

# **Indigenous Leadership and Governance**

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*The success of a nation is highly dependent on the quality of its leaders. Leadership therefore continues to be an important topic for discussion in the Philippines in its quest for national development. The indigenous peoples (IPs), comprising 15 percent of the population, remain to be a significant part of the nation and have historically demonstrated their effectiveness in governing daily lives. The study discusses leadership among eight indigenous groups, identifying various titles used, sources of authority, roles and functions and the shifts from traditional to current leadership practices. It then cites lessons for current public administration scholars and practitioners alike. IP leadership structures and practices can be used in enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of formal governance process. Furthermore, political and administrative leaders may instead reflect upon the high standards of IP leadership—merit and fitness should always prevail.*

## **Introduction**

The success of a group, organization, or nation depends largely on the quality of its leadership. This fact explains the continuing interest of scholars in the study of leadership to describe leadership styles, identify qualities of leaders, or determine how leaders can be effective.

There are many approaches to the subject. Trait theories tried to identify the personality, and social, physical, and intellectual characteristics of leaders. These theories tend to show that leaders are born rather than made and overlook the role of followers. Behavioral theories focus on behaviors that distinguish leaders from non-leaders but are not able to establish consistent relationship between patterns of leadership and group performance because they overlook situational factors. Contingency or situational theories address this deficiency by identifying situational factors that affect leadership roles, skills, and behavior and the need to match leadership styles with specific situations. Group and exchange theories emphasize that leadership is an exchange process between the leader and followers, where the leader provides more benefits or rewards than burdens to followers. Path-goal, attribution, charismatic, transactional, and transformational leadership theories are among the theories that have recently

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emerged (Robbins 1993: 365-403; Luthans 1995: 341-366). Indeed, leadership is such an important issue that continues to attract attention and interest.

Alfiler and Nicolas (2003: 473-506) attempted to describe and analyze broad categories of Filipino works and studies on leadership found in a number of libraries in the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman. The review covered materials on the relationship between leader and follower among pre-colonial Filipinos, concepts of leadership, qualities Filipinos want to see in their leaders, models or typologies of Philippine leadership, mode of recruitment of local political leaders, studies on political and administrative elite, including women leaders, the lives of individual leaders and leadership styles, religious leaders, community leadership, rural leadership patterns, and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and people's organization (PO) leaders. Except for the Sulod of Central Panay, the review does not refer to any study on indigenous or tribal leadership.

This study focuses on indigenous leadership. It is part of a bigger project of the P.A. 329 (Special Problems in Public Administration) class, second semester of Academic Year 2003-2004, at the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG), to publish a collection of papers on the governance of selected indigenous peoples (IPs). Separate studies focus on individual IPs highlighting governance areas, including administration of justice, rulemaking, delivery of services, external relations, security, and defense, fiscal administration, and the concepts of property and human rights. The individual papers describe the principles, structures, processes, and individuals or groups involved in governance within a particular indigenous group, and then analyze the data along the core governance values of transparency, accountability, leadership, gender sensitivity, and people's participation.

Rather than focus on one indigenous group, however, this study discusses the concept of leadership among the eight indigenous groups selected for the project—Bontok, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mandaya, Mangyan, Manobo, Maranaw, and T'boli. It identifies the various titles used, sources of authority, roles and functions, and, where data are available, the shifts from traditional to current leadership practices, in the context of public administration and local governance. Background data about the IP and its governance structure will be found in the focus papers.

To put the discussion in context, this study starts by defining "indigenous peoples" and then presents the typology of indigenous social organizations developed by Jocano. It then briefly describes the leadership structure of each group then proceeds with a discussion on the public administration and governance implications of these. Data on the various indigenous groups are taken from written reports, studies, and documents.

The study is a starting point for further research and does not claim to be an exhaustive study of indigenous leadership, considering the constraints of time and resources for the project. It treats the selected IPs as broad groupings and, unless data are available, does not make distinctions among subgroups. For instance, it does not distinguish between the Southern and Northern Kalingas or among the Arumanen, Agusan, Cotabato, or Matigsalog Manobos.

### **Indigenous Peoples**

Indigenous peoples are a significant part of the nation and history. There are around twelve million IPs in the Philippines comprising over 15 percent of the total population. They belong to about 110 ethnic groups distributed over seven ethnographic regions (Andolana 1997).

Cobo (1986: 379) provides a comprehensive and widely accepted definition of "indigenous peoples":

Indigenous communities, peoples, and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sections of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sections of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal systems.

Republic Act 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, enacted in 1997, identifies indigenous peoples as:

a group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership, since time immemorial occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions, and distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, become historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos. Indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) and IPs shall likewise include peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from populations which inhabited the country at the time of conquest or colonization, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religion and cultures, or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural, and political institutions, but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled outside their ancestral domain.

“Indigenous peoples,” therefore, are “those who have maintained a historical continuity with pre-invasion societies that developed on their territories” (Mercado 1994: 1) and remain distinct from dominant cultures.

The above definitions highlight the distinct character, capacity to resist change, traditional territorial possessions, and the determination to preserve the identities and territories of indigenous peoples and communities. In accordance with their distinct culture and traditions, they have produced leaders who saw them through the various stages of their history and struggles as communities and peoples. Indigenous leaders are symbols of power, authority, order, and justice.

### **Indigenous Social Organizations**

F. Landa Jócano (1998) developed a classification scheme for Filipino indigenous communities based on the degree of shared institutional complexity and the level of sociocultural integration at the time data were recorded. Although arbitrary and heuristic, the typology provides a sense of order to the broad array of ethnography data. The typology is based on ethnographic accounts on 56 ethnic communities where there is good information on social organization. Communities with great institutional similarities are classified under one of five types, each type using an indigenous term.

This section provides a brief description of the Jócano typology to provide a general background on the social institutions of IPs and to help put in context the leadership structures among them.

#### *Pisan (campsite)*

*Pisan* is an Agta term for “small exogamous groups consisting mostly of kinsmen” and representing “highly mobile groups living in campsites, possessing simple technology,” living by foraging and hunting, and “generally led by a male head of family or household” (Jócano 1998: 38).

There is no social stratification in the *Pisan* type of social organization. There is no formal political institution that defines power and authority. “Consequently, there are no formal or permanent leaders. Leadership is defined by kinship, age, experience, and residence. Leaders are listened to on the basis of superior skills, knowledge or traditional lore and/or practices. Personal charisma is another criterion for leadership. Charismatic leaders are generally believed to be endowed with supernatural powers. They are followed partly because they are secretly feared and implicitly admired....The authority of the leader is limited, diffused, and flexible....He exercises

influence over group actions through persuasion, consultation, consensus, personal example, and charm. In most cases, however, men and women share leadership responsibilities" (Jocano 1998: 57-58).

Pisan-type IPs are found on the fringes of interior highlands. Among them are the Aeta, Agta, Ata, Ati, Baluga, Batak, Dumagat, Mamanua, Pinatubo, and Tasaday (Jocano 1998: 38, 43-45). None of the IPs included in this study belong to this type.

#### *Puro (settlement)*

The *Puro* represents the kindred type of social organization (Jocano 1998: 69). This is the "*sulod* word for semi-sedentary, amorphous aggregate of persons who live in a particular and named settlement. These people may or may not be related to one another," and are "occasionally mobile swidden or kaingin cultivators, headed by the oldest member of the founding family" (Jocano 1998: 38).

"Leadership in most communities with *Puro* type of social organization is assumed by the most influential elder who possesses the personal ability to persuade and influence" (Jocano 1998: 89). Among the *Puro* type of IPs included in this study are the Mangyans of Mindoro and the T'boli.

#### *Ili (village)*

The *ili* typology is from the Bontoc word for "village" and "consists of groups of people living in villages of various sizes, predominantly large and compact....The demographic base of the *ili* is larger and less dispersed than those of the Pisan or *Puro*" (Jocano 1998: 99) and "has more structural and institutional units characterized by specialized and patterned activities" (Jocano 1998: 127).

"The demographic base of each village is relatively stable and ranges from a few hundreds to several thousands. The villages are generally divided into named political wards or agricultural units. The settlements, composing the villages, often 'lie dispersed within or near a clustered series of irrigated terraces and other holdings' as among the Ifugao; near streams and surrounded by terraced rice fields, as among the Bontoc, or clustered in canyon or small hill slope terraces, as among the Kalinga" (Jocano 1998: 102). "Authority in the village is vested upon the highly respected leaders who possess wealth, personal charisma, knowledge of traditional lore, custom laws, and genealogical history. But above all, they must have oratorical skills and experiences in warfare.... Their authority is backed up by an elaborate system of custom laws and traditional practices" (Jocano 1998: 122).

