

TRAINING IRAYA MANGYAN COMMUNITY WORKING GROUPS IN ETHNOGRAPHY: ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE CADT PROCESS

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The Iraya Mangyan of Occidental Mindoro are currently applying for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT), a tenurial instrument awarded by the government which recognizes indigenous peoples' legal rights to their ancestral domain. Part of their requirements for processing this instrument is the submission of "anthropological proofs" to establish identity, time immemorial occupation and relation of indigenous peoples to their lands. The burden of proof rests on indigenous peoples who oftentimes lack training and resources to produce these outputs. AnthroWatch recognizes the need of indigenous peoples to be trained in such and provides technical assistance. In 2009, AnthroWatch became part of a consortium of non-government organizations working towards livelihood empowerment of the Mangyan of Occidental Mindoro. Through the project, a key component of which focuses on tenurial security, AnthroWatch has trained Community Working Groups in gathering data such as genealogies, ethnographies, photographs of landmarks, and census data.

This paper discusses the role of anthropology in the CADT process, presenting the Iraya experience as a case study on how anthropology is brought closer to communities through participatory trainings in ethnographic methods. It illustrates how anthropology is applied to development work, becoming an avenue for 'capacity-building' and at the same time, strengthening indigenous peoples' sense of ownership of their data.

Keywords: Applied anthropology, CADT, ethnography, indigenous peoples, Iraya, Mangyan, Occidental Mindoro, Mindoro, tenurial security

Introduction

Anthropological methods and perspectives are increasingly being used to analyze and solve social problems, thereby contributing to the development

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agenda in a unique way. This brand of anthropology, called ‘Applied Anthropology’, challenges practitioners of the field to make anthropology more relevant, and to bring it closer to the public.

This paper presents a case study on the application of anthropology to the land rights struggle of indigenous peoples, specifically the Iraya Mangyan of Occidental Mindoro in the Philippines. How has anthropology been of use to the Iraya in their process of applying for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT)?

The experiences of AnthroWatch in training Iraya Mangyan community working groups (CWG) to use ethnographic methods will be presented in this paper. I hope to share personal reflections on the relevance of anthropology in advocating for indigenous peoples’ rights. I also hope to contribute to the literature on indigenous peoples and non-government organizations’ experience in the titling process, as well as provide a background on the inherent steps involved when communities apply for a title.

The Mangyan livelihood project and tenurial security

AnthroWatch is a non-government organization established in 1994 with the vision of “sustainable, self-managed indigenous peoples’ communities” in the Philippines in secure ancestral domains. Our organization integrates anthropological concepts into development interventions involving the indigenous peoples who make up about 10% of the population of the Philippines or around 9.4 million people (Padilla 2011:262).¹

In 2009, AnthroWatch became involved in a project for “Local Institution Participation towards Livelihood Empowerment of the Mangyan Indigenous Peoples of Occidental Mindoro” (Mangyan Livelihood Project hereafter) in Occidental Mindoro as one of the implementing partners. The other members of the consortium project are Plan International, the Non-Timber Forest Products–Exchange Programme, and the Vicarial Indigenous Peoples Apostolate Coordinating Office (VIPACO), also known as the Mangyan Mission. The project works closely with the federation of Mangyan indigenous peoples’ organizations in the province, known as the *Pantribong Samahan ng Kanlurang Mindoro* or PASAKAMI.

¹It must be noted that the figures cited are but mere estimates. The last official census conducted specifically for the indigenous peoples in the Philippines is that conducted in the year 1916 by the American colonial government. The national census conducted in 2010 by the government’s National Statistics Office (NSO) included disaggregation according to indigenous peoples’ ethnicity, but as of this writing the official results, including those on the Iraya, have yet to be released. (Guia-Padilla 2012:272).

The project is on-going and is to run for five years (March 2009-February 2014) with support from grants received from the European Union (under its “Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development” window) and Plan International-United Kingdom. Its aim is to contribute towards poverty reduction amongst the Mangyan. This would be done through developing and enabling communities in sustainable livelihood practices and ancestral domain management. It also seeks to engage local institution participation to ensure the sustained delivery of social services for Mangyan communities (especially by local government units).

AnthroWatch’s role in the project is focused on assistance in the CADT and in the formulation of the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan. Tenurial security is seen as an important sustainability measure for the Mangyan livelihood programs. The project team works with the Mangyan groups in the province of Occidental Mindoro which include the Alangan, Buhid, Hanunoo, Gubatnon, Ratagnon, Taobuid and the Iraya. This paper however, focuses only on AnthroWatch’s experience in assisting the Iraya Mangyan in their application for titling their ancestral domain.

The Iraya and their ancestral domain

The Iraya are one of the indigenous groups in Mindoro (collectively referred to as the Mangyan). They resemble the Negrito population of indigenous peoples in the Philippines based on physical features because of their height, curly hair and dark skin.² In Estel’s (1950) study of anthropometry in

² In Chapter 2 of his dissertation on the Mangyan Patag, Sabino G. Padilla, Jr. (1991) outlined the historical references on the origin and description of the Mangyan population. He mentioned that in the *Census of the Philippine Islands* of 1905, Barrows described those living in Mindoro as a likely result of intermarriages of Negritos and other Filipinos. He also cited Blumentritt’s mention of the Mangyan as “*lahing bastardo na nabuo dahil sa pag-aasawahan ng Negrito at Malay*” [‘a bastard race resulting from intermarriage of Negrito and Malay’]. Padilla added Phelan’s argument that “although the Mangyan have dark skin and some look Chinese, they are on the whole Malay”, and Beyer’s categorization of the Mangyan into two groups which also reflects the strong observation of Negrito origins in some Mangyan groups. Beyer described the northern group (to which the Irayas belong) as “*maliit na tipong Mongol na may halong Negrito*” [‘small Mongol type with a mixture of Negrito’] and those in the south as “Indonesian and Malay”. This is no different from the statement of Worcester who in 1921 referred to the Mangyan as: “*isang primitibong mala-lagalag na tribo na Malay ang pinaggalingan subalit mayroong konsiderableng dugo ng Negrito*” [‘a primitive, nomadic tribe with Malay origins but with a considerable degree of Negrito blood’]. Leo Arthur Estel’s (1950:1-15) study of anthropometry among the Mangyan was also cited wherein it

Mindoro he described the Iraya as having dark skin but “not as dark as that of the Negritos”.

