

The Bontok Igorot Tribe: An Internal Scanning of its Governance System

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In the light of the changing environment that permeates the ancestral Bontok Igorot culture, one pervading problematique that hounds them is how to mitigate external influences that are constantly making inroads into their culture in general and traditional governance systems in particular. The article dissects the governance system of the Bontok Igorots and the corresponding issues that they face today. It posits that their indigenous governance mechanisms must be respected, preserved and safeguarded vis-à-vis the constantly changing milieu that surrounds them.

Introduction

Bontok Igorots are tribal Filipinos or indigenous people since they have developed their territories and maintained a historical continuity, before and after the arrival of colonizers in the country. They are one of the ethnolinguistic groups in Cordillera that are able to sustain their traditional structures, beliefs and institutions. However at present, the existence of Bontok Igorots, along with other indigenous groups in Cordillera is threatened by national government policies and the cash economy prevailing in the country today. Hopefully, through a better appreciation and understanding of the indigenous governance developed by the Bontok Igorots, indigenization of public administration may also be facilitated.

The internal scanning of the internal environment of the Bontok Igorot describes its governance system in the areas of legislation and policymaking, administration of justice system, delivery of community services, fiscal administration, security and external relations and concepts of property and human rights as they cut across governance core values application. The author had difficulties understanding the operation of the areas of governance due to limitations of materials that deal with the topic at hand.

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Brief Description of Bontoc and Bontok Igorot

Bontoc, now the Mountain Province, is bounded on the west by Ilocos Sur Province, on the east by Isabela and Ifugao Provinces, on the south by Benguet Province and on the north by Kalinga-Apayao Province. It is separated in the west from Lepanto mines by the long Cordillera range and in the east from Ifugao by the Polis range (Cawed 1972: 8). Bontoc or Mountain Province has ten municipalities. Bontoc municipality is the capital of Mountain Province. It lies 164 kilometers north of the city of Baguio and is situated in a narrow valley of a strip of flat land stretching westward up to the mountainsides. The town growth and expansion are limited on the east by the Chico River, and on the north and south by steep mountains. The municipality of Bontoc measures 234.6 square kilometers (Botengan 1976: 2).

The Bontok Igorot is one of the seven ethnolinguistic groups in Cordillera, along with the Ibaloi of southern Benguet, the Kankanaey of northern Benguet and western Mountain Province, the Kalinga, the Ifugao, the Isneg of Apayao and Tinggian of upland Abra (Carino 1996: 70). They are found in the Mountain Province of the Cordillera Region. Mountain Province was formerly part of the old "Mountain Province," which included Mountain Province, Ifugao, Benguet, Kalinga, Apayao and Abra Provinces. In 1905, these divisions were made subprovinces of the old "Mountain Province." On 18 June 1966, these were made independent provinces by virtue of Republic Act 4695, otherwise known as the "Division Law of Mountain Province" (Botengan 1976: 1).

A Bontoc village has a population ranging from 600 to 3000 inhabitants. The total population of the Bontok Igorot was 148,000 in 1985 and 157,876 in 2003 (http://www.ncip.gov.ph/resources/ethno_detail.php?ethnoid=48). Bontoc as a mother tongue was spoken by 34.9 percent in 1975 but this was reduced to 13.4 percent in 1990 since many Bontok people began to report Ilocano as their mother tongue at home (NSO 1975 and 1990).

The Bontok Igorots of Mountain Province culturally belong to the Indonesian and Malayan type. Jenks (1905: 35) stated that the definite time of their arrival in the Philippines and their retreat to this mountain region have not yet been established. There were no written records available since voluminous historical records and data, which the Spaniards prepared and kept at Bontoc, were burned. Furthermore, Cawed (1972: 1) mentioned that little is known about them before and shortly after the coming of the Spaniards in 1565. Literally, the word *bundok* means "mountain" in the Filipino language. The Bontok Igorots are among the terraced rice field cultivators in the mountain range of Cordillera. Goda (2001: 9) says that the Spaniards changed the word *bundok* to *bontoc* and, later on, the American called it "mountain." The term Bontoc refers to the place while Bontok means the ethnic group.

The Bontok tribe subsists on rice grown on irrigated rice terraces and on parcels of land close to the Chico riverbanks. A special rice variety of upland rice is planted from January to July and the *pak-ang* rice variety with camote (*faliling nan tokey*) as the second crops are planted from August to December. Other crops grown are millet and coffee, fruits like persimmon, tangerines, and banana, and vegetables (cabbage, carrots, peas, beans). They also raise domesticated animals like chicken, pigs, carabaos and dogs. The fishes along the Chico River are also a source of food.

The Bontok Igorot Culture Area

Goda (1999: 1) describes the villages belonging to the Bontok culture as sharing the so-called "megalithic culture complex" with other indigenous people of Cordillera such as the Tinguian, Isneg, Kalinga, Kankanaey, and Ibaloi. Historically, it includes such cultural traits as terrace field rice cultivation, custom of headhunting and worship of skulls, animal sacrifice in rituals, feast of merit, and the building of stone circles or megalithic monuments together with the "Y" shaped wood pillar after the headhunting (Prill-Brett 1987).

However, Cawed (1972: 23) narrated that in past generations, Bontok Igorots were known as fierce headhunters. This common practice was both a duty and honor. They rarely practice headhunting, only doing it today to avenge the death of fellow tribesmen. Headhunting was also considered a great sport to show prowess and skills in the handling of head axe and shield, and agility and accuracy with deadly spears.

The villages belonging to the Bontok culture area exhibit cultural patterns, which show more similarities among themselves than with other ethnic groups occupying the Cordillera. Prill-Brett (1987: 23) identified the cultural traits shared among the Bontok: i) common language with dialect differences; ii) common belief in Lumawig, the Bontok culture hero who instituted many Bontok sociocultural and religious institutions; iii) common flood myths (*amulo*); iv) common dance patterns and songs; v) common house type; vi) same manner of dressing; vii) absence of betel nut chewing; viii) common practice of superincision; and ix) common sociopolitical and religious institutions such as rice agricultural cycle rituals and ceremonies, hereditary priesthood (*papatayan*), the men's meeting place (*ator*),¹ common intensification rights, and common rules of warfare and peace pact.

Despite the difficulties in defining the essential difference in culture, Jenks (1905: 33) noted there are two institutions of the people of Bontoc that seem to differ from those of adjoining people. One of these institutions has to do with the control of the village² or pueblo or *ili* in the Bontok language. Bontok has not developed the headman or chieftain—a rich man who becomes

the pueblo leader, as practiced in other tribes in Northern Luzon. Headman has no place in Bontoc since the control of the pueblos is in the hands of the *intugtukan* (groups of old men). Hence, no one group has control of the entire pueblo. The other institution is the *olog*, an institution of trial marriage. This is not known to exist among adjoining people but is found throughout the area in which the *intugtukan* exists. Seemingly, *olog* and *intugtukan* coexist in the Bontok Igorot tribe.

The Bontok Igorot has the center in the pueblo of Bontoc pronounced as *ban-tak*, a native word for mountain and the original name of the pueblo (Jenks 1905: 23). The traditional, independent and compact Bontok village is delineated by political subdivision (*ato*) and from other villages by territorial and political boundaries (*fedcheng*)³ (Botengan 1976; Cawed 1972; Jenks 1905; Prill-Bret 1982). These boundaries are mutually recognized and respected by villagers within and in the adjacent villages. Village boundaries have been established on the basis of the geographical extent to which each village traditionally constructed and cultivated the rice fields and tapped their water sources and the extent to which villagers had to travel to cut firewood (Prill-Brett 1987: 14).

In many ways, the Bontok has remained traditional. The religious beliefs and practices influence the way of life of the Bontok Igorot. Inanimate objects in the environment are also part of the belief system. For every occasion, the spirits and the living are linked through rituals (*mangmang*), done either to please or appease the ancestral spirits (*anitu*). This is practiced both in the home and in the community through the *ator* and *papattay* sacred pine tree (Botengan 1976).

In Bontoc, people watch the ritual seclusion of the whole *ili* in various ritual occasions such as after the planting of paddy, pre-harvest ritual, post-harvest ritual, after the coordinated wedding ritual or funeral ritual. Loyalty to one's local community is very strong among the Bontok and there is little desire or political movement to unify all local communities of Bontoc as a single tribe or political unit. Traditionally, unity goes beyond vows of peace and some intermarriages (Jenks 1905: 6).

The Bontok Governance Institutions and Systems

Legislation and Policymaking

The Bontok Igorot tribe has two distinct sociopolitical institutions that are responsible for making decisions and resolving conflicts within the village and/or between neighboring villages: i) territorial administrative unit—the *ili*; and ii) tribal groups comprising the *ato* or *ator*, a sub-village level unit and

supra-ato or *supra-ator* organization, a village level unit. These sociopolitical institutions are based on blood ties or kinship.