The ili type of IPs in this study includes the Bontoc, Ifugao, (southern) Kalinga, and the (Arumanen) Manobo.

*Magani (district)*

This is a term derived from the Agusan Manobo word *bagani*, meaning “renowned warriors” and is used to “represent the type of social organizations headed by warrior chiefs, who in turn are assisted by a council of elders” (Jocano 1998: 129).

Among the *Magani* type of social organization, social stratification is marked but allows for social mobility. “Through the accumulation of wealth and valor in warfare, an individual belonging to the lower economic class can move up to the scale of the social ladder without much difficulty” (Jocano 1998: 137).

At the apex of the social pyramid is the warrior group—the wealthy and powerful *bagani* or *mengal* families—led by males with demonstrated abilities in warfare and unquestionable reputation and courage. Next to this group are the commoners. They are families with medium economic income, own some property and dominate occupational specializations. They assist the warrior group. At the bottom of the social strata are those without property, sometimes referred to by ethnographers as slaves (Jocano 1998: 138).

“Leadership is assumed by the warrior groups, the *bagani* (among the Mindanao group) or the *mengal* (among the Luzon group). This group of respected warriors makes major decisions, particularly those dealing with intra-village relations. They lead head-taking expeditions and in avenging the honor of the village, should its territorial right be transgressed or its population humiliated. The *bagani* or the *mengal* is a powerful and influential person. A distinguished *bagani* can extend his influence over several districts and extract tributes from the people in return for his protection” (Jocano 1998: 141). “The warrior provides protection to the community, and, in return for such act, the people assist him in cultivating the fields and in maintaining his household” (Jocano 1998: 147).

The *Magani* are mainly found in Luzon and Mindanao and those included in this study are the (Agusan) Manobo, Mandaya, and (northern) Kalinga.

*Banwa (domain)*

The name of this type is derived from the Manuvu word *banwa* meaning “domain,” and is “structurally the most complex of the five types of ethnic

social organization.” There are very few of this type, which are found only in Mindanao (Jocano 1998: 149).

“The members of the banwa reside in self-contained villages, located in adjacent and contiguous territory and bound together as a single sociopolitical unit under the centrally located political office of the *datu*. The *datu* is assisted by a council of elders and the warrior groups. The banwa corresponds closely to the anthropological concept of chiefdom” (Jocano 1998: 39).

“Chiefdoms are political units that consist of several communities, each with one or more chiefs of their own, that are unified under the control of a paramount chief. Thus, chiefdoms involve two levels of leadership: local chiefs of kinship groups or communities and the paramount” ([www.anthro.ucdavis.edu/courses/f02/ant2/AN2lec13.htm](http://www.anthro.ucdavis.edu/courses/f02/ant2/AN2lec13.htm): 4). A staff of assistants, through whom the paramount imposes orders, supports him. In most cases, they are his close relatives. “Typically, the paramount is related to the village chiefs, who in turn head kinship groups in their communities” ([www.anthro.ucdavis.edu/courses/f02/ant2/AN2lec13.htm](http://www.anthro.ucdavis.edu/courses/f02/ant2/AN2lec13.htm): 1-2).

Several villages constitute a banwa. The villages are independent and self-sufficient units that interact with each other. Kinship is important for interpersonal and interfamilial relations but not significant for defining the banwa identity. The community, more than the family or neighborhood, is the center of important activities (Jocano 1998: 155).

Power and authority reside in the *datu* who exercises “considerable juridical, political, and ecclesiastical influence within his territorial domain. The most respected among the *datu*s within the village composing the domain exercises a wider sphere of influence and authority. Sometimes his influence extends beyond his own village over other neighboring villages. He may be called upon to settle disputes, which could not be easily resolved in a given village for one reason or another...The most influential *datu* heads the banwa through various forms of alliances. Installed as head, he exercises much authority and power within the banwa. His duties include coordinating various social and religious activities, leading in important ceremonies, and protecting the banwa from its enemies. While vested with influence and power, the *datu* does not govern as an absolute ruler; he leads according to customs and laws. He exercises authority through persuasion, consultation, and consensus” (Jocano 1998: 156-157).

An advisory council composed of respected leaders (either religious or secular) from the different dominant warrior families in the villages within the community, assists the *datu* in overseeing the affairs of the banwa. Most decisions are arrived at by consensus and proper consultation. The

sentiments and counsel of the elders, custom laws, and religious morality, thus temper the authority of the *datu* (Jocano 1998: 158).

The Jocano typology classifies IPs with similar features into one of the five types described above. It is likely that the IPs classified under one type may in some way exhibit specific characteristics that are distinct from others in the group. By describing the variety of IP social organizations, however, the typology provides a broad framework for the study of IPs, as well as a neat handle for understanding indigenous leadership.

### **Indigenous Leadership of Selected Indigenous Peoples**

This section briefly describes the leadership patterns of the IPs included in the project. Most sources are ethnographic, anthropological, cultural, or biographical works. Focus studies on leadership using the lenses of governance and public administration are few and far between. While every effort is made to reflect the traditional or indigenous institutions of leadership and the changes over time, sources of data, however, are uneven and narratives do not generally indicate whether the descriptions refer to the past or to the present. Unless specified, therefore, this study treats the descriptions as referring to existing realities and continuing traditions.

#### *Leadership Among the Bontoc*

The Bontoc (Bontok or Bontoc Igorot) occupy the rugged mountains of the upper Chico River system (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 622). A distinctive feature of the Bontoc is their organization into compact villages, the *ili*, which are subdivided into wards each with an *ato* and an *olog*. The *ato* is the building where the council of elders meets for its ceremonial, religious, social, and political functions; it also serves as a guesthouse. The *olog* is the dormitory for young girls of marriageable age (Cawed 1981: 13; <http://www.emailpinoy.com/educational/philippines-tribes.shtml>).

“The decisionmakers for the village are the *amam-a*. These are old men who by virtue of seniority and experience in life, automatically form the core of village decisionmakers” (Brett 1987: 11). Besides being an experienced elder, there are certain requirements to become an *amam-a*. One must be: 1) articulate; 2) fair in making judgments as affirmed by villagers in past settlement of cases; 3) a holder of a good war record (this is not an absolute necessity but provides an edge over others); and 4) wealthy. Having only one of these qualifications is not sufficient (Brett 1987: 11-12).

All families are affiliated with one of the several *ato*, which is the “center for village activity and decision making of the elders.” When it involves



members of an ato only, the matter is settled through its resident elders or amam-a (Buendia 1993: 97-98).

Individually, an amam-a (*am-ama* or *amama* in some references) has no power to make decisions for the ili or village. The amam-a of the various ato gather as a single body known as the *intugtukan* (Jocano 1998: 122), a highly respected council that acts as the judicial, legislative, and executive body of the ili (Brett 1987: 12). In general, the elder who stands out among peers is given the privilege to lead the council deliberations (Jocano 1998: 122).

When an elder sits in the *intugtukan*, he works for the interest of the entire ili and not just the ato he represents (Brett 1987: 24). Among the functions of the *intugtukan* are:

- hear, review, and make judgment on disagreements among members of an ato;
- make laws or amend custom laws when they see fit;
- impose fines on villagers based on precedents;
- impose fines on offenders from other villages that have no peace pacts with them;
- make peace, accept or reject challenges to war;
- release or adopt people who move from one ato to another;
- schedule the agricultural calendar; and
- advise and counsel villagers who need help (although this is normally handled by the amam-a in a particular ato) (Jenks 1905: 45; Brett 1987: 12, 24; and Buendia 1993: 98).

The class division in Bontoc society is between rich and poor. "Since the rich marry only within their own class, leadership never passes away from them. Despite having a council of elders, and acknowledging only custom law itself as worthy of obedience, it is really the rich who rule" (Casal 2004: 2). The *katchangians* or rich men are regarded with respect and have a say in the council (Cawed 1981: 16).

Another important political figure among the Bontoc is the *pinakarsu* or *inanak* who serves as a mediator or go-between. The *pinakarsu* is an adult from one village who marries into another village, thereby establishing an affiliation between the two villages. In the event of conflict between these two villages, the *pinakarsu* serves as mediator (Brett 1987: 12).

The "traditional setup has gradually changed with the advent of Christianity" ([http://www.geocities.com/sagada\\_igorot/igorot/ethnic\\_groups.html](http://www.geocities.com/sagada_igorot/igorot/ethnic_groups.html)). The assumption here is that these structures continue to exist although formal governance structures and other external influences may have considerably diminished the power and authority of traditional leaders.