The Iraya live in the northern part of Mindoro island and can be found in the municipalities of Baco, Puerto Galera and San Teodoro in Oriental Mindoro and Abra de Ilog, Mamburao, Paluan and Sta. Cruz in Occidental Mindoro. In terms of population³ they number around 10,257 in Occidental Mindoro (SAKAMAIMO 2005), and 5,136 in Oriental Mindoro.⁴

The Iraya refer to themselves as “Iraya”, literally ‘person’ in their language which is called Iraya as well. Iraya is also the name of their god/protector, “Apo Iraya”. The term “*iraya*” is a cognate of “*ilaya*” which means ‘upstream’.

The Iraya ancestral domain under application is one of the largest ancestral domains in Occidental Mindoro. It is spread out across four municipalities, particularly Abra de Ilog, Mamburao, Paluan and Sta. Cruz. They have described their domain as having two “lots”, with “Lot 1” covering an approximate area of 55,000 hectares and “Lot 2” an area of around 75,000 hectares. The national highway of the province bisects these areas, demarcating the western (Lot 2) and eastern (Lot 1) portions of the domain. Portions of Paluan, Abra de Ilog and Mamburao are included in the area of Lot 2. The eastern portion or Lot 1 covers parts of Sta. Cruz, Abra de Ilog and Mamburao. The total area of their CADT application is approximately 130,000 hectares, the largest Mangyan CADT application in terms of hectares in Mindoro island. (See Fig. 1).

There are 144 *guraan* (villages) within the area applied for, as of our last count in May 2011. However, this number is variable because some Iraya still move in and out of villages from time to time, such that emergence and disintegration of *guraan* as a social unit is observable. More or less though,

was mentioned that phenotypically, the Iraya possess characteristics similar to the short, curly-haired, dark-skinned “Veddoids”.

³As mentioned above, official census results for the Iraya population from the NSO 2010 census are still unavailable. The same is true for the recent survey conducted by the Iraya for their CADT application. These are still in the process of consolidation into a database.

⁴Based on a census undertaken in Oriental Mindoro in 2009 through the Assisi Development Foundation entitled “IP Information Systems Development Program”. This was with support from the United Nations Development Programme. AnthroWatch staff served as resource persons to train indigenous peoples as enumerators for this project.

the *guraan* included in the count are permanent Iraya settlements across the four towns in Occidental Mindoro.

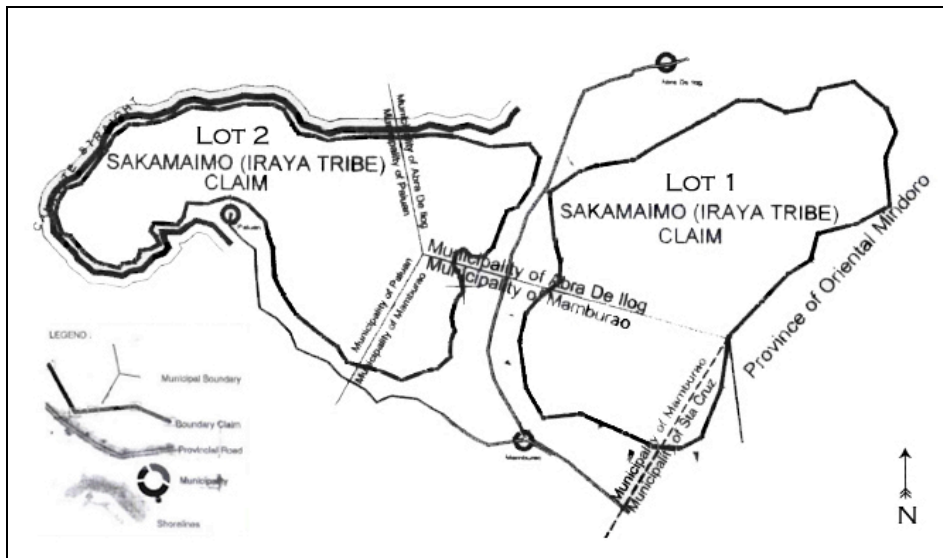


Figure 1. The sketch map prepared by the NCIP above shows Lots 1 and 2 of the Iraya ancestral domain application, which cuts across political boundaries of the municipalities of Abra de Ilog, Mamburao, Paluan and Sta. Cruz in Occidental Mindoro.⁵

The extensive Iraya ancestral domain includes areas in the mountainous interior of the province, watersheds, as well as lands near the vicinity of national road and town centers. The Iraya claim also includes the Mt. Calavite Wildlife Sanctuary in Paluan, believed to be a grazing ground of the endemic tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*).

It is significant to note that while the Iraya of Occidental Mindoro are applying for a CADT, a portion of Sta. Cruz in Barangay Alacaak has already obtained a separate, registered and awarded CADT. Likewise, the Iraya of Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro already have their own delineated CADT. The Iraya CADT of Calomintao which spans 5365.1112 hectares was awarded on June 14, 2004 while the Iraya CADT in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro spanning 5700.8721 hectares was awarded on June 18,

⁵ Based on a survey map drawn by NCIP's geodetic engineer, Rodolfo P. Malabon.