Botengan (1976: 75) noted that kinship has greatly influenced not only the governance system of these institutions but also their ritual practices and choice of marriage partners. Kinship is important for determining property rights, both inheritable and uninheritable clan properties. Inheritable properties are passed on from mother to daughters and from father to sons. This general rule, however, is modified according to agreements between parents and children to maintain some form of equitable distribution. Kinship also serves as a stratifying criterion for the members of the community. One's lineage determines whether one is rich (*katsangyan*), with name (*wad-ay ngatsana*) or poor (*lawa*) (Botengan 1976: 92). The *katsangyan* are the elite in the community with most inheritable properties by virtue of their ancestors. The *wad-ay ngatsana* are those who by lineage are related to the *katsangyan* but do not have as many of the inheritable properties. They may be classified as the middle class. The *lawa* are those who are not in any way related to the *katsangyan* and do not have enough inheritable properties to provide adequate livelihood. Inevitably, the lineage and class status of the Bontok Igorots have implications in the leadership pattern and decisionmaking process of these sociopolitical institutions.

Territorial Level (ili)

The main source of identity of the people in Bontoc is the village (*ili*, or *ab-abonga*). There is no clear concept of Bontok as a single and integrated ethnic group (Prill-Brett 1987). A Bontok *ili*⁴ has smaller political groups⁵ within the territory⁶ but does not have administrative responsibilities. *Ili* is at once a geographical, economic and ritual microcosm since it reflects the way of life of the Bontok.⁷ An *ili* has one or two small sacred hills with holy pine trees (*papattay*), where a village priest (*pumapatay*) sacrifices domestic animals and makes offerings to the cultural hero (*Lumawig*) and to the dead relatives' spirits (Goda 2001). Each village is an autonomous and an organized agricultural unit or a "state" with its own political and religious institutions, leadership, territorial boundaries, and custom law that involves public rule even over forest tracts (Prill-Brett 1987: 17).

The Bontok *ili* is a loose federation of 17 smaller political groups called *ato* or *ator*. The *ili* is subdivided into four sections from north to south (*afew*, *mag-few*, *chaotey*, and *umpeg*) (Jenks 1905: 50). Each of these sections has several *atos*.⁸ The *ato* is divided into two sections.⁹ Each *ato* is a separate political subdivision with public buildings and set of leaders guided by their custom laws, implements various social, political, economic, and religious activities.

Sub-village Level (Ato or Ator)

Ato/Ator is a sociopolitical unit in the ili of Bontok, which exercises control over a defined geographic territory. As a sociopolitical institution, it has the following elements: i) member families; ii) set of leaders; iii) customary body; iv) a code of conduct; v) sanctions; and vi) traditional ceremonies and rituals (Cariño 1996).

Botengan (1976: 61) underscores the importance of the ator in the life of the community. The ator is referred to as the "half of the home" since all those who live in a house within the proximity of an ato are its members. The ator provides identification for the members. It is not kinship-based, wherein membership is not due to a person's family lineage, but based on one's place of residence. There are four choices of ato, which male households can join: i) the ato where he was born; ii) the ato of his grandfather; iii) the ato of his father-in-law; and iv) the ato where he builds his home (Cawed 1972: 15). Because of these choices, membership in the ator can be hereditary and voluntary. Membership in an ato once decided is for life and one may leave the place only if he loses face before his fellow members and ostracized or if he transfers residence.

Since a family is affiliated with one of the several ato and is represented by the male household head, their membership is accompanied with certain rights and responsibilities. Being a member of an ato is a privilege, once accepted by the concerned ato. An individual member can also be expelled from the ato if other members find him undesirable. Hence the acceptance and expulsion as a member is dependent on the evaluation of the current members.

Ato is the center of decisions that greatly affect the life of the people. Decisions of the old men in the ato indicate whether everyone should stay home, go to work in the fields or be engaged in other activity. A married householder participates in all activities of his ato such as: i) following rules and regulations; ii) contributing to all the expenses of the ato; and iii) participating in all religious, social and political activities (Cawed 1972). An ato has 25-50 members. A non-member, therefore, will not be able to participate in various activities of the ato and ili.

As explained by Botengan (1976) and Cawed (1972), aside from being an exclusive men's club, the ator is also a religious council house where religious decisions are made, and a political council house of the community. The *amam-a*, the oldest members comprise the council of elders (*intugtukan*) that govern each ator (Prill-Brett 1987). On top of being a council house for community affairs and sleeping place for men and boys, ator is perceived as the place in the community where bad luck can be cleansed both for the individuals and the community in order to avoid the occurrence of

misfortunes. Evidently, the ator also serves as a unifying agent for religious activities and almost all other aspects of the life of the Bontok. It performs economic, social, religious, and political functions to ensure harmonious relationships among the villagers and outside. However, all functions are interrelated and it is quite difficult to establish which activity is purely economic or religious, and social or political (Cawed 1972; Goda 2001).

There are 17 ators and 17 intugtukan in Bontok ili. As summarized by Prill-Brett (1975), the ator with intugtukan has activities and responsibilities of three types: (i) the regulation of the internal affairs of the ator and its membership in the socioeconomic and religious sphere; (ii) the regulation of relationships between ator of the same village; and (iii) the regulation of external relations between ator of two villages, and eventually the regulation of external relations with other villages. They are also responsible for policing several fines and punishments, and peace pacts for the entire village, since custom laws on external politics govern these peace treaties.

Decisionmaking is arrived at by consensus and is usually based on past experiences and precedents. Selective adaptation to changes and new situations, especially where there are no precedents, is done by the ator. The final decisionmakers are the amam-a comprising the intugtukan since they are considered to have the most experience in life's activities, and thus, are in the best position to make the "right" decisions for the welfare of the villagers (Prill-Brett 1987: 21). These men are said to be "cool headed," calm, and careful in their decisions.

Village Level (Supra-Ato or Supra-Ator Organization)

The supra-ator organization is composed of intugtukan from the different ators, serving as a governing council of elders in the ili. Prill-Brett (1987: 24) clarified that the supra-ator's judicial, legislative and executive functions are sanctioned by the villagers and are performed in a village court (*amongan nan umili*).¹⁰ This village court is a gathering place of villagers where the supra-ator handles cases where members of different ators or kinship groups are equally concerned (such as inheritance due to non-adherence to custom laws, inter-village conflicts, agricultural and religious rituals, and public works) (Prill-Brett 1982: 2). It adjudicates and settles cases that could not be settled by the ator and are considered to be above the ator's level of jurisdiction. All the intugtukan belonging to the different ators gather at the central ator or amongan nan umili to listen to and coordinate proposals or problems brought before the body. This "caretaker" role is a traditional duty prescribed for a Bontok elder. Basically, the cases brought to them for resolution are those that affect the security and operations of the entire village.

The village court (amongan nan umili) is open to the public. In instances where the decisions of the supra-ator are considered unjust, the public is there to voice out their disagreement. Decisions are rendered only after consensus is reached between the villagers and supra-ator. Correspondingly, external relations such as peace pact acceptance, breaking and renewal usually involve the whole village as the case is made known to all citizens and support is unanimously consolidated. Though pacts are held by individuals, the supra-ator elevates the status of a pact to that of a group endeavor and responsibility. The agreement is given weight by the force of the institution's support and the sanctions of its members' vigilance over the pact.

Leadership Structure

In 1903, Jenks' study of the Bontok Igorot revealed that elective organizations are not present in Bontok. Headman or chieftain was also non-existent; however, he mentioned that the control of the ili is in the hands of groups of old men. Each group of old men, called intugtukan operates only within a single political and geographic portion of the ili. This made him conclude that the ili of Bontok is not under any administrative control of an individual nor any groups. The ili is a loose federation of smaller political groups called ato.

The roles performed by the indigenous leaders like the amam-a, intugtukan, *katchangians*, *pumapatay* and go-between in the ili through the ator and supra-ator organizations reflect the leadership structure that has evolved in Bontoc.

Amam-a or Am-a-ma (Old Men)

The old men or amam-a or am-a-ma¹¹ are the inherent leaders that form the council of elders called intugtukan in every ato. The position of amam-a or am-a-ma is voluntary and is vested to the old men in every ato. Amam-a or am-a-ma is not acquired through election, but through de facto recognition by the ato members. These old men, by virtue of their wisdom, experience, articulateness, sense of fairness, and good judgment, have earned for themselves the recognition and respect of the ato members. The number of amam-a or am-a-ma in an ato varies from one ato to another, depending on the number of men qualified to occupy this prestigious position (Carino 1996: 73; Prill-Brett 1986: 21).

The amam-a or am-a-ma presides over the meetings in the ato. No single elder, however, monopolizes the role of presiding officer in ato meetings. These meetings are exclusively attended and participated in by the men. While the amam-a or am-a-ma are tasked to make decisions on behalf of the

ato, decisionmaking is basically democratic in character. This is done through a process of consultation, discussion and consensus building among the ato members before the final decision of the amam-a or am-a-ma.

Intugtukan (Council of Elders)

The council of elders or intugtukan exists in every ato in the ili. The intugtukan consists of the amam-a who is automatically recruited by virtue of age from the upper and lower strata of the community social structure, the former being outnumbered by the latter. The intugtukan has a voice in all the affairs of the ato and ili. The real power and authority exists when these community leaders "sit in council" as a body, to coordinate, hear and decide cases. However, an amam-a acting singly does not hold the same authority and power he enjoys when he coordinates with his peers or sits as intugtukan (Prill-Brett 1982: 4).

The intugtukan operates in two levels: i) at the ator; and ii) at the supra-ator. At the ator level, the intugtukan works only within a single political and geographic portion of the ili. The intugtukan is not an organization, except that it is intended to be perpetual and self-perpetuating where caretaker role of the elders is expected by the Bontok culture. The self-perpetuation character of the intugtukan is displayed when it presides over meetings and decides on cases presented by its members as a council rather than as individual amam-a or am-a-ma.