### *The Ifugao Leader*

The Ifugaos (Ipugaw, Ipugao, Yfugao) live on the steep mountains of Ifugao Province in the Central Cordillera, in an area of about 750 square miles. They are the most technically proficient among all rice terrace-building groups (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 621-622).

“Government institutions are poorly developed among the Ifugaos, and chiefs, councils, and politically defined districts or other units are lacking in the traditional culture. The functions of government are (or were) accomplished by the operation of collective kinship obligations, including the threat of blood feud, together with common understanding of the *adat* or custom law given the people by ancestor heroes” (LeBar 1975: 81).

Social stratification is based on wealth in terms of rice land, water buffalo, and slaves. At the apex are the *kandangyan*, the wealthy aristocrats. The next rank is the *natumok*, composed of families with relatively little land and as a result greatly dependent on the *kandangyan* for their existence. The *nawatwat*, or very poor, have no land and include servants and tenants on the lands of the wealthy. At the bottom of the strata are the slaves. The political power of the *kandangyan* is in terms of prestige and influence rather than institutionalized authority (LeBar 1975: 82).

Traditionally, a very loose type of community leadership is achieved through the role of the “rice chief” or *manu’ngaw*, one of the leading priests of the area to whom members of the community give voluntary obeisance. The *manu’ngaw* has “very little authority for he could not enforce the decisions he has made, nor could he in any way change the laws dictated by the *adat*. The principal role of the *manu’ngaw* is merely to determine on which days certain religious customs of common interest to all should be observed” (LeBar 1975: 81).

Other than the above account, the literature does not identify the leadership structure for the Ifugao community. What is described at length is the role of go-betweens.

There are two types of informal arbitrators or go-betweens among the Ifugaos: the *monbaga* in civil cases and the *monkalun* in criminal cases. They act as judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, and court record for cases involving theft, killing, violation of religious taboos, and other crimes. They must be impartial to both parties in a case and are responsible for the correct rendering of offers and payments. Their power derives from the art of persuasion, tact, and skillful play on human emotions. They are paid a fee for their services. During a period of truce, when one party attacks the other, it is the *monkalun*’s responsibility to wound or kill the offender. The community sanctions this act (Buendia 1993: 100; Brett 1987: 41).

Monbagas are men gifted with abilities to persuade and influence decisions. A large and powerful kin group backs up their decisions (LeBar 1975: 81). In general, they are “wealthy, skilled in arbitration and bargaining, well-versed in custom laws or adat, and traditional lore, and have a good knowledge of genealogical history. They initiate negotiations in peace pacts, serve as witnesses in cases dealing with property, mortgages, marriage, and other transactions” (Jocano 1998: 122-3).

Another figure that performs a leadership role in the Ifugao community is the native priest, the *mumbaki*. “He is the spiritual protector of the community in war and peace. All in one, he doubles as a doctor, exorcist, astrologer, historian, but most of all, an expert in genealogy. He is the holder of the rules of his native society. Native priests are chosen, gifted, and blessed by their god called *Maknongan*. Only the anointed can perform the tasks of a *mumbaki*. They are imbued with the knowledge of the time-honored culture, customs, and traditions of the rich Ifugao heritage” (Pawid 2004: 1).

The monbagas, monkalun, and *mumbaki*, as well as members of the wealthy *kandangyan* class, provide leadership among the Ifugao. Their powers and authority are, however, rather informal and based on kinship obligations. The rich Ifugaos proclaim their leadership in society, if not in actual governance, by decorating their homes with skulls and horns of carabaos butchered for family feasts. The supreme expression of rank is the feast for the community so prized by Ma’i culture that it is among the prime obligations of the leader class (Casal 2004: 6).

The Ifugao culture is currently undergoing dramatic social change brought about by the influence of several factors, including the advent of Christianity and education ([http://www.cyberdyaryo.com/features/f2001\\_0727\\_02.htm](http://www.cyberdyaryo.com/features/f2001_0727_02.htm)).

### *The Kalingas*

The Kalingas (Calinga, Kalingga) live on the drainage area of middle Chico River and its tributaries and are found in the uplands of Abra and Kalinga-Apayao. They are known for “their relatively more integrated territorial organization through ‘peace pacts,’ a development following intensive governmental suppression of head-hunting and tribal vendettas in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century” (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 623-624).

“The *bodong* is the most admirable and efficient Kalinga institution. It is a peace pact or treaty between two tribes, wherein the *pagta* or laws on inter-tribal relations are made. The *bodong* is the Magna Carta of the Kalingas” (Rex Book Store 2000: 33).

In general, Kalingas have great respect for their elders. "The Kalinga society is stratified into the *lawa* or *kapus* (poor) and the *baknang* (wealthy). Among the signs of prestige and wealth are possessions of several rice fields, working animals, heirlooms like china plates and jars, agate necklaces, and brass gongs" (Rex Book Store 2000: 33). Other references mention the class of *kadangyan* or wealthy aristocrats or the extremely poor *puyong*, but these must be common classes among the mountain tribes because they are also present in other groups like the Ibaloi or the Ifugao. Still other sources attest that Kalinga society is not clearly stratified and any Kalinga no matter how lowly his family origin can rise to community prominence and leadership. His rise to significant social distinction is basically gained by industry, economic stability, personal charisma, physical prowess, fair play, and ability to talk sensibly with some sparks of wisdom and discretion. It is important to bear in mind, however, that among the Kalingas, no single leader claims full control of the affairs of his community. Although it may be true that there are leaders more effective in some ways than others, leadership is generally cooperatively shared and never wielded by a single person.

Among the Buwaya subgroup found in northern Kalinga, the leader is the *ap-apu*, who exercises influence over a cluster of settlements. He is usually a *mombagbaga* (spokesman), a rich man, and a *mengol* (headtaker) who is respected by the villagers. In his role as village spokesman, his influence extends to other villages throughout the region (Buendia 1993: 98).

In other Kalinga groups, such as the Lubwagan, the decisionmakers are the powerful *pangats* (or *pangangats*). The status of a pangat is achieved through the following qualifications: "wealth, lineage, family connections with other pangats, personality, cooperativeness, fairness, oratorical ability, a record of having settled cases of controversy between kinship groups, and above all—a reputation as a 'dangerous' man who is said to be feared by his own villagers" (Brett 1987: 40; Buendia 1993: 99). The main function of the pangats is to be peacemakers or determiners of rights (*manlilintog*), "although people seek their advice and help on all matters. Every pangat is a holder of at least two peace pacts and helps to determine the regional policy when problems arise" (Barton 1949: 147 as cited in Buendia 1993: 98-99). Becoming a pangat depends largely on community recognition rather than on social status and is not limited only to men. Women can also be pangats (Barton 1949: 163).

Pangats choose go-betweens called *mangi-ugud*, to take charge of settling disputes between kinship groups. A *mangi-ugud* must have experience in dealing with people, political maturity, a strong family backing, and a record as a renowned warrior.

The *mangi-ugud* may or may not be a pangat himself. If the *mangi-ugud* settles a case singlehandedly, it is more likely that he is related by either

blood or affinity to both parties. Otherwise, being unrelated to both parties is preferred. Mangi-uguds wield vast powers since they act as functionaries of the territorial social unit as well as of the kinship group. When an existing peace agreement between kinship groups is violated by one of the parties, the mangi-ugud is "honor-bound to impose punishments while mediation is in process." This may involve death or wounding. The whole region sanctions these executions (Brett 1987: 22; Buendia 1993: 99-100; Barton 1949: 52-54; 166-167).

"The leaders of a region, pangangats, see to it that every child is properly cared and provided for" (Jocano 199: 11). Pangats do not make laws. They simply implement and pass on to younger generations the existing custom laws. They also do not apply sanctions. It is the mangi-ugud's role to do so.

Another leadership role among the Kalingas is to be the holder of a peace pact, or *mangdon si bodong*. Pangats of the region initiating a new peace pact usually identify a nominee from the other region to be the mangdon si bodong. If the nominee accepts the role, the pangats of the region where he belongs generally confirm the choice. The choice would be different, however, for renewals of pacts that have been broken. In such cases, the offending party to the pact usually chooses someone from the other party who can greatly influence the family or nearest kin of the victim that led to the breaking of the pact. If the nominee accepts, he in effect waives his right to take revenge. He is expected to hold the kin of the offended party in check and to negotiate the reestablishment of peace. The role of mangdon si bodong paves the way for future recognition as pangat, if not yet one, or to further increase the prestige of those who are already pangats. Family members and kin of the mangdon si bodong, male or female, can inherit the position (Barton 1949: 56-57, 167-170).

