what Datu Saway calls "the cultural monuments." This involves the reappropriation of the *bangkaso*, which parallels the "altar" of the Christian churches. Datu Saway also uses the word "*alampoanan*," the spot where you pray. Talaandig's rituals are conducted in the *bangkaso*. This time, however, the *bangkaso* serves also as a banner, poster or signboard. In Derridian parlance, the *bangkaso* becomes a "text" that carries significant meanings. Thus, it gets transformed into a cultural monument. As a monument, it becomes symbolic and sacred and cannot just be torn apart by anyone.

There are *bangkaso* in the most significant spots in the Talaandig homeland. These are places of worship and prayer. These spots are those that are tied to the life cycles of the *lumad*, e.g., source of food and medicine. These are places where they can hunt, fish, find honey and medicinal plants. Other spots are those where the Talaandig can find manifestations of the spirit world, including their ancestors. In the Talaandig site of Mt. Kitanglad, there are close to 200 hundred worship areas. These are the sites of the *bangkaso*.

So far, they have put up four *bangkaso*. Each time a *bangkaso* was erected, the *baylan* led a ritual. The one whom Datu Saway calls on to do the ritual is Bae Inadlawan. Since the *baylan* will henceforth risk her life to protect the *bangkaso*, she is assigned guards known as *talawtawan*. However, all those with key positions in the community share in the responsibility of safeguarding the *bangkaso*. This time the *bangkaso* is made of more permanent materials, e.g., cement. The ritual includes a community feast shared by all those who take part in the ceremony.

Datu Saway is confident that this strategy will work. On the part of the *lumad*, this helps them internalize the value of their remaining ancestral domain to the point where they would protect these with their lives. From a symbolic perspective, it provides a message to outsiders that the original owners have a stake over the land, in the same way that the *mohon* (the piece of round cement that indicates boundaries of land properties) does with private land. The

State could not but recognize the validity and sacredness of the *bangkaso* and help protect the ancestral domain from landgrabbers.

On both occasions when the author heard Datu Saway present this scheme, the eyes of the IPs brightened. They found it easy to be convinced of the validity of this scheme. Something resonated in their hearts with the way Datu Saway explained the whole strategy. While only time can tell if this strategy will work, there is no doubt that, viewed from the desperate impasse that they find themselves in these days, this is the only peaceful option left for them.

References Cited

- Collier, Christopher. 1997. "The political insurrection in Davao, Philippines." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii.
- Edgerton, R.K. and B.R. Edgerton. 1982. "Growing up in a frontier town: The Bukidnon experience in Malaybalay." *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 10, no.3 (September).
- Elarth, H. 1949. *The story of the Philippine constabulary*. Los Angeles, California: Globe Printing Press.
- Garvan, J.M. 1931. *The Manobos of Mindanao*, Memoirs of the National Academy of Science Foundation for Nationalist Studies.
- GZO Peace Institute. 2000. "Talaandig community: Case story analysis." Unpublished report.
- Lao, M. 1987. "The economy of the Bukidnon Plateau during the American period." *Philippine Studies* 35.
- Manuel E.A. 1973. *Manuvu social organization*. Quezon City: Community Development Research Council.

- Miclat-Cacayan, A. 1993. "Lumads: Endangered stewards of a ravaged land," *Magi Dev* 1993.
- Ofrendo, R. 1980. *Capitalism in Philippine Agriculture*. Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies.
- PANAGTAGBO. 1995. *Proceedings of the First PANAGTAGBO*. 6-10 December 2000, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Kidapawan City.
- Rodil, R. 1990. "Ancestral domain: A central issue in the lumad struggle for self-determination." *Mindanao Focus Journal* 24.
- _____. 1994. *The minoritization of the indigenous communities of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago*. Davao City: Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao.
- Salgado, P. 1990. "The rape of Mindanao-Sulu." *Mindanao Focus Journal* 30.
- San Pedro, E. 1996. "The Subanens of Lakewood: The struggle continues." *Bantaaw* 9, no. 1 (January).
- _____ and N. Villanueva. 1996. "The Subanens of Lakewood: Their life and struggle." *Mindanao Focus Journal* 14, no. 1.
- Scott, W.H. 1977. *Cracks in the parchment curtain and other essays in Philippine history*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.
- Soledad, G. 1998. "Pangayao and resistance against capitalist incursion in a Manobo community." M.A. thesis, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City.