At the ili level, the control of the ili is purely aboriginal or in the hands of a supra-ator organization. This supra-ator organization consists of intugtukan from the different ators and convened as governing council of elders (Jenks 1905: 167). This governing council of elders is also known as intugtukan. The composition of the intugtukan at the supra-ator organization is also automatic by virtue of its being an intugtukan at the ator.

The intugtukan at supra-ator organization discharge their functions as a governing council, not representing their respective ators, but working in the interest of the whole village. Just like at the ator level, the intugtukan makes appropriate laws, executes and enforces judgment based on custom law for both internal and external concerns. The decisions made by the intugtukan cut across the social, economic, political and religious life of the people in order not to jeopardize the operations of the entire community. Specifically, they can sue peace, challenge to war and accept or reject war challenges, and formally release and adopt men who change residence from one ato to another (Jenks 1905: 45).

Katchangian (Rich Men)

The katchangian (rich men) have as much voice as the intugtukan at the ator and supra-ator organization and is often heard and regarded with respect (Cawed 1972: 16). Although majority rules and consensus are adopted in decisionmaking in case of controversies and conflicting opinions, the katchangian gives the final decision. The result of the meeting or decision is accepted and respected by ato members.

Pumapatay (Village Priest)

In the religious sphere, the pumapatay (village priest) with assistance of the intugtukan are active during the conduct of rituals in all the aspects of the life of the Bontok.

Pinakarsu (Go-between)

In the Bontok peace pact (*petsen* or *petchen*), the go-between¹² and the guardian ator perform an important function in Bontok politics involving two villages in conflict. Specifically, a go-between carries a "diplomatic" function in behalf of the conflicting villages. The political function as go-between ends when conflict is settled and a peace pact is perfected. From here on, the guardian ator takes over and assumes the full political control over the pact's consummation, after the go-between completes the preliminary negotiations.

As described by Prill-Brett (1975: 219-236), the Bontok go-betweens are safe from harm during armed conflicts engaged by their affinal¹³ and natal villages. They can move back and forth between the warring villages without fear of being killed or harmed. To kill a go-between is considered a taboo. The go-between may either be a male or female who originated from Village A (natal) and married in Village B (affinal), of which he/she is a current citizen. Dual citizenship is an accepted practice among the Bontoks and does not pose any complication regarding the enforcement of the peace pact. In fact, this is a source of authority of a go-between.

The office of the go-between extends to their children, who also automatically function as go-between when the occasion arises. A go-between must have the following qualifications: i) mature men/women with experiences on a peace pact mission in the past; ii) a member of a large kin group in his/her natal village; and iii) must be neutral at all times in his/her dealings with both villages (Prill-Brett 1987: 28).

The diplomatic functions of the go-betweens are: i) to act as the village police for the ator pact-guardian by helping pact holders to enforce the peace

provisions, and mediate when they see conflict is about to erupt in public gatherings; ii) sent by elders to collect fines for offenses (theft, insult) from the natal village to the offended ator; iii) to help settle cases amicably between conflicting villages by shuttling back and forth in consultation with the ators of the villages, until satisfactory settlement is attained; iv) sent to present the *sudsud* (a head axe or spear) to the offending village, a symbol of the formal breaking of a peace pact and challenge to battle or warfare; v) sanctioned to stop an armed conflict between their affinal and natal villages by ritually positioning themselves between the two warring groups and saying "*achi tako ey loslos na kechend tay narpas*" (let us not violate this, enough, it is finished); vi) to prevent the severing of heads during an encounter by saying "*kwak na*" (this is mine) and putting their shields over the slain body; vii) unofficially, to warn their natal village of an impending attack; and viii) to beg for the heads or remains of victims taken in warfare by the opposing village (Prill-Brett 1987: 28-30).

Generally, there is no compensation or reward provided for the Bontok go-betweens. Their service is rendered for the welfare of the village and village consensus sees it as duty performed by virtue of being "children of both villages." Their reward is the prestige offered to them by both their affinal and natal villages. Because they have kin relations in both villages, they are the persons most concerned and most affected whenever conflict arises between their communities. Their neutrality and personal interest in seeking ways to reestablish peaceful relations are enforced, once a pact has been threatened or ruptured.

The role of the go-betweens in diplomacy is created, maintained and generally respected by the villages belonging to the Bontok culture area. This allows for some form of communication and control of critical situation concerning inter-village relations during times of conflict.

The go-between holds temporary power that is checked by his dual loyalties: such situation enforces his neutrality. The general absence of any material reward cannot allow for any build up of power. A further check to the accumulation of power, the go-between is terminated when peace is restored. In the ator decisionmaking, it is the *intugtukan* that is given this political function. Table 1 summarizes the leadership structure in Bontok Igorot culture area.

Peace Pact Holders

The persons given priority consideration in the bilateral peace pacts are: i) the relatives of the victim in the last hostilities; ii) ator of the victim (*ator nan nateyan*); and iii) ator of the killer and the killer himself, if he accepts, becomes the titular pact holder. Once the *warang* (head axe or spear) is

Table 1. Bontok Igorot Leadership Structure

<i>Title of Leader</i>	<i>Roles or Functions</i>	<i>Sources/ Basis of Authority</i>
Amam-a or Am-a-ma (oldest man)	Decisionmaker with regard to: i) the internal affairs of the ator and its membership in socio-economic and religious sphere; ii) relationship between and among ators in the same village; and iii) external relationship between ators of two villages and other villages as guardian ator.	One's lineage regardless of economic status, demonstrated awareness of custom law, application of justice and general welfare
Intugtukan at ator	A council of elders which acts as a decisionmaker and adviser on the economic, social, political and religious affairs of community. Inherent in the position, the council has judicial, legislative and executive responsibilities cutting across aspects of the life of the Bontok	One's lineage regardless of economic status, demonstrated awareness on justice and general welfare
Intugtukan at supra-ator	Governing council of elders which performs judicial, legislative and executive functions covering internal and external relations that affect the security and operations of the entire village. In case of warfare, it makes peace or challenges to war, and accepts or rejects war challenges.	One's lineage regardless of economic status, demonstrated awareness on justice and general welfare
Katchangian (rich man)	Final decisionmaker in conflicting opinions between ators, villagers and intugtukan	Oldest, wisest and richest man in the community
Peace Pact Holder	Supports, preserves and defends the pact's provisions (collects fines, imposes fines, prepares the members of the ator for pact renewal, negotiates with the co-peace pact village as necessary)	Elders among the male relatives of the victim (seniority), not necessarily rich nor has a large kin
Pinakarsu (go-between)	Peacemaker by settling peace pact who amicably mediates, enforces pact agreement, and collects fines. His/her role ends when the peace pact is negotiated.	Children of both villages, experienced in conflict resolution and neutrality
Pumapatay (village priest)	Village priest who officiates over the different rituals in the ili	

accepted by the village being sued, the pact holder is chosen. The qualification for being a pact holder is: i) seniority, the eldest among male relatives of the victim (grandfather, father, uncle or brother); and ii) not necessarily rich nor part of large kin group.

Bontok Governance

The legislative body of the village is composed of the intugtukan, as sanctioned by the villagers. At the ator, the intugtukan consists of the amama/am-a-ma who sit as a council of elders. At the supra-ator organization, the intugtukan is composed of the different ators sitting as a governing council, and not representing their respective ators, but working for the interest of the whole village (Prill-Brett 1987: 24). Both at the ator and supra-ator organizations, policymaking is arrived at by consensus and is usually based on past experiences and precedents in accordance with their custom law. Selective adaptation to changes and new situations was done by the intugtukan when there were no precedents (Jenks 1905: 168).

Administration of Justice

Scope and Coverage of Conflict. For more than a century, Bontok villages have been engaged in varied forms of intravillage disputes and inter-village armed conflicts ranging from ambush to formalized encounters between two armed forces on designated battlegrounds (Prill-Brett 1975). Internal and external conflicts have existed in Bontok and resolutions have been undertaken to protect their self-maintaining villages. Every village assumes responsibility for the vigilance over its own economic and political affairs.

Generally, conflicts are due to disputes in economic interest, boundary, simple interpersonal abrasiveness, intentional or accidental injury or killing, theft, lying to shield oneself in some criminal acts, assault and battery, adultery and other destructive behaviors (Jenks 1905: 168; Prill-Brett 1987). The internal village conflicts are the inter-ato disputes involving members of one ato with another such as theft, murder and interpersonal misbehavior. The marriage and family disputes involve adultery, battery, and inheritance. The external village conflicts involve one member of a village with a member of another village. These conflicts include boundary disputes, stealing of pinewoods, rice, and village properties, and intentional or accidental killing and injury.

Jenks (1905: 138) stated that almost no thief in the Bontok area escapes detection, since the tribe is too simple for him to escape and when apprehended he restores more than what he took away; hence, there is no opportunity for a thief class to develop since there is no chance for theft to distort the usual equitable division of products. Conquest or the act of gaining control and acquisition of another's property by force of arms is not operative in the Bontok Igorot.

Key Players or Institutional Mechanisms in Resolving Conflicts

Intugtukan. The institutional mechanisms for resolving internal and external conflicts revolve around the ato/ ator/ supra-ator system through the intugtukan. However, for intervillage conflict, the peace pact institution (pechen) with the ator, as guardian of the peace pact and go-between plays pivotal role in resolving armed conflicts.