Since government and society do not approve of killing, headtaking is no longer a requisite for being a pangat. Recent sources indicate that whereas leadership status among the Kalinga used to go to those with distinguished headtaking records, today, leaders come from the *baknang* or affluent class, who are accepted by the community with no vote taken (Casal 2004: 3).

### *Mandaya Leadership*

The Mandaya live in the southeastern uplands of Davao from Monkayo to Gov. Generoso. They are closely related to several subgroups: the Mansaka (in the north and east of Davao Gulf); Mangwanga, Mangrangan (in thickly forested interiors of eastern Agusan and northern Davao); Managosan, Magosan (in Maragosan Valley, headwaters of Agusan River); Pagsupan (in Tagum and Hijo rivers); and Divavawon, and Dibabwon (in south and west of Compostela). They form the largest indigenous group in southeastern

Mindanao. "These subgroups cannot easily be distinguished from each other since their habitats overlap and peoples move and intermarry." From the estimate of 35,000 in 1910-1915, recent estimates account for only 3,000-5,000 Mandayas. Deforestation, and conversion to Islam and Christianity have changed the culture of these people (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 625).

Mandaya traditional governance has a strong leadership. Acceptance and respect by the community make tribal governance work. "Customary laws are observed and stiff penalties imposed" and government systems have little effect on these practices. In some areas, the leaders and elders approve the holding of *pangayao* to exact justice or revenge (Ompang 2001: 1).

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Mandaya leaders were the *likid*, *bagani*, and *maniklad*. The *likid*, also called *mangkataadong* or *magtambagay*, was an old man who acted as adviser and settled disputes among the villagers. He was a man of wisdom, talent, and peace and commanded respect from the people. Through his counsel and advice, and during informal meetings, he hands down the unwritten laws and customs of the Mandaya to the younger generation. Next to the *likid* was the *bagani*, a younger village chieftain who ranked first in bravery and strength. He came from a *bagani* family line and served as adviser of the *likid*. In the absence of the *likid*, the *bagani* assumed full responsibility for settling disputes. Despite his tribal conquests, a *bagani* could not extend his leadership and village without informing the *likid*. The son of a *bagani* can become a *bagani* if he satisfies the requirements: slay at least ten people and capture a number of children for sale as slaves. Next to the *bagani* is the *maniklad*, who served as the *bagani*'s adjutant and stood in front of the *bagani* during a tribal war (Valderama 1987: 57-59).

A more recent account refers to a distinctively dressed headman, sometimes referred to as the "warrior-chief," as the leader of the Mandaya sociopolitical organization. The headman belongs to the warrior noble class of *bagani*. Each *bagani* has his domain of political authority where his rule is law ([http://www.ncip.gov.ph/resources/ethno\\_detail](http://www.ncip.gov.ph/resources/ethno_detail)). A council of elders known as *angtutukay* mitigates the power and authority of the *bagani* (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 625).

Acquiring the status of a *bagani* depends on the individual's "valor, fortitude, personal powers in warfare, and possession of magico-religious powers of invulnerability." The warrior status is not inherited, although elders "may confer such a title on the son of a well-known deceased warrior. In such cases, the recipient of the honor starts at once to fulfill the requirements of election, for otherwise he brings disgrace to himself and his family." The first and foremost requirement is to kill, to take the head of an enemy. In some groups there is no specific number required but among the Mandaya the warrior must kill "at least ten persons with his own hand. When

the requirement is accomplished, the candidate appeals to the bagani for the right to be a member of their select company. The older men will then solemnly discuss the merits of his case. The petition may be disregarded entirely, or it may be decided that the exploits related are sufficient only to allow the warrior to be known as half-bagani. In this case, he may wear trousers of red cloth, but if he is granted the full title he is permitted to don a blood red suit and to wear a turban of the same hue" (Jocano 1998: 141-142).

The *angtutukay*, the advisory council of the bagani, is composed of respected men who perform the following tasks (Jocano 1998: 143; Ompang 2001):

- review petitions of commoners to redress a wrong or take revenge against another outside the domain by means of warfare;
- assess the size and strength of a war party being organized, and the number of captives and values to be taken up;
- acquire additional choice forest areas;
- hear, arbitrate, and settle all intradomain disputes arising from theft, adultery, violence, rape, murder, etc.;
- select a bagani successor among the sons of the bagani's first wife if the present warrior chief is unable to rule or had passed away; and
- transmit the demands, needs, and grievances of commoners to the ruling bagani.

There have been changes in the leadership patterns among the Mandayas as a result of colonial rule, Christianity, and government processes.

### *Leadership Among the Mangyans*

Sources agree that there are several Mangyan groups but they differ in the name and number of such groups. Among the groups are the following: Alangan, Bangon, Buhid (Buid or Tao-Buhid), Batangan, Gubatnon, Hanunuo, Iraya, Ratagnon, and Tadyawan (or Tagaydan) (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 621; Mercado 1994: 6-7; Rex Book Store 2000: 39-45; <http://library.thinkquest.org/C003235/mangyan2.html>: 1-4). It is not prudent to generalize among the various groups as their practices differ. This study will discuss only the groups about whom materials with references on leadership are available and sufficient.

The Mangyan social organization and structure revolve around the network of family and kin who live close to one another. Leadership practices vary among the subgroups—elders or group of elders assume leadership roles, which are multifaceted.

The Alangan live around Mount Halcon and some are in settlements near the Dulansan River. In 1987, the estimated population of the Alangan was 47,580. Related families form local groups called the *gado*. The function of the *gado* is both internal—handling moral and legal issues within the group, and external—political and legal. The old men or *kuyay*, function as caretaker of the seeds for swidden agriculture and priest at agricultural rites. The *kuyay* keeps peace and order in the *gado* and is the community leader and performer during the planting and harvesting season (Lopez 1976). All the *kuyays* among the Alangan form a *kuyay* association called the *banada*, which functions as protector against “social, political, and economic menaces from the Christian lowlanders” (Kikuchi 1984 cited in both Rex Book Store 2000: 40 and <http://library.thinkquest.org/C003235/mangyan2.html>). Several *gado* make up a *banada* or a *pangado* association under the leadership of the *puon* (overall leader), who presides over the general meetings. The *banada* also aims to establish social and economic reciprocity and a security system within the various *gado* (Javier 1987: 33).

The Batangan live in the forests of Mindoro, particularly in the Southern tip of Western Mindoro. They live a band-level or Jocano’s Pisan-type life. All members of the Batangan group are affiliated by consanguinity or affinity. There is no titular head for each village but there is a caretaker for the settlement known as the *da:naama*. He emerges on the basis of age, good personality (kind, thoughtful, brave, etc.), intelligence (able to speak Tagalog), and financial sufficiency. Usually the oldest male becomes the *da:naama* if he possesses the qualities. Financial sufficiency is important because he is expected to pay off the debts of insolvent village members. He parcels out available land for clearing to each household, depending on the number of families in each one. The *da:naama*’s family is in charge of the whole area of the Batangan from generation to generation; thus, Kikuchi refers to this as the “caretaker-centered kin group” (Kikuchi 1984, cited in both Rex Book Store, 2000: 4; <http://library.thinkquest.org/C003235/mangyan2.html>).

The *fangayatan* provides leadership in the Buhid household. He is an expert in customary laws and possesses the skills of persuasion and negotiation. He has a group of followers called *sakop* who consider themselves under his authority. The *gurangon*, the eldest in the kin group also provides moral leadership based on his age, experience, and expertise, and is considered the point of reference in the community. He acts as arbiter in disputes and the magico-legal expert as the group believes he has access to supernatural help (Javier 1987: 34).



The Hanunuo Mangyans are found in the southeastern part of Mindoro and their approximate population in 1987 was 66,132. "Hanunuo" means "true," "real," or "genuine" and refers to their claim of being the genuine Mangyans because they have remained faithful to the traditions of their ancestors. Relations among the Hanunuo community are "dominated by the spirit of cooperation and togetherness" (Rex Book Store 2000: 43). They are governed by "laws" which are handed down verbally by their elders in the form of counsel or advice. Elders act as judges when troubles arise. Parties in the dispute settle their differences in the presence of the elder who metes out punishment to the offender (Rex Bookstore 2000: 43).