2004. (It can be noted that these form a “corridor” of Iraya ancestral domains in the Mindoro provinces.)

The Iraya rely on upland farming as their main source of livelihood. Both men and women are involved in swidden farming or *kaingin*. (Mijares 1994). Nowadays, some Iraya also practice lowland farming, maintaining their own *palay-tubigan* (wet rice paddy) plot. The Iraya also have a tradition of hunting or *pangangaso* which is still practiced today but is not as widespread as before. They hunt wild boar (*baboy ramo*), monitor lizard (*bayawak*), and deer (*usa*). Fishing is also done in rivers, although the Iraya mentioned that their ancestors used to fish at sea. Other livelihood activities of the Iraya include basket weaving, planting root crops, honey harvesting and engaging in *arawan* or ‘per-day’ labor with lowlanders who seek out their help in for *pag-aani* or harvesting (of rice).

The importance of land to indigenous peoples: “*Ang lupa ay buhay*”

‘Land is life.’ These words are often uttered by indigenous peoples all over the world, as well as by support groups advocating for indigenous people’s rights. It has been so often repeated that it almost sounds cliché, but I believe that it resounds precisely because the message cannot be overemphasized.

The concept of land is central to indigenous peoples. Land is that which supports and nourishes them – it sustains their life. Land is not a commodity but something they live in harmony with. The relationship they have with land runs deep and has been so for as long as they can remember. As one Iraya elder put it:

‘Our ancestral domain is our home, school, market, hospital, playground, source of livelihood. For us, it is life.’ [*Ang lupaing ninuno ay ang aming bahay, paaralan, palengke, opsital, laruan, pasyalan, kabuhayan. Para sa amin, ang lupaing ninuno ay buhay.*]

The identity and culture of a group is closely tied to the land. This link which bore witness to the lives of their ancestors continues on to the present as the very same land remains an integral part of life. Losing it would mean losing everything they hold dear.

Indigenous peoples have already lost much. They have been dispossessed of their original territories with colonization. This historical injustice resulted to changes in the size of indigenous peoples’ ancestral domains. It has resulted in the marginalization of a people,

“historically distinct from the majority of Filipinos in their success in resisting Spanish colonial administration. As a

result, they maintained their indigenous belief systems, worldviews and ways of life while the Filipino majority was assimilated into the socio-cultural, economic and political system brought about by the Spanish conquistadores” (Philippines ICERD Shadow Report 2009:1).

Consider the case of the Iraya. They narrate that before colonizers came, they lived near the sea.

Dati, sabi ng aming mga matatanda na ang mga Iraya ay nakatira malapit sa karagatan. Nung dumating ang mga tag-bari – mga Moro, mga Hapon – lumikas ang mga ninuno namin at umakyat sa kabundukan dahil sa takot. [‘Our elders told us that the Iraya lived by the sea. When the tag-bari (outsiders) – the Moro, the Japanese – came, our ancestors fled up to the mountains out of fear’.]⁶

The encroachment of outsiders in indigenous communities persists up to the present. These consist of mining applications, plantations, logging concessionaires, power plants, tourism and other projects. Based on our observations of indigenous peoples’ groups across the country, we noticed that the entry of large projects in communities often led to division within a group, with people torn about their sentiments towards projects. This puts indigenous peoples in a vulnerable position and challenges their stand as a collective unit.

It is not only ‘big time’ companies that indigenous peoples are worried about. They also face intense discrimination from outsiders who do not recognize their ancestral domain and aggressively trespass on their lands to farm, build homes as well as hunt in their forests. An Iraya leader from Abra de Ilog shared that they have long wanted to form a pool of forest guards (*bantay-gubat*) against trespassers. Their efforts to protect their territory from outsiders, however, were met with derision from *tag-bari* who questioned the legitimacy of their patrolling (*pagbantay*).

Kapag sinisita namin yung mga Tagalog na iligal, tinatanong nila ano ang karapatan naming gawin iyon? Hinihingan kami ng katibayan, ng authorization. [‘When we call the attention of the Tagalog and confront them with their illegal activities, they ask us what right do we have to reprimand them? They ask us for proof, for an authorization.’]

⁶ *Tag-bari* is an Iraya term which refers to outsiders or non-Iraya.

An Iraya mother of four and a woman leader of the Iraya's handicrafts group added: "*Hindi talaga ginagalang ang katutubo.*" ['There is really no respect for indigenous peoples.'] Clearly, there is a lack of awareness and respect for indigenous peoples' rights. In a situation where threats to their land are prevalent, clamor for the protection of the ancestral domain (*lupaing ninuno*) grows strong

The CADT

The right to land of indigenous peoples is concretized through the acquisition of a title for their ancestral domain (San Jose 2008). The Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) is a legal title awarded to indigenous groups which was mandated by the 1997 Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) or Republic Act 8371 recognizing the indigenous peoples' ownership of their ancestral domain. The CADT can only be acquired through an application defined by and implemented by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as part of its mandate to "promote the interest and well-being of indigenous peoples with due respect to their beliefs, customs and traditions". Section 11 of the IPRA states that

"the rights of ICCs/IPs⁷ to their ancestral domains by virtue of Native Title shall be recognized and respected. Formal recognition, when solicited by ICCs/IPs concerned, shall be embodied in a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT), which shall recognize the title of the concerned ICCs/IPs over the territories identified and delineated."

