Preface

This Journal puts together a selection of papers read in annual UGAT conferences* held in various settings at different times (1991 to 1995). It brings to bear viewpoints expressed by local anthropologists and related practitioners regarding the anthropology of development and sustainability, disaster, gender, ethnicity, and the practice of anthropology itself. More importantly, it is the intention of these papers to promote anthropological perspectives as options in academic and development endeavors.

The tenacity of indigenous knowledge and practices serves as the point of departure of Mangahas' and Blolong's papers. Mangahas provides a rich description of the *mataw*, a traditional mode of using and managing fisheries among the Ivatans of Batanes, and calls attention to the conflicts brought about by the introduction of new technologies. She observes that existing state development policies are insensitive to local modes of resource management, hence the need for a critical examination of such policies. Relatedly, Blolong takes an adaptionist model of culture in arguing for the strengths of the Ivatan coping strategies to an environment frequently hit by typhoons. These strategies are manifested in their agricultural practices and material culture.

Disasters and their impact on people's lives constitute another subject matter in this volume, albeit treated in various ways by contributors. Stress reactions and coping responses among the "victims" of the catastrophic flood that occurred in Ormoc on November 5, 1991 are examined by Alix using a psychological framework. For Alix, stress reactions and coping strategies are mediated by such factors as gender, age, and the workings of multiple stressors.

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* **UGAT Conferences:** "Anthropology of Development," Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Sta. Mesa, Manila; "Sustainability of Development: Anthropological Perspective," University of San Carlos, Cebu City; "The Anthropology of Transformation: Issues and Concerns of Industrialization and Development," Mindanao State University, General Santos, Cotabato; and "The Anthropology of Disaster," Central Luzon State University, Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

Popular awareness of the Ormoc tragedy provided the stage for the mass hysteria that occurred in Cebu City, as presented in the paper of Bersales and Nolasco. This mass hysteria was triggered by a letter aired over a local radio station urging people to post signs in their homes and public spaces carrying the message "Love *(higugmaa)* God, fear *(kahadloki)* God." Failure to do so, according to the news, would lead to a disaster worse than that which occurred in Ormoc. The authors, by and large, attributed this phenomenon to the characteristic Cebuano religiosity and moral values, following partly theoretical leads of symbolic anthropologists like Geertz.

In a certain sense, the separate papers of Bennagen and Estacio took a different theoretical stance in exploring the dynamics of disaster management, using the case of Ayta communities affected by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. Rejecting conventional knowledge that sees disaster victims as passive actors, both authors provide concrete ehtnographic examples to illustrate that active role played by the Aytas in managing their lives. In particular, Bennagen showed the ways in which the Aytas have subverted the representations and actions of the state in the formulation and implementation of disaster management programs. This process, according to him, may be attributed to the "mediating role of a value-driven NGO and . . . the high level of political consciousness of the community which allows it to draw on its own cultural resources." In addition, it is Bennagen's contention that sustainability could be achieved through a process of community organizing that derives its framework and strategies from community traditions. On the other hand, Estacio provides a processual view of how an Ayta community has struggled against both the encroachment of outsiders upon their ancestral lands as well as the culturally-insensitive state-led resettlement schemes. This case study brings to bear the ways in which victims of disaster draw on their cultural resources, including indigenous knowledge systems and practices, to define and act upon pressures from external forces.

Deforestation lends itself to a critical anthropological analysis, a position taken by Cabanilla in analyzing the issue of deforestation in the Philippines. Drawing on the tradition of holism and cultural analysis, she calls attention to the limitations of existing official definitions of deforestation as these fail to situate the problem within wider social and cultural contexts. In arguing so, she maintains that deforestation is caused by state, private, and military interests. Like most of the contributors

to this volume, she underscored the importance of local knowledge and community participation in developmental programs.

Again, the theme of human agency in social development resonates in Duhaylungsod's paper. She critically examines the role played by internal colonialism (as expressed in state policies) and capitalist expansion in the invasion of Higaonon ancestral domain. Specifically, she takes up the case of the state-initiated Bukidnon Forest Incorporated, which suffers from a limited understanding of the issue of ancestral domain as well as absence of genuine initiatives to engage local participation in program management.

Local anthropologists contribute to the discourse on gender as exemplified by the separate papers of Quesada-Reyes and Amihan-Vega. The first keys in the strategies women employ as shoe factory workers in asserting their position as productive agents in local economy as they deviate from traditional roles engendered by the workings of the ideology of patriarchy, grounded in local forms of understanding. In effect, her paper provides an antidote to the artificial application of Western feminist prespectives in local gender studies. The second paper, on the other hand, factors in gender, along with ethnicity, in the analysis of indigenous knowledge in sweetpotato production among the Maranao. In doing so, it emphasizes the notion of complementarity between male and female roles in agricultural production — an observation that contributes to the critique of Western feminism that gives primacy to "difference" over "complementarity" in gender relations.

Part of the analysis of anthropology of development is the issue of professional ethics. Castro takes a reflexive mode in writing about ethics in anthropological work. He pays heed to the call for greater observance of ethics among anthropologists, whose profession has been historically linked with colonization and counterinsurgency. His paper is an important reminder for local anthropologists involved in development work to deepen their consciousness of the politics of data collection and dissemination. Here, the protection of the human subjects is of paramount importance. With this in mind, he strongly suggests a reexamination of UGAT's code of ethics.

The politics of identity formation and legitimation is another issue that invariably interests local anthropologists. The final paper by Labrador attests to this. She examines the process of identity formation through the technologies of ethnographic museums, arguing against the fixity of identities. She brings into light the contested character of ethnicities in a given political economic formation. Museums, among other settings, Labrador contends, create identities. Objects are, in effect, invested with the power to mark ethnicities.

Finally, these annual conferences were attended by representatives of the academe, non-governmental organizations, the government, and peoples' organizations. This is reflective of the agenda of UGAT to surface relevant and urgent issues and to foster exchange swirling around the discipline's theoretical and methodological concerns.

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