The Hanunuo household group consists of closely related families having reciprocal ties and activities. In the local group known as *kabalayan*, everybody is equal and there are no formal, only informal leaders. These informal leaders must be of age, rich in experience, and well-versed in customary laws (Javier 1987: 34).

The *panudlakan*, who performs the "rites of first planting," may be considered as an "institutionalized form of a magico-religious leader" (CCP 1994: 111). The *panudlakan* may be male or female, the eldest in the group, or a skilled weaver or smith, and is a person of authority or influence (Miyamoto 1978 cited in CCP 1994: 111). Leadership is not hereditary. The authority of the Hanunuo leader is limited and not absolute as group members have considerable freedom among themselves. The members of the community, however, are always subject to the headman's call. They "owe their leaders a portion of their labor and obedience." A council composed of the old members of the same neighboring settlements or rancherias takes responsibility for settling disputes (Lopez 1976: 63).

The Irayas occupy the northwestern part of Mindoro. The estimated number of Irayas is 10,689. The term "iraya" means "man" or "human being." Closely related families form a local group called the *sanguraan* led by the *puon-balayan*. Moral and legal problems are referred to the *puon-balayan* for decision (Javier 1987: 33; Rex Book Store 2000: 44). Some Iraya villages have adopted the governance pattern of organized towns where there is a mayor and an assistant. The barangay system has replaced the barrio as a political unit in the Philippines (CCP 1994: 111).

The local group of the Tadyawan household is called the *pagkatifunan*. The *kuyayatam* provides the leadership for the group. He acts as administrator of justice, arbiter of disputes, and makes decisions on new swidden sites. Occasionally, he is also the local medicine man (Javier 1987: 33).

*The Manobo*

The Manobos are often considered the original lumads or tribal people of Mindanao. There are over 300,000 Manobos in Mindanao consisting of up to 20 distinct groups. "Manobo" comes from the lowland Moro term "man" (person or people) and "obo" (hill or mountain). Spanish usage of Manobo added the meaning of "pagan." They are the most widely dispersed IP in Mindanao and are found in Agusan, Surigao, Bukidnon, Davao, and Cotabato (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 628).

Another derivation of Manobo or "Manuvu" is "mansuba," "man" for people and "suba" for river, hence their reference as "river people." A third derivation is from "Banobo," the name of the creek that presently flows to Pulangi River about two kilometers below Cotabato City. A fourth meaning is taken from "man" meaning "first, aboriginal" and "tuvu" meaning "grow" or "growth." Manobo is the hispanized form (De Leon 2004: 1).

An early account (Garvan 1931: 139-144) refers to the Manobo society as "essentially patriarchal" and characterized by "perfect equality" in nearly all things. The same account identifies the nominal leader as "chief" or "warrior chief." The chief is a man from a good family, of sufficient age and means, has the gift of speech, fair in making judgments, strong character, more than usual ability, especially the ability to look at intricate points in a dispute, generous, hospitable, and of personal valor than the rest of the group. The title is not hereditary nor does it confer a privileged status on the holder who "sallies back and forth in the company of his slaves." The chief, however, enjoys a "certain amount of respect," due to his age and because he has many relatives.

One of the requisites of being chief was that he must have killed an average of five people. The advent of Christianity has diminished the importance of this requirement. The chief performs a combination of roles: priest in all that concerns war; magician who can safeguard himself and friends from evil designs and enemies; medicine man; settler of grievances; and leader in warlike expeditions.

Garvan (1931) refers to a bagani class as the warrior class. It is not clear whether the bagani he referred to was the same as the "chief." According to Garvan, women have no role in public affairs and there are no women chiefs (1931: 141). A more recent source, however, states that although baganis (or bahanis) were mostly men, "stories are told of women warriors in the past" but "today, very few women actually participate in direct fighting" (Kaliwat Theater Collective 1996: 68).

Recent sources describing the social structure of the Manobos identify various classes (De Leon 2004: 1; Gatmaytan 1994: 1-37; Kaliwat Theater

Collective 1996: 69; [http:// www.peopleteams.com/sptribal/page4.html](http://www.peopleteams.com/sptribal/page4.html)). De Leon (2004) states that the traditional social structure of the Manobo consists of four classes: the bagani, baylan, commoner, and slave. The bagani class defended the community and went to battle. The baylan is a male or female priest and healer. The commoners are the farmers. The slaves are those seized in raids or village members who could not pay the penalty for crimes committed. Slaves became the property of rulers, and were usually given away as part of the bridal dowry. They could win their freedom through faithfulness to their master, diligence in fulfilling their duties, or payment of their debt through servitude.

The material from <http://www.peopleteams.com/sptribal/page4.html> describes the Manobos as “usually led by a datu or chieftain and are grouped in clans. Each clan usually has a *shaman* or spiritual leader, a warrior class and commoners.” The ethnographic account of the Kaliwat Theater collective likewise refers to the datu as the leader of the Manobos. The individual affidavits from Manobos themselves put together by Gatmaytan (1994) provide detailed descriptions of Manobo leaders—datu, *manigaon* (elders of the community that serve as advisers), and *datu manigaon* (elder datu, thus ranks above the ordinary datu).

There are conflicting accounts on whether all these titles continue to exist today. There is almost general consensus that the prestigious bagani class is “gone except in memory,” but the Kaliwat source documents the existence of Datu Kalimpitan of Kinawayan as the oldest living bahani (1996: 87). The source states that “a bahani will always be a bahani,” but the “status of the bahani has weakened in contemporary times” (1996: 69).

There are many indications that the baylan and datu systems are continuing traditions. Although a few affidavits in the Gatmaytan collection tend to indicate that the baylan is a thing of the past, because when the Visayans started coming they “moved to other communities, being wary of the attitudes and actions of the Visayans” (Gatmaytan 1994: 2), still there are more affidavits that refer to baylans in the present tense. The titles of *manigaon* and *datu manigaon* are mentioned only in the Gatmaytan collection. Some of those who executed affidavits refer to these titles in the past tense but many others refer to them in the present tense.

This study provides a brief description of these leadership structures on the assumption that the datu, *manigaon*, and *datu manigaon* continue to exist in Manobo society.

The datu is the political leader chosen and installed by the people of the community through popular recognition and can be removed or even punished by the people. The datu can be a man or a woman, in the latter case she is

called *mabayow* or *Datu Daga*. The title of datu is not hereditary. The son of a datu may be conferred the title if he possesses the required skills and abilities, which include the following (Kaliwat 1996: 69-70; Gatmaytan 1994:1-37; Manuel 1973: 316-7):

- able to convince, articulate, and argue;
- intelligent;
- able to resolve conflicts and provide solution to problems;
- good knowledge of custom laws—their applications and interpretation;
- integrity, honesty, credibility, trustworthiness;
- attentive to community issues and problems;
- financially stable and well-endowed—must be in a position to shoulder expenses of holding the title and share in the payment of damages in dispute settlements; and
- friendly, loving, sociable, sympathetic, merciful, and has a good attitude towards the people.

The datu's authority may cover either one cluster of houses only, or may extend to one territorial district or even an entire subtribal or tribal territory. He may have a title that refers to his particular skills or specialty, such as *Datu Manganganop* (good hunter). He performs the following governance roles for the community (Gatmaytan 1994: 1-37; Kaliwat 1996: 71-74):

- mediator and arbiter—to resolve conflicts and disputes between members of the community or between two disputing datu from other villages. The datu receives payment for settling disputes.
- judge—to hear cases and impose penalties; to ensure that the penalty or fine (*tamok* or *manggad*) is paid immediately. If the wrongdoer cannot pay the *tamok* (Kaliwat 1996: 71) or *manggad* (Gatmaytan 1994: 30), the datu offers to provide some of it and persuades the community to raise the rest.
- maintainer of peace and order within the territory and peaceful relations with other territories and subtribes;
- spokesperson and ambassador of goodwill;
- provider of the needs of people especially when they face shortages;

- medium for passing on traditional values to succeeding generations;
- religious performer—to lead religious rituals or assist the baylans; to pray over the harvest and hunting bounty and to distribute the food among members of the community; to marry couples (and raise the bridal dowry if the groom cannot afford it); to invoke gods and goddesses during calamities; and
- to give marital advice or to help raise the economic requirements for the aggrieved party in a divorce.

The manigaons are the elders of the community who have the wisdom and experience to serve as teachers and advisers. They also settle disputes in accordance with the customs, traditions, and practices of the Manobos. The datu manigaon is the elder datu, the chief leader in the community, over and above the ordinary datu (Gatmaytan 1994: 1, 2, 7, 9, 12, 20 and 24).