A title gives the indigenous peoples some legal recognition in their defense of their land. Many of the Iraya that I have talked to told me that "*Pag nasukat na ang lupaing ninuno, may panghahawakan na kami.*" ['When the ancestral domain is surveyed, we will have something to hold on to.'] From this statement we see the CADT as a powerful representation of the triumph of generations of struggle for indigenous peoples' land rights. The movement to claim the CADT has enabled significant gains in consolidating communities as they work together towards a common vision.

Not all indigenous peoples share this view though. There are groups who do not see the need for the CADT. With or without the CADT ("*may titulo man o wala*") they already **are** the rightful owners and stewards of their lands. 'Native title' refers to their "pre-conquest rights to lands and domains which, as far back as memory reaches, have been held under a claim

⁷ICCs/IPs refers to indigenous cultural communities/indigenous peoples as stated in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (Republic Act 8371).

of private ownership by ICCs/IPs, have never been public lands and are thus indisputably presumed to have been held that way since before the Spanish Conquest” (IPRA 1997).

There are also other groups who are skeptical of the idea of having their lots surveyed and delineated through a CADT, saying that this would only make them more susceptible to development aggression by large companies eyeing their lands for profit.

AnthroWatch espouses the principle of self-delineation of ancestral domains. It acknowledges the indigenous peoples who believe in applying for a CADT, sharing the view that obtaining a legal tenurial instrument like the CADT as an added support to their land rights is better than having no CADT. Since the year 2000, AnthroWatch has been assisting indigenous peoples in gathering ethnographic data and preparing documents for the CADT, thus our particular role in the Mangyan Livelihood Project.

The Iraya in Occidental Mindoro have differing views with regard to the CADT application. Most groups espouse it, but a number remain skeptical, inhibiting themselves from participating in the process. This was one of the challenges encountered in gathering data for their CADT by the community working groups that AnthroWatch engages with, as will be discussed in another section of this paper. Such issues are usually resolved through indigenous customary practices, which involve dialogues with leaders, elders and the community, and when necessary, through the mediation of NCIP until a resolution has been reached. The Iraya resolve issues first among themselves and only elevate it to the barangay or NCIP as needed.

The CADT process

The entirety of the process as institutionalized in the NCIP’s Omnibus Rules and Guidelines is outlined below (see p.75).

The CADT process can be categorized into three major parts – (1) pre-survey, (2) actual survey, and (3) post-survey. The pre-survey includes the ‘social preparation stage’ where the bulk of research work and data gathering is done. Once sufficient proofs have been submitted to the NCIP provincial office, an oversight committee called the Provincial Delineation Team (PDT) is formed to take charge of preparations such as information education consultations in barangays on the IPRA and CADT process. Boundary conflict resolutions with other indigenous groups as well as internal ones are also expected to be resolved during this period. The NCIP does not complete the application process until conflicts have been resolved. A report is then prepared by the PDT to confirm the readiness of the application to enter the

survey stage. Communities await a work order issued by the NCIP central office to signal the schedule of actual survey.

Table 1. The Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titling Process

Pre-survey	Survey	Post-survey
1. Social Preparation	3. Establishment of Project Controls	6. Data Processing and Preparation
2. Conduct of Research	4. Perimeter Survey	7. Community Map Validation
		8. Publication
		9. Finalization and compilation of Recognition Book
		10. Deliberation
		11. Registration of CADT
		12. Awarding of CADT

The next stage consists of the actual survey, usually taking two to three months to finish. The NCIP assigns geodetic engineers to join indigenous peoples in surveying the Ancestral Domain. Boundary monumenting or *pagmomohon* is guided by the principle of self-delineation. Before actual survey, a mission planning activity is conducted spearheaded by the head geodetic engineer to identify places where the survey team will directly pass through during the period of the survey. Survey time is lessened when adjacent lots have been previously surveyed, because control points have already been identified, making mapping easier.

Titling must go through a long verification and approval process before final approval by the NCIP (Dahl 2009). This is referred to as the post-survey stage. Time-consuming but very important activities such as data processing and validation of proofs and maps in communities are included in this stage. The recognition book is also finalized and CADT proofs are completed at this stage. When ready, the CADT is deliberated on by the NCIP's Commission en-banc, referring to the seven commissioners that constitute the agency's highest policy-making and governing body, before its endorsement for registration. At this point, even the NCIP is not exempt from the waiting game that indigenous peoples usually experience, as they are dependent upon the cooperation and pacing of line agencies Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Land Resource Authority

(LRA), and Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in the projection of the map of surveyed ancestral domains.

While the NCIP is the office mandated by law to assist indigenous peoples applying for a CADT, limited funds and staff of the Commission hinder it from prioritizing applications that are not enrolled in the Provincial Delineation Action Plan, or the list of CADT applications that the NCIP intends to prioritize.

Titling can get very expensive, depending on size of the ancestral domain, and funds are needed for the application to progress. On the average, it costs around ₱868,501.75⁸ to process a CADT. Case in point is the Iraya CADT application which costs ₱2,312,100 as stated in its work and financial plan (WFP), a document prepared by the NCIP which outlines all of the activities involved in the titling process and the corresponding budget needed to accomplish such. It also notes the counterpart funds of support groups (if any) for the project and the total costs that will be charged to the NCIP.

With the volume of indigenous peoples applying for a CADT nationwide, the NCIP understandably has its hands full and cannot work on all applications at the same time.