The intugtukan, acting as a group of wise, experienced men of age is the final decisionmaker in the ator and supra-ator organization, since they are considered to have the most experience in life's activities and are in the best position to make the "right" decisions for the welfare of the villagers. It has the power to hear, review and judge disagreements and controversies among members of the ator and inter-ator. It can declare, accept or reject war challenges and if their tribe is at war, can sue for peace, as it deems right with the enemies. The intugtukan makes and enforces decisions such as fines and punishment of offenders within the ator, inter-ators and inter-villages (Prill-Brett 1982; Cawed 1972).

Each of the ator with the intugtukan acts in its own right within its respective jurisdictions in relation to disputes, purification rituals, welfare rituals, economic activities and politics. In cases of controversies on common beliefs and customs such as external conflict, village agricultural and welfare rituals, public works construction involving different ators, the supra-ator organization (general council) handles the administration of justice (Prill-Brett 1982).

As observed by Jenks (1905), there is no communication that is kept secret by any one member of the ili, as it becomes public knowledge that affects majority of the families. The problem or proposal is brought for discussion and reaction. Anyone from the community may question and comment on the subject regardless of social standing. The intugtukan of the supra-ator organization listens to all sides. Except in cases which have to do with external conflict and ator rituals, the women are free to voice out their opinions and suggestions since they are on equal footing with men in decisionmaking. The consensus arrived at through the deliberative process by the villagers is considered by the supra-ator, who will further discuss the matter. The result of the meeting is presented to the villagers and is accepted and respected by ator members.

Pechen or Petsen or Peden (Peace pact institution). As a consequence of strong community ties, a wrong done to a member of a village within and outside is a threat to its security and autonomy. Bontok villagers refer to a wrong done by someone from the other village as "*nilayusan cha chatako*" (they have taken advantage of us or degraded us) or "*finotlukan cha sitako*" (they have emasculated us). When a villager is injured or killed by outsiders,

the villagers say "*pinatey cha chatako*" (they have killed us). Likewise, when a villager has killed or injured someone from another village, the expression used is "*pinatey tako sicha*" (we have killed them) (Prill-Brett 1987: 15).

Such conflicts had triggered retaliatory violence in the past, in an effort to balance the harm done and to assert the strength and defensive capacity of the village. Since any act of harm to the village is taken to be a slur on its power, the entire village must answer on an "eye for an eye" basis (Prill-Brett 1987). A man who is not quick to retaliate and a village which does not avenge an offense committed against its members have allowed themselves to be degraded and taken advantage of and will lose the respect of other villages.

This situation interrupts the normal course of necessary socioeconomic processes in the community such as trade between villages, necessary journeys through enemy territory and interaction between intermarried members of the conflicting villages or members of atos. The answer to the problems resulting from these external conflicts is the peace pact (*pechen*) between warring villages. *Pechen* helped the Bontoks to end hostilities among warring villages and to ensure safe travel and reestablishment of friendly relations. For inter-ato disputes, the council of elders (*intugtukan*) at the supra-ato organization handles, hears, reviews and judges the individual disagreements of the members of the ato and makes laws by determining custom. It executes its judgments or sees that they are executed.

The origin of Bontok peace pact institution and settling of inter-ato and village level disputes is based on the *paranga/palanga* ritual myth. This myth of *Kabunyan of Lumawig* (the Supreme Being or Bontok culture hero) has solved the problems that confronted the villages. The ritual performance was believed to have cured their illnesses, prevented death, insured fertility of crops, animals, and human beings, and established peace between warring villages.

The *pechen* works within the concept of village territoriality, the ator system and the role of the go-between. There are provisions in the Bontok bilateral peace pacts requiring pact guardians to uphold certain duties and responsibilities towards the pact holding villages in boundary related affairs.

Objectives of Peace Pact. *Pechen/Peden* literally means "to grip tightly," is a ritualized oral contract between two villages with the purpose of establishing peaceful relations. Such contract is held in safekeeping by a particular ator of each village. Prill-Brett (1987) noted that among the Bontok villages, there are three reasons for forging a peace pact: i) a curative measure to ease tensions and normalize relations between enemy villages; ii) a preventive measure to lift the restrictions on the intercourse between the two villages involved in conflict, including *panyew* (taboos) imposed against eating, drinking, smoking tobacco from enemy villages for fear of

supernaturally caused deaths; and iii) a means to secure the safety of citizens from co-peace pact villages.

Types of Peace Pacts. There are two types of peace pacts among the Bontoks: i) the *enator* (ator pact) is practiced in all the villages and ii) *inafung* (house-type) practiced in a few villages. There are also two types of inafung: i) *inaliwid* (friendship pact) and ii) peace pact holders who are individuals in their house rather than an ator and supported by kinsmen. The friendship pact is made between two individuals from different villages for the purpose of trade or as a result of special social relations due to some past gratitude or friendship originally initiated between their ancestors. The pact is held by the persons who initiated the formal friendship but its benefits are extended to his kinsmen. The other inafung house type pact is held by pact holders who belong to a large kin group to enable enforcement of pact provisions, and by a wealthy man, capable of shouldering the financial requirements in feeding visitors, inviting co-pact holders and his kin group to feast and reciprocating gifts.

The ator type pact is forged as a result of armed conflict or as a preventive measure against armed conflict. Persons directly involved in the last hostilities between the villages in armed conflict, or their male kinsmen are the titular *kapeden* (pact-holders). The elders of the victim's ator make the decisions in matters relating to the forging, renewing, mending and breaking of the pact. By virtue of the victim's membership in that particular ator, the ator is automatically vested with the authority to hold the pact in its guardianship.

Peace Pact Process. Prill-Brett (1987) enumerated the major milestones of the peace pact such as: i) sue for peace; ii) pact renewal; iii) mending of pact; and iv) breaking of pact.

The suing for peace between two villages begins with the sending of the *warang* (head axe or spear) through the go-between to the village being sued and presentation to the priority ator (where the victim is a member). Once the *warang* is accepted by the village being sued, the peace pact holder is chosen. If the *warang* is not accepted, this is returned to the village suing for peace. The persons given priority consideration in the bilateral peace pacts to become the titular pact-holder are: i) the relatives of the victim in the last hostilities; ii) ator of the victim (ator nan nateyan); and iii) ator of the killer and the killer himself, if he accepts, becomes the titular pact-holder.

The conditions for peace pact (*tut-oyan nan pechen*) that should be incorporated in the peace pact provisions are: i) the territorial boundaries (fedcheng); ii) the establishment of respect for neutrality; iii) respect for village asylum; iv) penalties covering assault, theft, disturbance of peace,

injury, discourtesy and other wrongdoings; v) peace pact renewals implied during preliminary negotiation; vi) presentation of the *sudsud* for formal declaration of the breaking of a pact; and vii) establishment of penalties for offenses.

Peace pact renewal is conducted after the pact is consummated, to reinforce and ensure continuous peace between the co-peace pact villages. The ceremony is done at least every one or two years for adjoining villages. The purposes of the peace pact renewal are: i) to revitalize and reintroduce the existence of the pact to persons who are not yet acquainted with it; ii) to add or delete provisions of the pact, or renegotiate some terms of the pact; and iii) to reinforce social solidarity and strengthen the harmonious relations between the co-peace pact village members.

The mending (*eret*) of a pact is performed after a wounding, theft or insult is committed by any of the co-peace pact members. The guardian pact holders of the offender's village initiate the mending. The case is brought to the *ator* of the offender or at the *supra-ator* gathering of the village elders. Oral provisions are reviewed and judgment is made. Mending is also done after a peace pact has been allowed to lapse for a long time.

The breaking of the pact (*nafakas nan pechen*) happens due to a killing (accidental or deliberate) of a citizen of a co-peace pact village.

Institutions Involved in the Peace Pact. *Ators*, as the guardian of their members, are also the guardians of peace pacts that are forged, renewed, mended or broken. Though the pacts are held by individuals, the *ator* elevates the status of a pact to that of a group endeavor and responsibility. The agreement is given weight by the force of the institution's support and the sanction of its member's vigilance over the terms of the pact. Thus, the responsibility of keeping peaceful relations between the parties to a pact becomes the responsibility of the *ator* as a corporate group. Peace pact guardians of an *ator* are directly obliged to support, preserve, and defend the pact's provisions (collect fines and impose fines, prepare for the *ator* feasts for pact renewal, negotiate with co-peace pact village as necessary and handle any politics involving co-peace pact village. Every member is required to contribute for every celebration pertaining to the peace pact.

Once the peace pact is received through the acceptance of a *warang*, a pact holder should be chosen from among the male relatives of the victim based on seniority and not necessarily on wealth and size of his kin group. An important consideration is that an elder of the guardian *ator* becomes the spokesman for the guardian *ator*.

When conflict between two villages bound by a pact becomes serious, the guardian *ator* is responsible for the ritual breaking of the pact. Pact breaking

usually involves the whole village as the case is made known to all the villagers and support is unanimously consolidated. The process of the control and regulation proceeds from the individual level, with kin support, to the ator level, with komatoren support and ultimately to the village supra-ator organization (represented by the council of elders) and *sinpangili* (citizen's support) (Prill-Brett 1986).