It is very likely that the manigaons who assist the datu compose the council of elders referred to in the Kaliwat source (1996: 7). Jocano identifies a council of elders of the Arumanen Manobo known as the *pekilukesen* (Jocano 1998: 122).

The datu's assistant is the *panadsang*, someone who is usually trained since his youth to become a leader. The only requirement to become a panadsang is to have sustained interest in the role, knowledge of his duties and responsibilities, and experience as assistant. He assumes the functions of the datu when the latter is away, grows older, or can no longer perform his roles for one reason or another. If he proves to the datu and the community that he is capable, credible, and respectable he may assume the functions of the datu when the latter dies (Kaliwat 1996: 77-78).

Manobo women who earn the title of *bae* (or *bai* in some sources) also have leadership roles. One becomes a full-fledged bae by gaining the respect of the community and exhibiting the capacity to lead. A bae performs community functions, which include mediating over minor disputes usually arising from gossip, morality issues between young men and women where the parties involved think the datu should not be bothered about, and giving advice on a variety of issues. She is also responsible for managing economic activities of the community, particularly the division of labor and produce from farming. She provides the opportunity for women to participate in discussions about community problems and projects (Kaliwat 1996: 78-79).

The barangay system has considerably reduced the power and authority of the datu and they must now adjust and adapt to new forms of governance. A Manobo leader states that the "people's respect has been transferred to the

kapitan barangay because he is more powerful than the datu" (Kaliwat 1996: 75). Gaspar (2000) reports that very few Manobo datu ever made it to the barangay council. The new leaders are predominantly non-Manobos, which creates complications and confusions in the traditional community leadership. His study indicates that migrant leaders (referred to as the generic Bisaya) have been favored more than the datu (Gaspar 2000: 176).

Worsening economic conditions have also weakened the traditional power of the datu. It is increasingly difficult for them to adhere to their traditional justice system because they cannot afford the tamok or manggad. The existence of both the traditional and the formal justice systems has also complicated matters. It is unusual for datu to ask disputing parties about their preference in settlement of disputes—whether to try the case through the traditional system or refer it to local government authorities. As a datu says, "we don't have anything to show to prove that we datu have some power, can represent our people and are capable of judging what is right and what is wrong...we are left with nothing to prove our strength as datu" (Datu Simbadan Mailan in Kaliwat 1996: 83).

The datu may have "lost their leadership and respectability" (Kaliwat 1996: 73-74), but the Manobos continue to cling to their traditions and claim that they "still follow the Manobo system of running the affairs of this community, still follow the customs and traditions of their [our] ancestors," and still "run their [our] government" (Gatmaytan 1994: 20).

### *The Maranao Leader*

The Maranao or Maranaw live in Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Sultan Kudarat, and Northern Cotabato. They are one of the major Muslim groups and take pride in being the "unconquered" people, having successfully resisted any form of foreign domination for centuries ([www.emailpinoy.com/educational/philippines-tribes.shtml](http://www.emailpinoy.com/educational/philippines-tribes.shtml)). "Like other Muslim groups, the Maranao were able to organize larger political institutions beyond the village and clan by the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The different tribes around Lake Lanao were brought together under the control of a class of native aristocrats called datu who were themselves subordinated to the Sultan" (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 628).

The head of a Maranaw traditional government is called the *solotan* or *sultan*. The title carries with it executive, judicial, and legislative powers. The solotan or sultan must be married, wealthy, wise, courageous, and of good moral character (Madale 1976: 25). "The sultanate or datuship is based on Islam" (Isidro 1976: 59). "Theoretically, the power of the sultan (and the datu) rests with the Koran, but it actually derives from personal wealth, strength and number of supporters" (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 625).

There are four major *pangampongs* or principalities in Lanao divided into various sultanates. "There are 15 higher-prestige sultanates (*pagawidan*) and 28 lower-prestige sultanates (*pagawid*). These categories of sultanates have further subdivided into an unknown number of sultanates or dataships for the smaller communities of *suko* (district), *inged* (township), and *agama* (village)...larger sultanates are relatively independent from one another although they maintain alliances under the terms of the unwritten *adat* (customary law). Each sultanate has its founding father, either historical or legendary, from whom descends power on the basis of heredity" (Isidro 1976: 59).

"The sultan, or any titled datu, holds office for life or as long as he is able to perform his duties. No titled datu, no matter how corrupt or cruel, can be forced to put down his crown." He cannot be impeached from his position (Madale 1976: 25-26).

The sultan settles disputes, promotes peace and order, performs traditional rites, and assists in religious ceremonies (Benitez 168: 25). The datu presides over settlements of conflict, with the assistance of a *kali* or legal consultant. "While the *datu* presides with honor, the *kali* is more important in the administration of law" (Isidro 1976: 64).

The titles of datus describe a trait or role, such as the following (Madale 1976: 25):

panondiongan	-	most high
kasangoan	-	adviser
ampotua	-	wise
paniyambaaan	-	great
ampuan	-	most revered
solotan a pitiilan	-	chosen solotan
simbaan	-	idol
solotan a dalomangcob	-	wise solotan
songcopan	-	unbeatable
solotan a adil	-	wealthy solotan
pangarongan	-	adviser
solotan a gaos	-	moneyed solotan

The rule of succession in the Maranaw traditional government is not well defined such that when a sultan lays down his crown, "it takes a long time to choose a successor. Customarily, the local titled datus and heads of families meet to determine which family can nominate the successor. Usually two or more families are entitled to nominate the next solotan. But the most deserving of these families by reason of seniority, wealth, and size of clan is the one chosen to nominate the next solotan" (Madale 1976: 25-26). They use

the *salsila* (genealogy), *taritib* (customs), and *igma* (practices) to guide them. When the sultan is chosen, coronation rites are held to recognize the new sultan. The coronation rites take only one day but the festivities may last up to a week with everybody in the sultanate helping in the celebrations. The family and relatives of the designated sultan foot the bill (Madale 1976: 25-26).

Long before the advent of formal democratic structures, there already existed a system of laws, customs, traditions and beliefs among the Maranaos. The source of authority is the *adat* or customary law, which supports the power structure and social organization. This includes the *taritib* and the Islamic law. "The *taritib* is a collection of customs, traditions, and practices in the community. It defines the relationships of territories, the extent of communities, the status of the ranking families, the titles that should be given to individuals, the kinship groups found in the community, and the social behavior pattern." The authority on this is called the *pananaritib*. The genealogy of families or *salsila* "relates the kinship structure of groups of people and their distribution to social ranks" (Isidro 1976: 61).

A recent account shows that the title of sultan need not be limited to Maranaws or to the royal class. On 19 May 2002, the royal houses of the sultanate in Lanao named Armando de Rossi, a man from Sicily, as *Sultan Macapundeg Ko Lanao Ragat* (Sultan Benefactor of the People of Lanao). The House of Representatives granted de Rossi, Filipino citizenship in February 2001. He had lived in Lanao for 14 years and helped build schools, delivered potable water, donated materials for the construction of mosques, and supported irrigation and agricultural projects. He is credited for the antipolio vaccines of thousands of children in Lanao del Sur. As Sultan, he holds regular meetings and dialogues with leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) (*Manila Times* 2003: <http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2003/sept/26/life/20030926lif3.html>).

"Maranaws still want to carry titles. To them no matter how educated a person is, if he is not titled, his power and influence are limited. It is a fact that a title is oftentimes a guarantee that one can win an elective post...A title is an indication that one comes from a royal family" (Madale 1976: 28).

### *T'boli Leader*

The T'bolis live in the interior highlands of South Cotabato bordering Davao del Sur. "Their name may have been derived from 'taga'—meaning 'people of,' and 'bilil'—meaning 'slopes' or 'rolling hills'...Like the Manobo, they have adopted the datu leadership system of the Maguindanao but have not converted to Islam" (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 631).



While the organizing principle in the society is kinship, communities are also linked through a recognized leader who does not really command but whose word is respected because of his status, economic means, courage, skill in settling disputes, and wisdom in the interpretation of laws. This position is achieved through community validation. "He traditionally acquires rights over a person for whom he has paid an unsettled debt" (Kintanar and Associates 1996: 631).

A male chieftain (*datu*) or a female chieftain or princess (*boi*) is the leader of the T'boli society. He/She may be the oldest member of the founding family, must be well educated, a good speaker, and has status, wisdom, charisma, courage, and integrity.