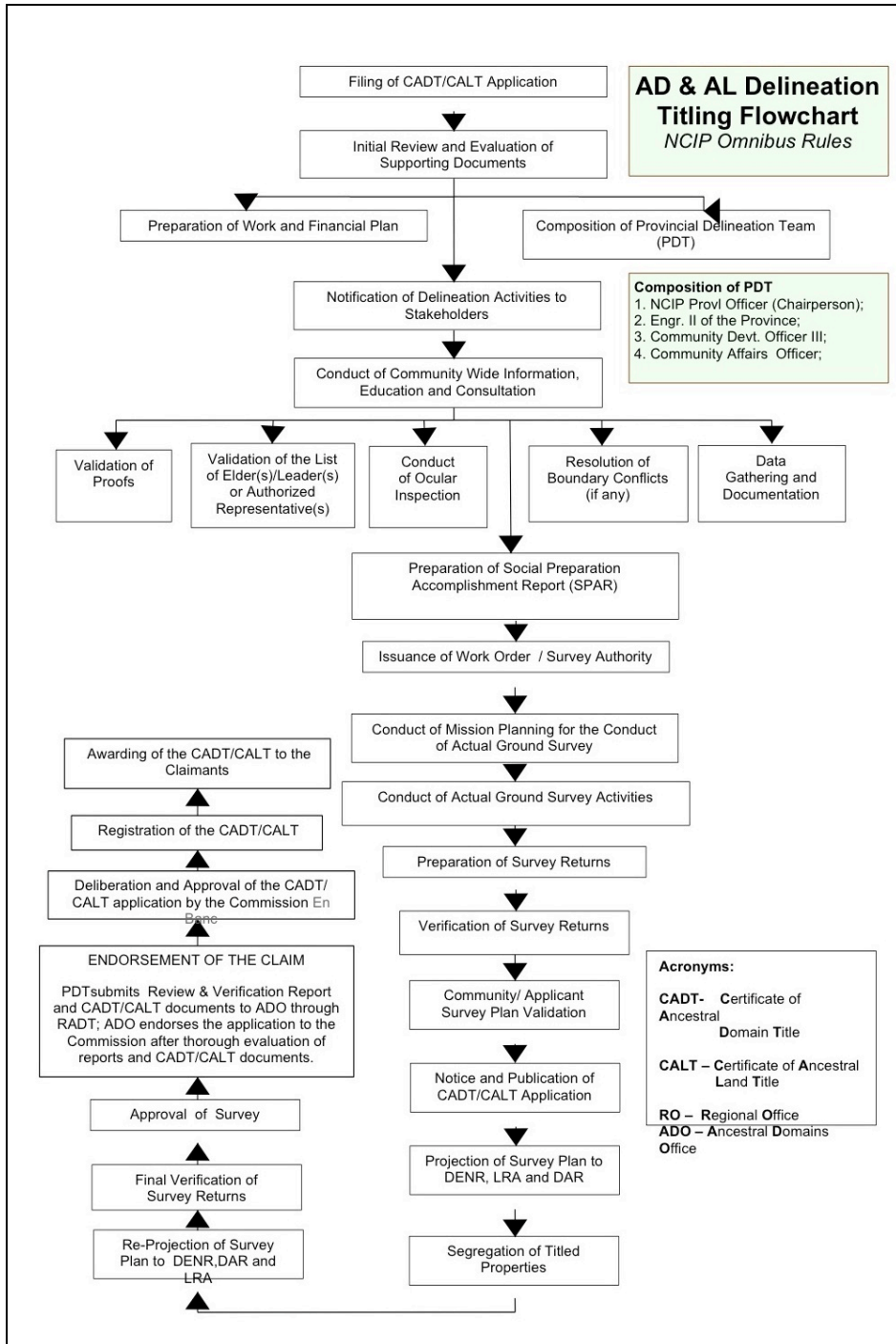
Based on the status report of the NCIP as of December 31, 2010, there are 156 approved CADTs, with 1,912,395 rights-holders.⁹ Other CADTs are in process and are being transmitted to line agencies of LRA, DENR and DAR for projection.

Anthropological requirements

NCIP Resolution 119 series of 2004, which became effective in April 2005, provides an outline of the claim book, the set of documents containing the mandatory requirements needed for IPs to prove their claims to their land. The format was adopted into the Omnibus Rules on Delineation and Recognition of Ancestral Domains and Lands of 2008 as a guide to the content of the claim book, now called a “recognition book” under the new guidelines, referring to the contents of the book as proofs to recognizing

⁸ This average is based on NCIP Status Report as of September 2008 with 55 ancestral domains that have completed their survey, a total hectarage of 47,767,596.03.

⁹ Since that time, only a handful of CADTs have been approved by the NCIP Commission en banc.



lands that indigenous peoples own, as opposed to lands that they are claiming.

The Omnibus Rules outline the requirements needed for CADT processing. These include the testimony of elders and other secondary data proofs such as: written accounts of the ICCs/IPs customs and traditions; written accounts of the ICCs/IPs political structure and institutions; pictures showing long term occupation such as those of old improvements, burial grounds, sacred places and old villages; historical accounts, including pacts and agreements concerning boundaries entered into by the ICCs/IPs concerned with other ICCs/IPs; survey plans and sketch maps; anthropological data; genealogical surveys; pictures and descriptive histories of traditional communal forests and hunting grounds; pictures and descriptive histories of traditional landmarks such as mountains, rivers, creeks, ridges, hills, terraces and the like; write-ups of names and places derived from the native dialect of the community.

According to the NCIP, these sets of data are needed to establish three things: the relationship of people to their land, the identity of IP/ICCs, and time immemorial possession and occupation of IPs/ICCs of their land.

The singling out of “anthropological data” as a major pre-requisite to the titling of ancestral domains is noticeable, even though a quick look at the list would tell you that all proofs enumerated are essentially anthropological data. This highlights the relevance and importance of anthropological research to ancestral domain applications. Anthropology, aside from providing a data bank of knowledge on different cultures, is crucial in assessing how meritorious applications are.