The *pinakarsu* (go-between) performs important functions involving two villages in conflict. The go-between performs diplomatic functions: i) acts as the village police for the ator pact-guardian by helping pact holders to enforce the peace provisions, and mediate when conflict is about to erupt in a public gathering; ii) sent by elders to collect fines for offenses (e.g., theft, insult) from the natal village to the offended ator; iii) helps settle cases amicably between two villages by shuttling back and forth in consultation with the ators of the offended and offender, until satisfactory settlement is attained; iv) sent to the enemy village to present the sudsud (a head axe or spear).

Conflict Resolution Process

Misbehavior, marriage and family cases affecting ato members, are the concern of the member's ator and are generally referred to the elders of the kinship group concerned. In some cases where kinship groups cannot settle their disputes (such as inheritance problems due to non-adherence to custom law) the kin group decides to take the case to the council of elders (intugtukan) (Prill-Brett 1987: 23).

In the inter-ator crimes, marriage and family disputes, the intugtukan (governing council of elders) determines through several customary tests who is guilty of the crime. One of these is the rice-chewing test. The concerned ato is assembled where each suspect is made to chew a mouthful of raw rice and asked to spit out the masticated rice into a dish. The person whose rice is the driest is considered guilty. It is believed that the guilty one will be most nervous during the trial. Another is the hot-water test. An egg is placed in a pan of boiling water and each suspect is obliged to pick it out with his hand. The person who draws out the egg with the water leaping up and burning the forearm is said to be guilty of the crime. The third test is the blood test whereby a sharp spike of iron is placed against the scalp. The person who bleeds is considered the guilty person (Jenks 1905:169).

In the central meeting, the supra-ator sits to listen and pronounce judgment on the case. It also makes judgments or sees to it that decisions are executed. Table 2 presents a summary of the nature and processes in the administration of the Bontok Igorot justice system (Prill-Brett 1982).

Table 2. Bontok Justice System

<i>Conflicts</i>	<i>Institution or Organization Concerned</i>	<i>Adjudicator and Executor of Judgment</i>	<i>Rules on Behavior and Patterns of Action</i>
External conflict (inter-village)	Supra-ator organization	Intugtukan (Governing council of elders)	Traditional management based on custom law procedure
Internal conflict	Ator of the parties concerned or supra-ator organization	Intugtukan (council of elders) of concerned ator or supra-ator	Traditional management based on custom law procedure
Village	Supra-ator organization	Intugtukan (governing council of elders) especially with the hereditary village priest	Traditional management based on custom law procedure

Sanctions Imposed. The sanctions imposed were based on the nature of the cases in accordance with custom law. Jenks (1905) enumerated the following: If a person steals rice grains and pine wood from the forest lands of another, he forfeits all the woods he cuts and his working ax. Hence, the offended party takes the customary retributive action against the offender.

In cases of assault and battery due to lovers' jealousies, theft of irrigation water during period of drought and dissatisfaction between the heirs of a property or shortly following the time of inheritance, it is customary for the elders of the interested ato to consider except common offenses unless the parties settle their differences without appeal. A fine of chicken, pigs, or carabao is the usual penalty for assault and battery.

For adultery, death of the offenders is always administered by the council of elders being prompted by shock and turbulent emotions.

For murder considered as a crime, its punishment may be one of two types: (i) the murderer may lose his life at the hand of his own group; or (ii) the crime may be compounded as the equivalent of the guilty man's property. The settlement is between the guilty person and the ator of the victim. The value of the compound is consumed by feasting of the group. No part of the price is paid to the family of the deceased as a compensation for the loss of his labor and other assistance. Murder considered as warfare by the ator of the murdered person is to be met by return warfare, unless the ator of the murderer is a friendly one and at once comes to the offended people to sue for continued peace.

Delivery of Basic Services

The delivery of services is the primary responsibility of the ator encompassing the economic, social, and religious spheres. Religion permeates all facets of life of the Bontok. Religious beliefs and rituals direct the conduct of all activities at the ili. Their knowledge of irrigation, fighting, and destroying the enemies and other skills is all attributed to Lumawig. All events in the Bontok's life from birth to death have specified rituals that must be performed (Botengan 1976: 24).

Botengan (1976: 125-209) identified the services delivered by each ator to its members. In relation to educational services, the socialization of the young Bontok includes the inculcation of his various rights and obligations not only as a member of the kin group but also as member of his community and the ator. It starts after birth when the baby is treated with extra care through the imposition of taboos on the family and the performance of rituals to assure the safety of each child until he grows up and becomes a full member of his community. As an institution of socialization, the ator is considered the "other half" providing complex process of learning skills necessary to make a living and to carry on the social activities of the community among the young boys. For the female child, the mother takes pain in teaching all the facts on rice planting, their care, weaving, religious beliefs and practices. Men have more authority in matters of beliefs and practices than women.

Among the Bontok, all diseases, sickness or ailments are caused by an anitu. Traditional health services are provided through rituals and the use of herbal medicines. Abortion is practiced among the Bontok, especially for an undesired child usually without the use of drugs. Only women with their mothers and female friends are present during the abortion process (Jenks 1905: 60).

The building of communal irrigation systems, village public works and externally introduced projects is undertaken and accompanied by religious ceremonies. The men and women together construct and repair an irrigation system. The men usually dig the earthen soil and the women transport it. Table 3 presents the various community services initiated by the Bontok.

External Relations

The external relations and networking among the Bontok are observed through intermarriages and peace pacts. The peace pact is a kinship relationship on a community-wide basis established through the ator. This is initiated to establish harmonious relationship between members of two communities. Peace pact holders are expected to host anybody from other communities.

Table 3. The Bontok Igorot Service Delivery System

<i>Community Services</i>	<i>Institutions or Organizations Involved</i>	<i>Decisionmakers</i>	<i>Rules of Behavioral Patterns of Action</i>
Communal irrigation work	Traditional communal irrigation members	Ator leaders	Traditional management based on custom law procedure
Village public works	Supra-ator organization	Ator leaders	Traditional management based on custom law procedure
Agricultural cycle activities	Individual ricefield owners	Ricefield owners	Traditional management with a few innovations
Externally introduced projects/programs	Formally organized associations required by the particular project	Formal structure required by the particular agency	Non-traditional rules and procedures introduced by the particular agency/program

Security and Defense

The judicial, legislative, and executive functions of the ator and supra-ator institutions play a pivotal role in the exercise of security and defense of the Bontok Igorot tribe. A clear distinction is made between the area of village rule and the "outside." Traditionally, people decide the village boundary by features of the natural topography such as valleys, rivers and mountain ridges, and building holy houses (*fawi*) on the roadsides near the boundary (Goda 2001: 22).

The villages maintain harmonious relations by the exchange of marriage, and inviting each other to ritual ceremonies. Beyond these villages, there are hostile villages or *kabosor nan ili*. They can establish peace pacts (*peden*) with them to maintain peaceful relations, though they could be broken anytime.

Peden implies peace pact and agreement on i) the boundaries of governed land and safe areas; ii) fines that must be paid in case of crimes (theft or trespassing between villages, not maintaining neutrality in case one of the villages gets into a conflict with a third village); iii) penalty in case of incidents of injury or murder where oaths of peace are broken (Goda 1999).

Fiscal Administration

The fiscal administration is also part of the responsibility of the ator. Its members contribute for expenses of the ator for physical infrastructures such as construction of irrigation systems, public buildings, entertainments and

rituals. Usually the contributions are in terms of labor, rice grains, and domesticated animals. Collections are done as needed.

Concept of Property

Bontok people consider the surrounding forestland as communal properties. Traditionally, there are three levels of communal landholdings among the Bontok. The omni lineal group has its own forestland as a communal property. The ato as ceremonial group with communal properties such as men's meeting place with men's house and village or ili possesses some part of the forestland. Because of the communal nature of traditional land possession, the forestland cannot be registered under the name of a single individual. Moreover, the hillside rice fields could not even be registered as agricultural land (Goda 2001: 16).

Land Use. The customary laws of Bontok in their use of land show a sharp distinction between forestland, rice terraces, and land within dwelling areas. Land unsuited for agriculture is divided into the following categories: i) *wangwang* (land that is all rock); ii) *chawang* (riverbanks and land full of stones); iii) *challog* (depressions in hillsides that turn into rivers during the rainy season); iv) *chepras* (a down slope); (v) *ticheng* (very steeply sloping hillsides, almost cliff-like slope); (vi) *chomachanak* (swamp land); and (vii) *hareyakay* (land damaged by erosion) (Cawed 1972).

Land in these categories, located near both irrigated fields and forestlands, is left unused. Land used in daily life is divided into the following categories: i) *filig* (forestland); ii) *sa-ad* (land for dwellings); iii) *pawey* (irrigated fields through irrigation built of stones fitted together on hillsides).

Individual ownership of land within dwelling area is recognized but people related by blood to the owner can use this land free of charge. People with higher status in villages live on the higher or upper part of the village housing space. Lower status people are not able to live in these areas. When houses must be relocated because of fires or typhoon, latent property rights remain (Botengan 1976; Cawed 1972).

Communal Land Possession. The forest within the territory is divided into sections with its own name with swamps and ridges forming borders between them. The whole village or each ato owns a small portion of the village forestland communally. However, all descendants of the omnilineal group own most forestlands communally. *Sinpangapo* means all descendants of a specific founder (*gabo*, *narpo-an*, *po-on*) and *tayan* means their communal property (referring to communal forestlands held by the kin group over three generations; less than the forestland is called *sani*).

