REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ETHNIC QUESTION IN MINDORO: THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Ethnolinguistic diversity is as much a feature of the Philippines as that of the other insular countries of Southeast Asia, i.e., Indonesia and Malaysia. Within a comparatively small land area of 115,820 sq. miles, one finds close to a hundred ethnolinguistic groupings only recently united in the use of the national language, Pilipino.

With ethnolinguistic diversity comes concommitant regional variations in methods of agricultural production, patterns of exchange, types of rice produced, and supplementary food taken, as well as their manner of preparation. One may further observe significant regional variations in the degree of political sophistication and interest in regional autonomy and in the underlying matrix of economic and social institution, as well as in the articulation and direction of individual aspirations of a good life.

It is more appropriate, therefore, to regard the Philippines as a cluster of distinct regions than as a homogenous entity. Historically speaking, the Philippines has had no tradition of a strong centralized government or incipient forms of it as may be seen in the great Sri-Vijayan and Madjapahit empires of Indonesia or the Angkor kingdoms of ancient Khmer.

In their initial encounter with Philippine culture, the Spanish chroniclers noted the absence of "absolute kingship or monarchy". As one Spanish explorer observed:

> Their government was not monarchic, for they did not have an absolute king; nor democratic, for those who governed a state or village were not many; but an aristocratic one, for there were several magistrates (called maginoos or datus) who participated in governmental activity, advising the chief in all important matters of policy and administration in the barangay (de San Antonio 1883 in Blair and Robertson 1903:348).

What the Spaniards found in the Philippines, therefore, were regional political units or as one Filipino political scientist describes it, "limited monarchies" – i.e., the barangay (Arcellana 1954:208). The extent of barangay, 1

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[1]The term according to Filipino ethnolinguistic tradition, had been corrupted from the word *balangay*, meaning a small vessel (or boat) in which early Malay immigrants came to the Philippine Islands. In each boat were extended families with their slaves, led by a patriarch or another acknowledged or superior person. Upon landing and colonization of the land, they presumably displaced earlier settlers who were then pushed into the interior part of the islands. Arcellana conjectures that some barangays in time became more powerful than others leading to their absorption to some form of feudal polity under the leadership of a *datu*, or in the case of the stronger, active and more astute royalties in the South, a *rajah*.

"sovereignty" Arcellana argues, was necessarily delimited by its "regional" domains, had customs and laws applied and enforced among its constituents and at times even beyond.

The Philippine historical experience therefore reflects a strong "regional tradition." Today's major sociopolitical and economic regions may in fact be traced to the earlier pre-Hispanic dominant datu chiefdoms and "rajahship" centered around the strategic regions (largely reverine principalities) of the Manila-Luzon area, Cebu-Visaya, and the Mindanao-Sulu-Brunei regions. Thus, despite the "centripetal forces" that have emerged during the past three or four centuries[2] which served to bind these regions together into a viable Philippine state, the "centrifugal forces" making for regionalism (e.g., the Islamic confederacy in Mindanao) remain strong.

The Mangyan in Ethnohistorical Perspective

Historically speaking, the term Mangyan referred largely to an aggregate of people in the interior of Mindoro that had no consciousness of itself as such. To the early Spanish explorers and mission workers, the Mangyans constituted the "ancient inhabitants" of the island (Medina 1630). In a general sense, the Spaniards used the term to refer to the sector of the population that refused incorporation into the instituted colonial-ecclesiastical order.

On a wider scale, the Spanish clerics and colonial officers used the term *infieles* for all hill peoples and pagan groups that remained in their primitive ways and refused Christianization (Lopez 1976). The term *Moros* on the other hand, was a form of identification used for the southern groups which were organized around the emerging Islamic base culture and which presented stiff resistance against Spanish attempts at colonization, while the majority of coastal dwellers in Luzon and the Visayas that favourably responded to the persistent Spanish drives at evangelization were all conveniently lumped together under the identification *indios*.

At the same time, the ascriptions *indios, infieles* and *Moros* also seem to have reflected the Spanish perception of the different stages of sociocultural development of the indigenes of the Archipelago.

The Jesuit priest, Francisco Colin specifically referred to three distinctive groups of people in the archipelago: "those who held command of it and inhabited seashores and riverbanks and all the best parts about, "who included the Tagalogs, Pampangos, and either people occupying coastal communities in the Visayas, Mindanao, and Sulu; the Negritoes "who lived in the mountains and thick forests"; and the Tingues "who generally [lived] about the sources of the rivers and on the account were called in some districts, Ilayas" (Colin 1664 as cited in Marcos 1976:49). This categorization of the natives on the basis of their ecological adaptations appears to be consistent

[2] Notably, the Spanish and American colonization as well as the short-lived Japanese occupation.

with Edmundo Leach's observation of the more or less universal division of the Southeast Asian people into "hill" and "valley" peoples (Leach 1961).