Training the CWG: the Iraya experience

SAKAMAIMO stands for *Samahang Katutubong Mangyan Iraya Mindoro Occidental*. It is a people’s organization of the Iraya of Occidental Mindoro province. One of their goals is for their ancestral domain to be appropriately recognized (“*magkaroon ng angkop na pagkilala sa pag-aari ng lupaing ninuno*”). “*Ang Iraya, 15 years nang nakikipaglaban para sa pangarap na mapasukat ang lupaing ninuno,*” an Iraya member of SAKAMAIMO narrates. [‘We Iraya have been working on the processing of our ancestral domain for 15 years already.’]

Bago ang proyekto ay matagal na namin sinusulong ang lupaing ninuno. Nang malaman namin ang mga requirements, nakita naming malaki pa ang aming pangangailangan. [‘Before the project, we have long been

working towards the goal of having our ancestral domain titled. When we learned of the requirements, we realized that a lot of work still needs to be done.’]

The burden of proving the legitimacy of their application rests on IP communities who oftentimes lack the skills and resources to produce these outputs in the form that the Omnibus rules require. Thus, AnthroWatch sees its role as providing technical support to this need of the indigenous peoples, not necessarily to do it for them, but to build up their capacities so that they can do as much as possible by and for themselves.

In AnthroWatch’s experience, training a pool of community working group (CWG) members has significantly speeded up the process of CADT applications. Recognizing that IPs are in the best position to document their culture, we wanted to demystify the notion that anthropological requirements are technically hard to comply with and to show them that the technical expectations are not impossible for them to contribute to. Training CWG members also maximizes community involvement or ‘counterparting’ to the titling process, thereby engaging indigenous peoples in active co-production of knowledge. This is veering away from the traditional practice of anthropologists writing about the culture of ‘the other’, or from hiring ‘experts’ or consultants to take charge of fulfilling the requirements needed for acquiring the legal certificate of title.

The first thing we did to assist the Iraya was to find out how far they have gone in terms of gathering data. Prior to the start of the project, census data for their *guraan* had been collected, but they still lacked the other requirements due to meager financial and technical resources.

After assessing the documents at hand, dates for the ethnography training were set. Participants were identified through the SAKAMAIMO, which ensured the attendance of representatives per cluster, formed on the basis of geographical proximity. A series of ethnography trainings were then conducted on July and September 2009. We were able to train 35 CWG during the first “ethno training” and 28 CWG members during the second session.

The CWG participants selected by the Iraya for the training were those who have the ability to read and write. Literacy skills were a pre-requisite in identifying participants since the work involved in data gathering was writing-intensive. The CWG members were composed of both adult and youth Iraya males and females whose ages ranged from as young as 14 to as old as 70 years of age. They included students and out-of-school Iraya youth as well as adults who had been able to complete some grade levels but not

finish their elementary education. Iraya leaders who could not read or write but were respected leaders and effective community organizers in their communities also attended the trainings together with one of their children or grandchildren who could act as their secretary during the training and eventually during the actual data gathering itself.

The training included modules on genealogy and the construction of kinship charts, census data gathering and ethnographic research methods such as key informant and focus group interviews and discussions. Practice sessions on interviews, drawing of kinship charts and census-taking were done so participants could have a feel of the process before undertaking actual interviews on the field. These sessions allowed anthropologists to mentor the CWG in data gathering, clarifying confusions and sharing tips on how to improve their ethnographic data.

After the trainings, the CWG were able to gather census data, ethnographic accounts and photos of significant places in their domain, as well as produce kinship charts attesting to their 'time immemorial' stay in their ancestral domain. Some CWG members who were the sole representatives of their cluster during the training found it necessary to seek assistance from local village leaders, whom they called their "*poong balayan*", to help them with the census interviews. The local village heads played a crucial role in explaining to the community the purpose and importance of having their census taken as well as in allaying the suspicions some Iraya had about the data-gathering— some feared that it might be connected to mining. In such instances, the CWG, together with the local leaders, teamed up in explaining the purpose of gathering data for the CADT and assured the people that it was in no way connected to mining activities.

The officials of SAKAMAIMO also played crucial roles in mobilizing people for the laborious task of data gathering. Moreover, they were usually the ones who acted as mediators in instances where community members were skeptical and even hostile about the CADT process. For example, during their fieldwork, an Iraya CWG shared that there were some families who totally refused to be interviewed for the census even after extensive explanation by the CWG and talks with the local leaders. In such cases, their wishes were respected and the CWG did not force them to oblige to an interview. These instances were noted down in their reports and the number of people in that household was just estimated.

Gathering census data and testimonies of Iraya elders and key informants across 144 villages is a tough job. There were communities who had no capable point person or CWG to rely on to have their data gathered so there were CWG members who crossed clusters, so to speak, and undertook the

duty of gathering data in villages outside one's assigned cluster. Meanwhile, other CWG members continued to work in tandem which enabled them to gather data faster.

It was through these linkages with the community and Iraya leadership in *guraans* that the pool of CWG members was expanded. Those who had been trained in ethnographic data gathering methods echoed their learning and transferred their skills to other Iraya who were then able to help with the data gathering activities. This has resulted in a strengthened partnership across villages toward completing the proofs for their CADT. This exemplifies AnthroWatch's thrust that the process itself of applying for a CADT should also serve as a consolidating activity for the ancestral domain.

While they still received assistance from the anthropologists of the project in firming up their data, I have observed that their sense of ownership of their data is strong. It is something they can truly call their own because of their personal involvement and hard work in producing these accounts.

It is truly a remarkable feat how the Iraya were able to do this in the spirit of volunteerism and community, notwithstanding the challenges they faced along the way such as dealing with fellow Iraya who were initially skeptical about their activities and also in balancing their personal time for work and family.