The necessities of life valued by the elders had to do with rules and standards concerning the forestlands such as: i) not to set fire to the forest; ii) no one can and has the right to use land for slash and burn; and iii) not to cut down trees in lands one did not have rights to. The Bontok places much importance on their forestlands and respect the rights individuals have over parts of it.

Land Possession and Omnilinear Groups. Goda (2001) in his book *Diversity in Culture Change* stated that the most important element in the regulation of communities is the way in which the means of production are handled. Primitive agricultural communities are organized into units of community-owned land determined by principles of kinship. Any type of association that serves to protect the lives of the members is considered a community.

There are three types of communal land possession: (1) land owned by the kin group; (2) land used for men's houses; and (3) land owned communally by the entire village.

The cutting of trees, taking care for water buffaloes and setting fire to fields in the slash and burn procedure are all men's work. However, women also do play a productive role in the gathering of camote leaves, which the Bontok use as pig feed. Thus, both men and women have responsibilities for the forestlands, although the former shoulder greater amount of work. In opening up new woodlands, most of the labor is done by men with women helping out a little. Table 4 highlights the Bontok Igorot governance and its indicators.

Bontok Governance Value Systems and Practices

Leadership

The Bontok Igorot leadership is exercised in the sociopolitical institutions such as the ator or ato and supra-ator organization. Leading these sociopolitical institutions are the amam-a or am-a-ma that comprise the intugtukan (council of elders) at the ator and as governing council of elders at the supra-ator organization. Cariño (1996: 71) stated that this council of elders who had distinguished themselves, over the years, for their wisdom, impartiality, and articulateness in the interpretation and application of custom laws are the bases of their authority and power in the sociopolitical institutions and ili. Basically, the amam-a or am-a-ma are the decisionmakers in relation to internal and external relations of the villagers.

In addition to amam-a or am-a-ma and intugtukan, the services of the pinakarsu (go-between) and katchangian (rich man) are sought in the

Table 4. Bontok Igorot Governance Areas Indicators

<i>Governance Areas</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
Legislation and Policymaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bases of policymaking are custom law and practices. • Selective adaptation to changes or legislated laws and policies is done if there is no precedent. • Coverage of policymaking is on economic, social, political, and religious aspects of Bontok way of life. • Legislators are the amam-a (elders), intugtukan (council of elders) at ator and supra-ator levels, and villagers themselves. • Policymaking is done through consensus by intugtukan and the villagers. • For the peace pact (pechen), a bilateral arrangement is developed by the two warring villages through the pact holder and guardian pact holder ators. • Pact provisions cover: i) territorial boundaries (fedcheng); ii) respect for neutrality; iii) respect for village asylum; iv) penalties for assault, theft, disturbance of peace, injury, and discourtesy; and v) pact renewal, peacemending, and peace renewal.
Administration of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole kinship is responsible for an act (contractual or tortfeasal), of any one of its members. • Procedures for administering justice: i) fact-finding (oral), pangats and citizens listen and interrogate; ii) palin (oath); iii) sapata (conducted when no evidence exists and guilt of accused not established); iv) buyon (ascertain culprit); and v) du-u (ordeal). • Intertribal administration of justice is through the peace pact (Bodong), a bilateral arrangement between two contracting tribes through their peace pact holders (mangdon si bodong). • Bodong supersedes all legal and judicial systems of the state. • Formalized by a pagta (agreement that embodies the custom laws covering all aspects of human relations). • Bodong is not documented; pagta is non-codified (unwritten and orally agreed upon). • Bases are custom laws and legislated laws • Covered are internal village conflicts such as inter-ator disputes involving theft, murder and interpersonal misbehavior; marriage and family disputes covering inheritance issues.

Table 4 (continued)

<i>Governance Areas</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered as internal conflicts but resolved at the supra-ator are marriage and family disputes such as adultery, battery and inheritance. • External disputes are intervillage involving boundary disputes, stealing of pinewoods, rice and village properties and intentional or accidental killing and injury. • Administrators of justice are the <i>amam-a</i> of the kin, <i>intugtukan</i> of ator and supra-ator. • For the peace pact (<i>pechen</i>), <i>go-between</i> enforces the pact provisions covering territorial boundaries (<i>fedcheng</i>); respect for neutrality; respect for village asylum; penalties for assault, theft, disturbance of peace, injury, and discourtesy; pact renewal, peacemending and peace break up.
Delivery of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are delivered through the ator as the "other half" to its kin and members. It includes inculcation among male Bontoks of various rights and obligations from birth, and developing skills to make a living and carrying social activities in the community. • Among female Bontoks, the mother inculcates all facts on rice planting, weaving, religious belief, and practices. • Since all diseases, illnesses are believed to be caused by an <i>anitu</i>, traditional health services are provided through rituals and use of herbal medicines. • Abortion is practiced especially of undesired child usually without the use of drugs. Only women with their mothers and female friends are present during the abortion process. • Building of communal irrigation facilities, village public works and externally introduced projects is done by community members accompanied by religious ceremonies. • Men and women together construct and repair irrigation systems. The men dig the earthen soil and women transport it.
Security and Defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men are responsible for maintaining peace and order. • With hostile villages (<i>kabosor nan ili</i>), <i>pechen</i> or <i>peden</i> (peace pacts) are established to maintain peaceful relationship.

<i>Governance Areas</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
External Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External relations are observed through intermarriages, invitation to ritual ceremonies and peace pact. • Two types of peace pacts are observed. The enator (ator pact) is forged as a result of armed conflict. • The inafung (house-type pact) consisting of two types are: friendship pact (inaliwid) between two individuals from different villages for purpose of trade or as a result of special social relations due to past gratitude or friendship originally initiated between their ascendants. This pact is extended to its kinship. • The other house type pact is between individual peace pact holders in one's house supported by kinsmen. Usually those with large kinship and wealth enforce the pact and are chosen as pact holders.
Fiscal Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No defined system of taxation. • As necessary, the ator accepts the member's contribution for use in construction of irrigation system, public buildings, entertainment and ritual expenses. • Contributions are in terms of labor, rice grains and domesticated animals
Concept of Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrounding forestlands are communal properties classified as: i) omni lineal group with its own forestland; ii) the ator possesses some part of the forestland; and iii) forestland owned by the entire village. • Forestland cannot be registered under the name of a single individual. • Hillside rice fields could likewise not be registered as agricultural lands. • Individual land ownership of land within dwelling area is recognized but people related by blood to the owner can use the land free of charge.
Concept of Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right over ancestral domain claims. • Right of an aggrieved party to exact justice, with appropriate sanctions commensurate to the gravity of the offense committed

resolution of conflicts among the members of the village or between villages. Moreover, the pumapatay (village priest) is called for the conduct of religious rituals in the village. The source of power and authority of the katchangian are his economic status in the village, being a rich man; and for the pumapatay is his capability to officiate over the various rituals in accordance with their customary laws. On the other hand, the pinakarsu's source of power and authority is his/her birth and marriage affinity in relation to the warring villages, impartiality in mediating conflicts and knowledge of custom laws as applied in the petchen (peace pact).

Cariño (1996), Jenks (1905), Cawed (1972) emphasized that indigenous leaders are not autocratic leaders. They earn their status by virtue of their knowledge, wisdom, sense of fairness and wealth of experience shown by them throughout their lives. Their decisions are acceptable to the villagers precisely because of the respect and recognition accorded them. Most importantly, the leaders' decisions are backed by the body of customary laws and oral tradition that have sustained the village solidarity through the years.

While the leaders are tasked to make decisions as in the case of the amam-a or am-a-ma and intugtukan on behalf of the ator and ili, decisionmaking is basically democratic in character. Before the amam-a or am-a-ma and intugtukan arrive at their final decisions, they first go through a process of consultation with the members of the community. They also refer back to the ili's body of customary laws for guidance. Finally, decisions are generally reached through consensus building, until the amam-a or am-a-ma and intugtukan arrive at a unified position on the issues, conflicts, and disputes submitted to them for resolution.

Transparency and Accountability

Transparency in decisionmaking was practiced in the ator and supra-ator organizations consistent with the democratic character of settling disputes and cases within the ator, ili and inter-villages. Consequently, information is freely and directly accessible to those who will be affected by the decisions and their enforcement.

Accountability of the indigenous leaders and sociopolitical institutions is well established as manifested in ator and supra-ator organizations, and the peace pact. The safeguards and security provided to villagers within and outside the village clearly show the sense of accountability of the leaders. As mentioned earlier, Bontok villagers refer to wrong done by someone from other village as nilayusan cha chatako or "degraded us" or finotlukan cha sitako. When a villager is injured or killed by outsiders, the villagers say pinatey cha chatako. Likewise, when a villager has killed or injured someone

from another village, the expression used is *pinatey tako sicha* (Prill-Brett 1987: 15). These expressions are the impetus for actions taken by the leader to show their accountability to the villagers.

Gender Sensitivity

The Bontok Igorot tribe governance system is basically male-dominated. The sociopolitical institutions such as the *ator* and supra-*ator* organizations consist only of male households. Thus, at the *ator*, leadership is in the hands of men. The female members of the community are not involved in the *ator*'s decisionmaking. However at the village court, the women are free to voice out their opinions and suggestions since they are considered on equal footing with men in decisionmaking.