The *datu* or *boi* "assumes several roles. He has social, economic, religious and political functions. There are a number of *datus* in the T'boli society with varying degrees of power, fame and status achieved or ascribed by the *datus* to themselves and recognized by their followers. The position of *datu* is not hereditary. No *datu* enjoys primacy over the others, nor does he exercise specific jurisdictional control over specific areas or groups. Other *datus* might accord deferential treatment to one of their members, but this is not a sign of his superiority over them" (<http://www.ncca.gov.ph/culture&arts/cularts/ccta/kapatagan/kapatag-tboli.htm>).

"T'bolis go to the *datu* for the interpretation of the T'boli laws and for the settling of inter-tribal disputes. A *datu* is usually a family head whose claim to *datu*ship is recognized by its members, and the community. His leadership is more evident as village headman. Decisions on land conflicts, where to make the first sowing, where to place a house site or when to abandon a settlement are examples of executive decisions made by the *datu* after due consultation with the elders in the community" (<http://www.pia.gov.ph/philtoday/pt03/pt0320.htm>). The scope of authority of the *datu* is limited by the *b'long* or territorial jurisdiction as determined by consensus of all local leaders.

The *datu* also heads the T'boli court made up of all the respected elders of the community. "The court determines whether the accused is guilty or not through the application of the following rituals: The members of the court boil a pot of water. The accused is asked to pick up a stone from the pot of boiling water and when the hands get burned, he/she is declared guilty. Another means of trial by ordeal is when the accuser and the accused are ordered to submerge in a river or lake. The one who rises up first is guilty" (<http://www.pia.gov.ph/philtoday/pt03/pt0320.htm>). Buhisan's study of T'boli songs reveals that the functions of the *datu* include handling issues like "agawan ng asawa" (wife snatching), which often happens in a T'boli village, dealing with other crimes like theft, and resolving community conflict (1996: 95-98).

Nowadays, it is common to see datu or descendants of datu occupying formal government positions, like barangay captains. In dispute settlements, local government authorities wait for the recommendation of the datu or boi or the elders of the community.

### **Observations on Indigenous Leadership**

A summary of leadership patterns of the IPs selected for this study includes the titles, roles or functions, and bases of authority of leaders and, where applicable, the council of elders (See Appendix 1). The criteria used by the IPs for the choice of their respective leaders are found in Appendix 2.

Except for the Ifugao, all the IPs in the study have either a formal or an informal leader. This may be as simple as the elder among a group of households in the Mangyan group or as elaborate as the sultanate or datu system in the Maranao. A common feature among the upland groups of Bontoc, Ifugao, and Kalinga is the use of go-betweens. This mechanism indicates openness towards conflict settlement to maintain peace within the community and good relations with other groups.

The indigenous groups in the study have very high standards for leadership. Leaders must be wise, mature, experienced, fair in making judgments, rich, articulate, know custom laws and traditions, skilled in negotiation and arbitration, and must be recognized by the community. There is also very high respect for elders who are generally the ones chosen as leaders or become members of an advisory council. Since government and the larger society do not sanction headtaking, this is no longer a criterion for leadership. Leaders, however, are persons who have proven themselves to be worthy of their roles in the community, by acts of bravery or past actions for the good of the community.

The IP leaders have multiple roles but perhaps the most common role that they perform is the settlement of disputes or conflict. The IP leaders act as judge, mediator, or arbiter to maintain peace and order in their respective communities. This is why age, wisdom, experience, and knowledge of custom laws are necessary for leadership. Above all, however, wealth and financial stability are very important. One explanation for this is because leaders must ensure that judgments in dispute settlement are implemented, including the payment of penalties, which they themselves usually have to assume if the offending party cannot afford it.

The enforcement of sanctions appears to be more through persuasion, the strength of tradition, or appeal for supernatural intervention, rather than through coercion. Leadership is generally by consultation and mediation because the leader has the respect and support of the community.

It is common for IPs to concentrate all leadership functions, whether secular or sacred, in the person of the leader; thus, indigenous leaders are at once economic and spiritual leaders. They make decisions on planting, harvesting, and distribution of produce and play primary roles in religious rites. They are local doctors and healers. They are also military leaders.

Although custom laws are unwritten, these are passed on to succeeding generations as bases for community action and decisionmaking. Custom law and tradition provide both leaders and followers with rules of engagement that are commonly understood by all.

### **Some Lessons for Public Administration**

Indigenous leadership and governance are part of the values and traditions of the IPs. It is a way of life. Democratic governance, at the national and local levels, has intruded into this way of life. It has forced the IPs to adapt and make changes in their mode of leadership. It imposes a rule of law that is not grounded on IP values, culture, tradition, and practice. Formal structures are alien to their culture and laws are not clearly understood by all members of the community.

Administrative offices and local government units run parallel to their traditional leadership and governance systems causing confusion. As cited earlier, traditional leaders of the Manobo now seek the preference of parties in a case for the venue for the settlement of the dispute, whether to go through the traditional system or the formal government process. Another example is Presidential Decree No. 848 in 1975. It created the Kalinga Special Development Region to "hasten the growth and development of the Kalinga people" but it provided for the participation of only one barangay leader "who may be a respected pangat or traditional leader." While the indigenous leaders made decisions for the community, external institutions and persons have taken over decisionmaking for the indigenous peoples.

As for titled leaders, the Constitution expressly forbids the enactment of any law conferring titles of nobility or royalty. On 9 November 1988, in an *en banc* decision, the Supreme Court noted that "titles of royalty or nobility have been maintained and appear to be accorded some value among some members of certain cultural groups," however, "such titles of royalty or nobility are not generally recognized or acknowledged socially in the national community...No legal rights or privileges are contingent upon grant or possession of a title or nobility or royalty" (Supreme Court 1988: 1). In effect, titled leaders (e.g., *datus*) have lost much of their power and influence.

IPs also face challenges to their standards and structures of leadership. Government leaders, both administrative and political, are not necessarily the

wise, experienced, and respected elders of the community. At times, they can be young and inexperienced. They can be insensitive to traditional customs and practices and therefore may offend the sensibilities of the IPs. Laws, rules, orders, and sanctions may run counter to accepted ways of settling disagreements and conflicts.

This study shows that indigenous leadership structures and practices have been effective in governing the daily lives of indigenous peoples for centuries. They have endured because they fulfilled the needs of these peoples. They cannot be totally disregarded nor set aside in the name of development or government. They can contribute to enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of formal governance processes.

IPs put a premium on being an elder as a requirement for leadership; public servants should be sensitive to this tradition. In dealing with IPs, older, more mature, and experienced public servants would most likely have the ear of the group over one who is perceived to be raw and inexperienced.

The council of elders in IP communities is an effective mechanism for community participation and an oversight body. Leadership is shared among the wise and experienced elders and the council checks or diffuses the power of the leader. Local government units may well consider this participatory leadership structure. In dealing with IPs, it would likewise be a wise move for public servants to seek the leaders or the council of elders first. The use of go-betweens may also improve chances for success.

IPs must be utterly confused and dismayed with the criteria for leadership emerging in the country today. The unwise, inarticulate, inexperienced, or dishonest seems to have greater chances for assuming leadership roles than those who possess traditional desirable qualities. Unqualified civil servants and political leaders do not only disrupt efficient and effective delivery of public services, they also confound the IPs who have been forced to surrender their autonomy only to be taken over by misfits.

Political and administrative leaders may well reflect upon the standards of IP leadership. Merit and fitness always prevail. IP leaders are people who always possess the necessary qualities for leadership. They must be wise, articulate, experienced, honest, etc. There is no place for the unqualified and there are no shortcuts. Even heirs to titles of leadership must prove that they deserve the honor. If the indigenous peoples can impose such high standards on themselves, then public servants can do no less. Public servants, especially when dealing with these communities, must manifest that they are qualified to take over the decisionmaking for them and for the larger society. Merit and fitness should prevail.