With regard to the objective of gathering ethnographic proofs for their CADT application, it can be said that the Iraya CWG were successful. While data gathering for the CADT of the Iraya continues on to the present, it is significant to note that they have already submitted the initial proofs gathered by the Community Facilitator (CF) and the CWGs in October 5, 2010. These were sufficient for the NCIP to form the PDT for their ancestral domain (*lupaing ninuno*) in preparation for the next steps in the titling process.

Enar Canuyan, a respected elder or *amayan* from Abra de Ilog who has been an active CWG member in data-gathering for the CADT, shared:

Nung una, tinatanong ako ng mga taga-sa amin kung bakit ba lagi akong nagpupunta sa mga meeting, gumagastos ng pamasaha at nangangarap pa rin na masukat ang lupaing ninuno. Matagal na na pangarap yan, hindi pa rin natutupad, sabi nila . Sabi ko sa kanila habang may buhay, may pag-asa. Ngayon, masaya ako dahil mas marami na ang nakakatulong, mas marami na ang gumagalaw. [‘At first, people from my village have been asking me why I am always going to the meetings, spending money for transportation and continuing to hope that our ancestral

domain will be surveyed. We have long been dreaming that our ancestral domain will be surveyed but still, nothing has happened, they said. I told them, while there is life, there is hope. Now, I am happy because there are more who can help, more people are moving and working together now'.]

Based on experience in training the Iraya, I have observed that they have the capacity to learn, apply and re-echo anthropological methods of inquiry and data gathering to fulfill requirements needed for their ancestral domain to be surveyed. More importantly, they have a high interest in undertaking such a research not only because it is a means to their end – the dream to have their domain surveyed (“*ang pagsusukat ng lupaing ninuno*”) – but also because it provides an opportunity for them to take a deeper look at their culture, revisit it and get to know it better.

Iraya Community Facilitator Silda Sanuton shared that undertaking interviews and writing sworn ethnographic statements (*sinumpaang salaysay*) for their CADT application has expanded his knowledge about their culture. As the lead person in compiling ethnographic accounts about Iraya cultural traditions and the origin of place names in their domain, he had the chance to talk to various elders who imparted their knowledge on Iraya culture. On the other hand, the experience also made him realize how much their culture has changed, as there were practices related to him by their elders which are no longer being lived out at present. Usually, the elders he met were able to tell stories about the Iraya way of life before, but they could no longer provide details as these practices were no longer passed on to them nor practiced by them.

Maraming mga kultura ng Iraya yung naikukwento na lamang pero hindi na naisasabuhay. Dito ako nahirapan dahil hirap matukoy sino ang pwedeng matanungan na matanda na alam talaga yung kultura. [‘There was much of Iraya culture that were recounted but no longer lived. This was what I found difficult— because it was hard to identify an elder to interview who really knows the culture.’]

This realization on the watering down and in some instances loss of some cultural practices of the Iraya was also evident in the nostalgia I sensed in some Iraya when they spoke of their traditional healing practices, or “*marayaw*”, and how this was now limited to a select number of practitioners who were still knowledgeable in the tradition. I also sensed it in the way they spoke fondly of their “*igway*”, the Iraya song or lullaby, which they

noted is now being replaced by pop melodies and by religious songs learned from missionaries.

Some Iraya CWG members involved in gathering pictures of landmarks in their domain also shared how through data gathering, they were able to visit places in their territory which they have never been to before. In these visits, young CWG members and Iraya elders usually went together and took photos of important landmarks and sites inside their domain. The elders would be in charge of pointing out significant landmarks while the younger ones took the lead in documenting stories about the place. Here we see how data gathering activities become sites for learning and passing on of territorial and cultural knowledge from the old to the young.

The ethnography that the Iraya are doing is one that is reflexive, because the people they are studying and writing about are actually themselves. Reflexivity implies an awareness of the changes that are happening to oneself and one's own society, and with the Iraya, the process and content of the research that they are undertaking for their CADT application has allowed them to reflect on their history and heritage as a group across generations.

For example, when the Iraya were gathering genealogical data (*salinlahi*) for their CADT, they were faced with the dilemma of balancing cultural restrictions like taboos on mentioning the names of their ancestors and the NCIP's mandatory requirement of genealogical data. To address this, they conducted a ritual and had a dialogue and consensus decision that they were disclosing such data only for the purpose of obtaining their CADT. Safeguards were also put in place to protect these information. This took the form of an agreement with assisting support groups that all data should be turned over to the Iraya. Rather than being passive informants who are always at the mercy of 'experts', indigenous peoples were asserting themselves as active players in writing the story of their "*tribo*". They also had a say in deciding what is to be included and excluded from narratives being written about themselves.

Indeed, the involvement of the Iraya in gathering ethnographic data for their CADT brought to them an increased awareness of their culture – of what binds them together as a people and what sets them apart and marks them unique from the other Mangyan groups in the province of Mindoro. They cited their traditional leadership structure, customary laws, material culture and language primarily as what differentiates them from the rest of the Mangyan groups in the island.

A 'rekindling' of what makes them Iraya was encountered by the CWG as they gathered the requirements needed for their CADT. However, it also

brought to the fore the alarming realization and observation that that the Iraya language, which forms a huge part of their identity, is rapidly becoming an alien tongue to their younger generations. A CWG member lamented the rapid loss of their language, saying that Tagalog is now becoming the household language of choice in Iraya homes. Partial results of their census also reflect this. An elder said that many Iraya youth and even some adults are no longer accustomed to or familiar with their speech. It is something that they hope to revive and encourage because they are aware that loss of their language would also mean loss of their culture and identity. Hopefully, their activities in the titling process can become avenues to advocate for a revival of the Iraya practices and traditions.