Predominantly, the sphere where women are given opportunity to exercise their leadership role in the community is when they are recruited as *go-betweens* for the peace pact. However, to be chosen for the post; women must have experienced being sent out on a mission in the past cases; be a member of a large kin in her natal village; and neutral at all times in dealings with both villages.

In the reproductive and productive arena, the role of women and men is clearly spelled out. The household chores are relegated to the women. The men are the hunters, warriors, and go to the mountain to cut and bring home firewood and lumber for building purposes. In relation to rice cultivation, women are engaged in the seed planting and transplanting. Their male counterparts are expected to work on the other remaining rice cultivation activities.

Joint activities shared by men and women are in relation to the repair and maintenance of the irrigation system.

People's Participation and Community Support System

The traditional Bontok village is a compact and independent community. The village is economically self-sufficient and all members of the community are involved in cooperative efforts. Specifically, as a member of the *ator*, one's family can take part in the various socioeconomic, political, and religious activities of the *ator*. One is assured of the care and protection extended by the *amam-a* and the *ator* during periods of need. Prill-Brett (1986: 21) stated that all the members have responsibilities and obligations in the *ator* to: i) contribute for all the expenses and services for *ator* ceremonies; ii) avenge any member who has been wounded or slain by anyone outside the village and

help look for the body of any member of the village who has drowned or is lost; and iii) look after the economic, religious, and political welfare of komatoren (atormates) which includes agricultural labor and collective ceremonial activities.

Moreover, Prill-Brett (1986: 15) noted that when the welfare of the village or ator is at stake, village solidarity is of paramount concern. All the ators consolidate to solve a common problem. Activities necessary for the welfare of the entire village or situations which threaten the safety and well-being of the village, elicit the concerted and cooperative efforts of all ators as in times of village crises such as epidemics, agricultural crises (e.g., worm infestation, drought, destruction of crops by typhoons). The display of cooperation among the villagers and komatoren includes: i) producing enough rice, the staple crop on the limited area of available land; ii) clearing access paths from the village to work areas; iii) building of foot bridges; iv) clearing or constructing irrigation ditches; and v) contributing to major village feasts and rituals. Each household usually sends a representative to contribute his labor for the village whenever it is needed. All the able-bodied men of the different ators help search for any missing villager until his/her body is found.

In terms of external relations such as warfare and settlement of intervillage conflicts, the ator as guardians of their members are also the guardians of peace pacts that are forged, renewed, amended or broken. Although individuals hold the peace pacts, the ator elevates the status of a pact to that of a group endeavor and responsibility. In view of this, the responsibility of keeping peaceful relations between the parties to a pact becomes the responsibility of the ator as a corporate group.

Participation of the Bontok Igorot is also manifested in their involvement in the decisionmaking process especially in the *amongan nan umili* (village court) where cases affecting the village welfare are heard by the governing intugtukan. The village court is open to public and villagers are free to verbalize and criticize the regulations set by the intugtukan. These regulations will not be observed insofar as more people are opposed to them. As earlier stated, democratic decisionmaking is practiced through consultation with villagers, before final decisions are made. Table 5 summarizes the core values of Bontok Igorot governance.

Problems and Issues of the Bontok Governance System

One major issue that confronts the Bontok Igorots is how to safeguard and preserve their traditional governance system in the light of its changing environment. For more than a century, the Bontok Igorots have practiced the values of democracy and principles of good citizenship through the ator and

Table 5. Bontok Igorot Governance Core Values and Indicators

<i>Core Values</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ator as the center of governance, which is not based on kinship but residence of its members • Chieftain is non-existent; there is no organization of groups that have administrative control of the ili. • The control of the ili is in the hands of the intugtukan from the ator and supra-ator organizations • Source of authority and power is the recognition of the ator members of their being the oldest male, wisdom, impartiality and articulateness in the interpretation and application of the customary laws for amam-a and council of elders. For katchangian based on economic status; for go-between for having a large kin both in his/her affinal and natal village, impartiality of conduct of past mission. • Leadership is predominately male dominated except for go-between. • Sharing of leadership and consensual decisionmaking practiced in the ator and supra-ator organizations
Leadership Transparency and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency in decisionmaking practiced in ator and supra-ator organizations consistent with democratic character of settling disputes and cases within the ator and intervillage. • Information is freely and directly accessible to the ator members and those to be affected by the decisions • Accountability is well manifested in the ator and supra-ator organizations and peace pacts in accordance with customary laws
Gender Sensitivity and Women's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bontok governance is predominantly male dominated since ators consist of male members only. • Women's role is recognized both in the productive and reproductive spheres. • Women occupy key position as go-between based on their having large kin and impartiality in past mission. • Women are actively involved in village courts except for intervillage conflict deliberations
People's Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members actively participate in irrigation system construction, repair and maintenance works, public building, and public works, agricultural production, externally introduced projects. • Participation in decisionmaking is manifested at ator and supra-ator organizations for cases related to ator members, inter-ator and intervillages.

supra-ator organizations. Specifically, the amam-a, and intugtukan have operationalized the democratic values of consultation, participation in decisionmaking, consensus building, transparency, accountability, and

commitment to the common good. The ator and supra-ator organizations have shown the value of citizenship, wherein membership can be hereditary or voluntary, along with its rights, duties, and responsibilities. With the imposition of state-imposed political systems, conflicts are created due to non-observance and recognition by the state of the customary institutions and practices.

The conflicts observed are in the areas of processes, structures, and accompanying values, which the state has implemented. Firstly, token participation has been the modality in policymaking, program and project design and implementation versus the consensus building process adopted by the Bontok Igorots. The programs and projects were designed and implemented without thorough consultation with concerned local communities. These were handed down by the national and regional governments, which were not reflective of the needs of the local communities and have relegated them to being recipients or beneficiaries than as partners in development initiatives. As highlighted by many literatures on participatory development, the process adopted at present has not instilled the sense of ownership of the Bontok Igorots in ensuring the sustainability of the programs and projects.

Second, the structures of the political system such as making the Cordillera an "autonomous" region (CAR) and the devolution of power are in many ways a contradiction of the Bontok Igorot's traditional governance system. Autonomy granted by the national government is limiting. Financial resources are still centrally decided and managed, systems and procedures in terms of administratively managing the region and its local communities have not considered their custom laws and practices as reflected in the Indigenous People Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA). The National Commission for Indigenous People (NCIP) tasked to protect the rights of indigenous people like the Bontok Igorots has not been fully functional.

Moreover, with state imposed political systems, the ator and supra-ator sociopolitical institutions have been corrupted and prostituted. An example was to generate approval of NCIP Precondition and Free Informed Consent for Concessions on Ancestral Domains by private and public institutions several showcase projects (schoolbuildings, paved pathways and waiting sheds) were constructed in the local communities. This encouraged a culture of bribery among the communities, which was previously non-existent among the Bontok Igorot. As stressed in the work of Prill-Brett, the state-introduced property regime, "overlaps and competes with the local property regime's management" of the Bontoc of Mountain Province (1993: 1).

Third, the value of democracy and commitment to common good is also slowly being eroded by disunity among indigenous people, Bontok Igorots are not exempted since they are located in CAR and recognized as indigenous

people. Castro (2000) discussed the various oppositions raised by indigenous people on the IPRA such as expressed unconditional support to the law to outright repeal. Further, he stated that an important factor contributing to the disunity of IP organizations is the role of external agencies, political parties, and other support organizations with their own political agenda that tend to disregard the indigenous people's governance values. The transparency and accountability core values are seemingly ignored because of the unclear understanding of the existing IPRA among the local communities.

Another major issue for the Bontok Igorots is whether their indigenous values and practices can blend with the formal political systems introduced by the state, considering the present changing environment. (Based on a paper written by Prill-Brett [1982] proposing the Bontok model of village participatory decisionmaking). She described the village participation in decisionmaking as an essential aspect of indigenous Bontok social structure. Prill-Brett (1982) highlighted the advantages of the model: i) distortion of communication and monopoly of information is very unlikely since villagers would have equal access to information and decisionmaking; ii) villagers' self-reliance and self-governance generated through experiences should be tapped as a resource in upland development; iii) once consensus is achieved, decisions are binding, mobilization and cooperation are assured; and iv) village participation among the Bontok Igorots who developed this structure in their culture through economic, political, and ritual cooperation as an ecological adaptation, should be an important consideration by policymakers and program implementers. For Prill-Brett (1982), if these considerations are covered, then the possibility of blending indigenous values and practices with formal political systems may be workable. This may also cut across other aspects of local governance such as in the administration of justice, policymaking (ancestral domain claims) and delivery of services. Similarly, Rood and Casambre noted the "disjunction in the articulation of the government policy on indigenous culture," on resource ownership and management. They concluded that government must recognize the indigenous communities in the upland by reinforcing indigenous mechanisms rather than supplanting them (1994: 18-21).

Contributions of Bontok Governance to Public Administration

Drawing from the experiences of the traditional governance system that the Bontok Igorots have developed and practiced, there are some lessons and insights for public administration. First, the values of people's participation and community support, transparency and accountability remain to be core values for any development initiative and good governance. The adaptation and practice and its non-adaptation and non-application would spell the difference in the success or failure of the government and private institutions

in pursuing development directions in the country. These are core values, which need to be revived and practiced in all the spheres of life, not only of the indigenous people but also of the Filipinos as a nation.