Historical accounts which date back to the early years of Spanish explorations and the pioneering ethnographic studies of the peoples of the Philippines reflect the general perception of differences in culture, technology and social organization between those who live in the lowlands and those in the uplands. From these historical and ethnographic accounts, one gathers the general image of the hill peoples of "upland types as being technologically less advanced than the lowlanders.

In contrast to the relatively advanced wet-rice farming of the lowlands, the hill people generally thrived on subsistence agriculture, supplemented by occasional hunting and gathering. The lowlanders, on the other hand, appear to have possessed a more complex economy which went beyond the practice of intensive and irrigated agriculture to fishing through the exercise of industrial crafts shown in boat building, cannon-making and fashioning of bladed weapons, jewelry and unglazed pottery. Thus, a steady production of surplus (as reported by different Spanish chroniclers like Antonio de Morga, trans. 1962) permitted a good amount of interisland trading among the different coastal and riverine principalities.

By the time the Spaniards came, insular trade was therefore brisk and far-flung, extending from northern Luzon through Pangasinan, the Manila Bay-Mindoro-Batangas area, the upper riverine settlements of Pampanga, through the mouth of Rio Grande de Cotabato, the estuary of Butuan, Sulu, and farther on to Malacca and even Java.

It is interesting to note that at the start of the 17th century, Morga still reported thriving industries in the islands:

> Cotton is raised abundantly throughout the islands. It is spun and sold in skeins to the Chinese and other nations who come to get it. Cloth of different patterns is also woven from it, and the natives also trade that.

Other cloths. . . are woven from banana leaf (Colin 1963). Another observant Spanish explorer noted that the natives "all know how to raise cotton and silk, and everywhere they know how to spin and weave for clothing."

Among the different trading regions, the Manila Bay-Mindoro-Batangas area served as probably one of the most important central points of international commerce in the Philippines during the 16th century. From early Chinese accounts of the Sino-Philippine cultural relations, we are given the idea that the Chinese traded directly with the region, from which point the Luzon merchants travelled to distribute the foreign goods throughout the islands (cf. Chao-Ju-Kua's Chu-Fan-Chi 1225, as translated in Wang Teh Ming 1964). It is significant to point out that a 1970 Spanish account of the conquest of Luzon and Mindoro mentioned among other things the presence of Chinese traders in the two islands. Legaspi found four Chinese junks anchored in the port of Manila and in the town area itself, Chinese and Japanese settle-

ments. The Spaniards led by Martin de Goiti found off the coast of Mindoro, several *sangleyes,* i.e., "travelling merchants," some in a skirmish at the Baco river area. While the original purpose of Martin de Goiti was to request "peace and friendship of the Chinese, the Spanish arquebusiers who reached the estuary ahead of the conquistador, engaged the Chinese in a short battle which resulted in the death of 20 Chinese traders:

> At the break of day, the praus which had preceded the others reached the river where the Chinese ships were anchored. The Chinese, either because news of the Spaniards had reached them or because they had heard arquebuse shots, were coming outside with foresails up, beating on drums, playing on fifes, firing rockets and calverins and making great warlike displays. Many of them were seen on deck armed with arquebuses and unsheathed cutlasses. The Spaniards, who were not at all slothful, did not refuse the challenge offered them by the Chinese; on the contrary, they bodily and fearlessly attacked the Chinese ships, and, with their usual courage grappled with them ... the goodly aim of the arquebusiers was so effective that the Chinese did not leave their shelter, the Spaniards were thus enabled to board their ship and take possession of them (Manuscrito inedito 1572 in W. Retana 1898).

At point of contact with Spain, therefore, Mindoro was a region of relative importance. It was frequently visited not only by native traders from such islands as Luzon, Cebu and the Visayas, but also foreign traders like the Chinese *sangleyes.* The island has had a long history of "capitalist" penetration and was in fact a vital trade link in the Asian trade chain. It is likely that the island even served as a commercial port where not only Chinese but other Asian nationalities as well loaded and unloaded their goods. The "town of Mindoro" (as described in the Spanish account) appears in fact to have been an excellent seaport – an asset which the Spaniards did not leave untapped, for shortly after colonizing the island, they turned it into a major port of call for vessels coming from New Spain and the island of the "Pintados", i.e., the Visayas.

A very interesting theory recently developed owing to the uncovering of new sources asserts that it was in the areas of intense trade contact with the insular world and continental Asia that the barangays[3] coalesced into larger communities, identified in the Spanish accounts as *pueblos,* which is variably translated into English as "towns" or "villages." *Tadhana,* an integrative work on the history of the Filipino people goes as far as espousing the view that:

> Being broader frameworks of sovereign authority, these social units were in effect "ethnic states" in contrast to the *baran-*

[3]An institution based on kinship grouping fundamental to the entire Philippines.

> *gays* which, as sociopolitical expressions of kinship solidarity were much more common in the Eastern half of the country even as, in the West, (of the archipelago) they remained the basic component of the larger units (Marcos 1976:95).