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## Appendix 1

## Leaders and Leadership Roles in Selected IP Communities

<i>IP</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Bases of Authority</i>	<i>Role in Governance</i>	<i>Council of Elders</i>	<i>Governance Role of Council of Elders</i>
Bontoc or Bontok, Bontoc Igorot	amam-a (am-ama; Amama)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experienced elder; articulate; fair in judgment; good war record; rich</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>individually, has no power to make decisions for the village</li> <li>member of the council of elders</li> </ul>	intugtukan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hear, review, and make judgment on disagreements among members of an ato</li> <li>make laws or amend custom laws when they see fit</li> <li>impose fines on villagers based on precedents</li> <li>impose fines on offenders from other villages that have no peace pacts with them</li> <li>make peace, accept or reject challenges to war</li> <li>release or adopt people who move from one ato to another</li> <li>schedule the agricultural calendar</li> <li>advise and counsel villagers who need help (although this is normally handled by the amam-a in a particular ato).</li> </ul>
	pinakarsu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adult; intermarried with someone from another village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>go-between or mediator in conflicts with other villages</li> </ul>		
Ifugao or Ipugaw, Ipugao, Yfugao	Monbaga (civil cases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wealthy; skilled in arbitration and bargaining; well-versed in custom laws and traditional lore; and good knowledge of genealogical history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>initiate negotiations in peace-pacts, serve as witnesses in cases dealing with property, mortgages, marriage, and other transactions</li> </ul>		
	monkalun (criminal cases)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to wound or kill the offender, when one party attacks the other during a period of truce</li> </ul>		

## Appendix 1 (continued)

IP	Leaders	Bases of Authority	Role in Governance	Council of Elders	Governance Role of Council of Elders
	mumbaki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of time-honored culture, customs, and traditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holder of rules of native society</li> <li>• health officer</li> <li>• adviser</li> </ul>		
Kalinga	ap-apu (Buwaya group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mombagbaga (spokesman); rich; mengol (headtaker) respected by the villagers</li> <li>• in his role as village spokesman, his influence extends to other villages throughout the region</li> </ul>			
	pangat (Lubwagan and other groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wealth, lineage, family connections with other pangats, personality, cooperativeness, fairness, oratorical skills, a record of having settled cases of controversy between kinship groups, and above all—a reputation as a 'dangerous' man who is said to be feared by his own village mates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peacemakers or determiners of rights (manlilintog)</li> <li>• provide advice and help on all matters</li> <li>• see to it that every child is properly cared for and provided</li> <li>• choose go-betweens called mangi-ugud</li> <li>• nominate or confirm choice of mangdon si bodong</li> </ul>		
	mangi-ugud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experience in dealing with people, political maturity, a strong family backing, and record as a renowned warrior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• go-between settles disputes between kinship groups</li> <li>• impose punishments while mediation is in process when an existing peace agreement between kinships groups is violated</li> </ul>		

<i>IP</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Bases of Authority</i>	<i>Role in Governance</i>	<i>Council of Elders</i>	<i>Governance Role of Council of Elders</i>
	mangdon si bodong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peace pact holder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• negotiate/hold peace pact</li> <li>• keep kin of offended party in check</li> </ul>		
Mandaya	Likid (mangkatadong/magtambagay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a man of wisdom, talent, and peace and commands respect from the people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counsel and advice</li> <li>• handed down the unwritten laws and customs of the Mandaya to the younger generation during informal meetings</li> </ul>		
	Bagani	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a younger village chieftain who ranked first in bravery and strength. He came from a bagani family line</li> <li>• The son of a bagani can become a bagani if he satisfies the requirements: slay at least ten people and capture a number of children for sale as slaves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adviser of the likid.</li> <li>• in the absence of the likid, assumed full responsibility for settling disputes</li> </ul>	angtutukay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review petitions of commoners to redress a wrong or take revenge against another outside the domain by means of warfare</li> <li>• assess the size and strength of a war party being organized, and the number of captives and values to be taken up</li> <li>• acquire additional choice forest areas</li> <li>• hear, arbitrate, and settle all intradomain disputes arising from theft, adultery, violence, rape, murder, etc.</li> <li>• select a bagani successor among the sons of the bagani's first wife if the present warrior chief is unable to rule or had passed away</li> <li>• transmit the demands, needs, and grievances of commoners to the ruling bagani</li> </ul>
	Maniklad		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bagani's adjutant; stood in front of the bagani during a tribal war</li> </ul>		

## Appendix 1 (continued)

<i>IP</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Bases of Authority</i>	<i>Role in Governance</i>	<i>Council of Elders</i>	<i>Governance Role of Council of Elders</i>
Mangyan	Alangan: kuyay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>old men</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caretaker of the seeds for swidden agriculture and priest at agricultural rites</li> </ul>	Banada (association of kuyays)	protector against "social, political, and economic menaces from the Christian lowlanders"
	Batangan: da:naama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>age (usually the oldest male), good personality (kind, thoughtful, brave, etc.), intelligence (able to speak Tagalog), and financial sufficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caretaker of the settlement; parcels out available land for clearing to each household</li> </ul>		
	Buhid: fangayatan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expert in customary laws; possesses the skills of persuasion and negotiation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>age, experience, and expertise</li> </ul>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>followers called sakop consider themselves under his authority</li> </ul>			
	gurangon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eldest in the kin group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>moral leadership; point of reference in the community. arbiter in disputes, magico-legal expert</li> </ul>		
	Hanunuo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>only informal leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>of age, rich in experience, well-versed in customary law</li> </ul>		council of elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>settle disputes</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>panudlakan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eldest male or female; skilled weaver or smith; person of authority or influence</li> </ul>			

<i>IP</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Bases of Authority</i>	<i>Role in Governance</i>	<i>Council of Elders</i>	<i>Governance Role of Council of Elders</i>
	Iraya puon-balayan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acts on moral and legal matters</li> </ul>		
	Tadyawan pagkatifunan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• administrator of justice, arbiter of disputes, decides swidden sites; occasional medicine man.</li> </ul>		
Manobo	datu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• man or woman chosen and installed by community through popular recognition</li> <li>• can convince, articulate, and argue</li> <li>• intelligent</li> <li>• can resolve conflicts and provide solution to problems</li> <li>• good knowledge of custom laws—their applications and interpretation</li> <li>• integrity, honesty, credibility, and trustworthiness</li> <li>• attentive to community issues and problems</li> <li>• financially stable and well-endowed</li> <li>• friendly, loving, sociable, sympathetic, attitude towards the people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mediator and arbiter</li> <li>• judge—to hear cases and impose penalties; to ensure that the penalty or fine (tamok or manggad) is paid immediately</li> <li>• maintainer of peace and order within the territory and peaceful relations with other territories and sub-tribes</li> <li>• spokesperson and ambassador of goodwill</li> <li>• provider of the needs of people especially when they face shortages</li> <li>• medium for passing on traditional values to succeeding generations</li> <li>• religious performer to marry couples (and raise the bridal dowry if the groom cannot afford it); to invoke gods and goddesses during calamities; and to give marital advice or to help raise the economic requirements for the aggrieved party in a divorce</li> </ul>		

## Appendix 1 (continued)

<i>IP</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Bases of Authority</i>	<i>Role in Governance</i>	<i>Council of Elders</i>	<i>Governance Role of Council of Elders</i>
	datu manigaon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>elder datu, the chief leader in the community, over and above the ordinary datu</li> </ul>			
	manigaon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>elders of the community with wisdom and experience to serve as teachers and advisers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>settle disputes in accordance with the customs, traditions, and practices</li> </ul>		
	bae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>woman who has gained the respect of the community and exhibited the capacity to lead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mediating over minor disputes; giving advice on a variety of issues; managing economic activities of the community; provides the opportunity for women to participate in discussions about community issues</li> </ul>		
Maranao or Maranaw	solotan or sultan and datu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>married, wealthy, wise, courageous, and of good moral character</li> <li>Theoretically, the power of the Sultan (and the datu) rests with the Koran, but it actually derives from personal wealth, strength and number of supporters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>settles disputes, promotes peace and order, performs traditional rites, and assists in religious ceremonies</li> </ul>		
T'boli	datu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>status, economic means, courage, skill in settling disputes, and wisdom in the interpretation of laws. This position is achieved through community validation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretation of T'boli laws and settling intertribal disputes</li> </ul>		

## Appendix 2

## Leadership Criteria of Selected IPs (Main Leader)

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Bontoc</i>	<i>Ifugao</i>	<i>Kalinga</i>	<i>Mandaya</i>	<i>Mangyan</i>	<i>Manobo</i>	<i>Maranao</i>	<i>T'boli</i>
An elder	✓		✓		✓	✓		
Male					✓			
Lineage/ family backing			✓					
Knowledge of genealogical history		✓						
Knowledge of custom law and traditions		✓			✓	✓		✓
Wisdom				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skills: Oratory (articulate) Persuasion Negotiation/ arbitration Leadership	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Experience	✓		✓		✓			
Wealth/financial stability	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Personal attributes: Fair judge Credible Sociable, friendly, kind, thoughtful Honest (Integrity) Good attitude Dangerous Brave	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Respected/recognized by community			✓	✓		✓		✓
Influential			✓					
Good record as warrior	✓		✓	✓				
Headtaker			✓	✓				