Second, inherent in the practice of the governance core values are the appropriate political structures to warrant their operations in the different areas of governance that cut across the social, political, economic, and religious arena. As a basic principle in organizational development and in strategic management, the structure will follow the strategy. Thus, core values in governance can be implemented in a coherent manner if structures are fitted and in harmony with the social, economic, political, and religious life of the people.

Third, the indigenization in the country, specifically in the public administration system could move forward if the documentation and research of indigenous people go beyond anthropological perspective. There are difficulties in concretely understanding the indigenous people like the Bontok Igorots due to limitation in available materials which capture their experiences from the Bontok Igorots' lenses. As Prill-Brett (1993) and Cariño (1996) noted, the local governments are not likely to supplant indigenous institutions in the near future. Local executives still utilize the indigenous institutions such as *amam-a*, *ator* and *dap-ay* as avenue for consultation and support. At the different levels of government, there is a need for better appreciation and understanding of the indigenous people to facilitate the blending of indigenous culture and practices with the formal political institutions.

Endnotes

¹ The terms *ato* and *ator* are one and the same. However, the term *ato without final r* is used by some Bontok villages. *Ator with final r* is used by majority of the central, northern and eastern Bontok villages. Both terms *ato and ator* will be used interchangeably depending on the reference used

² For Dr. Jenks (1905), *pueblo* refers to the Spanish term for town/village.

³ The boundaries between villages are called *fetcheng* in Central and Northern Bontok, *feraat* in Eastern Bontok and *ba-etor bedding* in Southern and Western Bontok.

⁴ The term *ili* is also found in reference to the original settlement (where all the houses are clustered) and to Bontok ritual myths, and is used when talking to outsiders in reference to one's village when away from it.

⁵ Dr. Goda (1999: 119) defined the smaller groups as hamlet cluster, which is a geographical grouping of from ten to several hundred households and the village as a community with administrative functions. The hamlet, village, barangay or local community corresponds to the traditional terms, *ab-afongan*, and *ili*, but the scope of barangay and *ili* differs from each other. There are three different kinds of Bondoc administrative villages: the

Bondoc ili, the Bontoc poblacion and Kalutitt. In certain cases all three of these barangays have jurisdiction in ritual seclusion. Sometimes, the territory of an administrative unit or barangay is in accord with the local community, where several communities make up a single barangay.

⁶ The territory to which the village belongs is referred to as *gakay* for the Southern Bontok, *khakay* (Northern Bontok), or *lakon* (Western Bontok) which includes reference to the settlement, ricefields, brooks, and stream, communal forest, fishing grounds, and sites for the groves and shrines are located.

⁷ There are four structures that play an important role in the life of the Bontok: i) the *ato*—the public place where young boys sleep during the night; ii) the *olog*—public dormitory for girls of marriageable ages iii) the *afong*—dwelling place occupied by the families and widows; and iv) the *katufong*—small house near the *afong* where grandmother lives.

⁸ The *ato* represents three things: i) the place where the council of elders holds various ceremonies, meetings and gatherings, which may be religious, social or political in nature; ii) a public structure used as a dormitory by the bachelors, widowers, young boys and visitors of the village; and iii) a gathering place where all the men of the village spend rest day (*tengao*) to weave basket and hat, to smoke pipe and talk with other men or as a place to take care of the babies of their respective families while the mothers do household chores (Cawed 1972: 13).

⁹ The *ato* has two sections: i) the *fawi*—the bed or structure where the old men sleep; and ii) *faabafongan*—where the young men and boys sleep. These two parts of the *ato* may comprise one structure or may be separate structures built near each other.

¹⁰ In some Bontok villages, this is called a central meeting *ator* (in Tukukan it is a *Parew*, a neutral *ator* and in Sadangan it is *Angaran* or *Faliwayan*; Tetepan has *Atullup*).

¹¹ *Amam-a* refers to the old men in the *ato*. However, other literatures spell and pronounce it as *am-a-ma* maybe due to differentiation in dialects from the northern to the southern Bontoc areas. However, the two terms will be used interchangeably depending on the source.

¹² These persons are also referred to by the Bontoks as *dinawil*, *inaanak*, *pinakarsu* or *anak*.

¹³ *Natal* refers to the village where the go-between was born while *affinal* refers to the village where he/she comes from due to his/her marriage ties.

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Glossary

Achi Tako Ey Loslos Nakechend Tay Narpas – For the Bontok Igorot, it means “let us not violate this, enough, it is finished”; is said to stop an armed conflict between two warring groups.

Afinal – Bontok Igorot village where go-between comes from due to marriage ties.

Amam-a or Am-a-ma – for the Bontok Igorot, the oldest members of the *intugtukan* that govern each *ator*; Decisionmaker with regard to i) the internal affairs of the *ator* and its membership in socioeconomic and religious sphere, ii) relationship between and among *ators* in the same village; and iii) external relationship between *ators* of two villages and other villages as guardian *ator*.

Amongan Nan Umili – village court that is a gathering place of villagers where the *supra ator* handles cases.

Anitu – Bontok Igorot’s ancestral spirits appeased through *mangmang*.

Ato – political subdivision; subvillage level unit in the Bontok Igorot tribe. The terms *ato* and *ator* are one and the same; however, the term *ato without final r* is used by some Bontok villages. *Ator with final r* is used by majority of the central, northern and eastern Bontok villages.

Ator – men’s meeting place in the Bontok Igorot village.

Ban-tak – Bontok Igorot’s native word for mountain and the original name of the pueblo.

Bontok Igorot – ethnic group that belongs to the Indonesian and Malayan type.

Fawi – Bontok Igorot’s holy houses built on the roadsides near the boundary

Fedcheng – Bontok Igorot’s territorial and political boundaries mutually recognized and respected by villagers within and the adjacent villages.

Finotlukan Cha Sitako – “they have emasculated” term by Bontok villagers for wrong done to them by someone from other village.

Gabo – or *narpo-an, po-on*; founder (Bontok Igorot).

Guardian Ator – In the Bontok Igorot villages, takes over and assumes the full political control over the pact's consummation, after the go-between completes the preliminary negotiations in conflict settlement.

Ili – Bontok Igorot's village or pueblo; territorial administrative unit .

Intugtukan – Bontok Igorot's council of elders that controls the pueblos or governs each *ator* .

Intugtukon at Ator – As a council of elders, acts as decisionmaker and adviser on the economic, social, political and religious affairs of community. Inherent in the position, the council has judicial, legislative and executive responsibilities cutting across every aspect of the life of the Bontok.

Intugtukon at Supra Ator – As governing council of elders, performs judicial, legislative and executive functions covering internal and external relations that affect the security and operations of the entire village. In case of warfare, makes peace, challenges to war and accepts or rejects war challenges.

Kabosor Nan Ili – Bontok Igorot hostile villages.

Katsangyan or Katchangian – elite in the Bontok Igorot community with most inheritable properties by virtue of their ancestors; Final decisionmakers in conflicting opinions between *ators*, villagers and *intugtukon*.

Komatoren – Bontok Igorot's atormates.

Kwak Na – For the Bontok Igorot, it means: " this is mine," is said to prevent the severing of heads during an encounter.

Lawa – In the Bontok Igorot's society, those who are not related to the *katsangyan* and do not have enough of the inheritable properties to provide adequate livelihood.

Lumawig – cultural hero of the Bontok Igorot.

Mangmang – Bontok Igorot's ritual that links the spirits and the living done either to please or appease the *anitu*.

Natal – a village in the Bontok Igorot's territory where the go-between was born.

Nilayusan Cha Chatako – "they have taken advantage of us or degraded us;" Bontok villagers' term for wrong done by someone from other village.

Olog – an institution of trial marriage in the Bontok Igorot's society.

Papatayan – Bontok Igorot's hereditary priesthood.

Peden – In the Bontok Igorot's governance system, it implies peace pact and agreement on: i) the boundaries of governed land and safe areas; ii) fines that must be paid in case of crimes (theft or trespassing between villages, not maintaining neutrality in case one of the villages gets into a conflict with a third village; iii) penalty in case of incidents of injury or murder where oaths of peace are broken.

Petsen or Petchen – Bontok peace pact.

Pinakarsu – go-between; carries a “diplomatic” function in behalf of the conflicting villages; Peacemaker by settling peace pact amicably, mediates, enforces pact agreement, and collects fines. His/. Her role ends when the peace pact is negotiated.

Pinatey Cha Chatako – “they have killed us”; expression used when a Bontok Igorot villager is injured or killed by outsiders.

Pinatey Tako Sicha – “we have killed them”; expression used when a Bontok Igorot villager has killed or injured someone from another village

Pumapatay – Bontok Igorot village priest; officiates the different rituals in the ili.

Sa-ad – land for dwellings.

Sinpangapo – all descendants of a specific founder of a land (Bontok Igorot)

Sudsud – head axe or spear; symbol of the formal breaking of a peace pact and challenge to battle or warfare in the Bontok Igorot villages.

Supra Ato or Supra Ator Organization –In Bontok Igorot, a village level unit; *general council* that handles the administration of justice.

Tayan – Bontok Igorot's communal forestlands held by the kin group for over three generations.

Wad-ay Ngatsana – In Bontok Igorot, those who by lineage are related to the *katsangyan* but do not have as many of the inheritable properties.