A place for Anthropology in the CADT process: lessons learned

Training and data gathering for the CADT was not without any challenges. Both anthropologists and the CWG members faced the difficulty of gathering data in such a wide geographical coverage. When it comes to census data gathering, some CWG members experienced being turned down by Iraya who were skeptical about the idea of the CADT. (In such cases, their decisions were respected.) Then, there was also the problem of CWG fall-out, where trained Iraya CWG members became inactive due to changes in their civil status (e.g. getting married and faced with new responsibilities, could not volunteer to gather data anymore) and being busy with school and farm work. Lack of volunteers in other clusters was also one of the biggest challenges faced. Endeavors to address these situations are still going on through regular consultations with SAKAMAIMO, the Iraya's indigenous peoples' organization.

In training the Iraya Mangyan to gather data for the CADT and assisting them in this process, I realized how anthropology is in a position to directly contribute to advocacy for indigenous peoples' rights. Anthropological material is needed in fulfilling requirements for the CADT, but more than this, in imparting its methods to the public it serves, anthropology can also play an active role in building the capacities of local communities. Through education in the form of trainings, anthropology contributed to individual capacity building and organizational strengthening of communities. The Iraya Community Facilitator remarked that the ethnography trainings were very useful to him especially in organizing the data that SAKAMAIMO has ("*Malaking tulong talaga, lalo sa pagsisinop ng datos*"). Through trainings in ethnography, indigenous peoples' sense of ownership to their data is also reinforced.

Here are some areas where anthropology can make key contributions in relation to the CADT process:

Sharing anthropological data gathering methods and analysis. Teaching communities how to gather census data, make kinship charts, write ethnographic accounts and take effective ethnographic pictures are some of the anthropological methods which have brought the indigenous peoples closer to their goal of securing their ancestral domain.

Observing certain anthropological principles in the process. Principles such as being participatory, holistic, multivocal, gender-fair, culturally sensitive and appropriate and ecologically-sound can be integrated into designing modules for capacity building. The anthropologists' commitment to sound and ethical research should also be observed when extending assistance to indigenous peoples. Ethical considerations with regard to what data should be revealed or made public, who gets hold of the data, and what purposes the data will serve are some concerns that communities and development anthropologists need to be clear about (AnthroWatch 2008).

Community consolidation through capacity-building. In involving local communities through trainings in data-gathering methods, the knowledge and skills transfer can be ensured by thinking of creative ways to make complex concepts simpler (e.g. community-friendly census and kinship charts). Trainings in ethnography build capacities of communities to gather data for their own use. In this process, communities and their organizations are strengthened. In our experience, the emergence of new leaders (second-liners) could be observed after the conduct of trainings. There is a multiplier effect when lessons are echoed to other community members and at the same time this contributes to greater consolidation of communities.

Mediation. Anthropologists can dialogue with various local institutions and different sectors within the same indigenous group who are stakeholders in the process to understand different perspectives on issues and aid the groups in reaching a resolution. Anthropologists can be in a position to mediate or facilitate discussions during conflict resolutions after having gained enough understanding of the multivocal opinions regarding certain issues pertaining to the titling process.

Convergence. Working closely with stakeholders such as the NCIP and local government units provides opportunities for anthropologists to identify areas for partnership to avoid duplication of data gathered or tasks being carried out. Based on experience, a convergence approach to the titling process increases efficiency.

Advocacy. Anthropologists can undertake research on policies that affect indigenous peoples (e.g. the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) process, the CADT process), and make suggestions on how to improve these. Moreover, as development workers working directly with indigenous peoples, we are in a position to promote gender equality and ensure multivocality of data and processes.

Providing reality checks. Anthropologists can offer reality checks to the people they serve, especially since there is a tendency for indigenous peoples to think that the CADT is a panacea to all their land-related problems. “*Kapag may CADT na, hindi ibig sabihin na wala nang problema,*” Ma. Teresa Guia-Padilla, AnthroWatch Executive Director, would usually remind communities. (‘When a CADT is obtained, it doesn’t mean that problems all go away’.) As a legal tenurial instrument, however, the CADT can help a lot in asserting the indigenous peoples’ rights to land. I quote Jens Dahl who said that the “titling of communal lands is only the first step for indigenous communities to gain control over their lands... The challenge is for the communities to remain *in control*, to promote self-development” (Dahl 2009:133). IPs must continue to be steadfast in safeguarding their domain and also allot time for planning the management and development of their lands and resources in a formal way. In the end, it really still is a matter of how strong communities are in facing challenges to their ancestral domain.

The experience of AnthroWatch in training Iraya Mangyan community working groups in doing ethnography and making use of anthropological research methods presents a case where anthropologists and indigenous communities are able to work together in knowledge production, directly contributing to land rights advocacy for indigenous peoples under the framework of the IPRA for the CADT process. This is one way of working towards the vision of a truly engaged anthropology, where subjects are given opportunities to participate and become visible, thereby asserting and strengthening themselves in the process.

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APPENDIX

GLOSSARY of acronyms

ADO – Ancestral Domains Office

CADT – Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title

CALT – Certificate of Ancestral Land Title

CF – Community Facilitator

CWG – Community Working Groups

DAR – Department of Agrarian Reform

DENR – Department of Environment and Natural Resources

ICCs – Indigenous Cultural Communities

IPRA – Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997 [Republic Act 8371]

IPs – Indigenous Peoples

LRA – Land Resource Authority

NCIP – National Commission on Indigenous Peoples

PDT – Provincial Delineation Team.

SAKAIMMO – *Samahang Katutubong Mangyan Iraya Mindoro Occidental*

VIPACO – Vicarial Indigenous Peoples Apostolate Coordinating Office

WFP – Work and Financial Plan

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