The thrust of Marcos' argument is that the existence of "fortified towns and communities" stood for a form of political organization which transcended the town "as simple conglomeration of barangays, extending authority beyond the normally accepted purview of paramount datuship" (Marcos 1976: 101). Thus, according to this hypothesis, the Philippines was "in a perceptible process of political consolidation" with the "ethnic states" as its point of contact with Spain.

The fact remains, however, that no true national state ever developed and one is left merely to conjecture what form of indigenous national political structure could have developed if the Spaniards had not intervened in the evolution of the indigenous Philippine institutions. It is safe to infer from the different historical accounts, the existence of strong regional, social, political trade centers rather than an "ethnic" or "national" state.

In the area under study, it appears that a strong barangay which recognized the paramountcy of the rajah of Manila was in existence. It is noteworthy that residing off the coast and the capital "town" of Mindoro were people described in the Spanish accounts as "Moros". However, the description of the general inhabitants of the island seems to point to the existence of two distinct sets of people–the coastal and the inland folks. While the latter or the "chichimecos" have been rarely studied, the coastal dwellers have been described extensively, especially in their reaction to the coming of the Spaniards. The "Moros" residing in the estuary of Baco and the "town of Mindoro" were reported to have possessed a large number of culverins, arrocos, and other offensive weapons, and to have been entrenched in a very strong fort ("Relacion" 1970 in Retana 1898). The town of Mindoro itself is described as an

> excellent though poorly-sheltered seaport. The harbor has only one entrance. Its waters beat against a hill which is the first and the smallest of the chain of three hills overlooking the port. The fort of the hill was fortified by a stone wall over fourteen feet thick.

Located along the direction of Spanish colonial expansion, Mindoro was easily annexed to the growing hispanic colony in 1570. The Spaniards superimposed a new central state over the existing indigenous social structure and aimed at gaining effective political control over their newly acquired territories. The traditional sociopolitical order was thus restructured to make room for the clerico-military government whose power base was shared by the *conquistadores* and the *frayles*.

A convenient means through which the Spaniards tried to wield greater political control over their "vassals" and to effect a more methodical extraction of resources from the peasantry was the *encomienda* system. This colonial setup was actually an attempt on the part of the Spaniards to reach the native base and to take control of their production.

In theory, the encomienda was a triangular system of relations among the king, the *encomendero* (normally a military officer) and the natives, with the royal right to collect tribute from the natives delegated to the encomendero who in return, was to render military service to the crown, make his wards subservient to Spanish sovereignty, defend the lives and properties of his men, and provide them with a minimum of religious instruction. There was, however, a fourth party to the assumed agreement: the *frayle.* The frayle also had a stake in the tribute, for it was from the encomendero's collection that the mission was to be subsidized. Thus, while some concerned and sympathetic *frayles* condemned the method of collection and consequent mercenary use of tributes, they favored its perpetuation since they were also dependent on it for support. The Filipinos, therefore, (i.e., mainly the coastal dwellers) did not only lose their freedom but were also made to subsidize their own political subjection and their own "Christianization".

The excesses of the tribute system and the slavery attendant to the *encomiendas de particulares,* which the ambivalent friars denounced, eventually led to some changes that called for the extension of the system of *alcaldes mayores* over the encomiendas. Within the domain of this change, the alcalde mayor was meant to be in an official place directly above the encomenderos in a supervisory capacity. In keeping with this administrative change, the encomienda in Mindoro as reported by Retana, was not only under religious management but also under the "chief magistrate" in residence in Balayan, Batangas, the regional colonial seat of government. Retana's *Relacion* cites that the encomienda in "Vaco, Mindoro" belonging to Philippe de Salcedo constituted 700 tributaries with about 2,800 persons.

By the turn of the 17th century, the encomienda had declined in value and in the esteem of many colonial officers themselves. As a consequence, the *frayles* increasingly took over the *encomenderos'* power as they provided an alternative form of the social organization for the native community – i.e., *the reducciones.*

At the base of this social formation lies an alliance of convenience between the *frayles* and the *datus,* the traditional leaders of the barangay. The *frayles* needed the *datus* for the success of their religious mission as they assumed that the barangay grassroot membership would usually follow the lead of their chieftains. On the other hand, the datus recognized the value of the missionaries as a shield to protect their status, to protect and preserve the integrity of their barangays. The informal alliance assured the friars of mass converts and the datus of a measure of autonomy, including religious security

in the form of "a whole series of indulgence" such as those Pope Gregory was induced to grant to "those datus who facilitated in any appreciable manner the conversion of their followers to the faith" (Marcos 1976: 139). This subtle accommodation of interests may be the beginning of the indigenous elite's participation as petty officials at the base of the Spanish colonial state on the one hand, and the special niche the friars created for themselves, i.e., the preponderant influence they would as a result exercise in the internal organization of the colonial state (Marcos 1976:139).

The zeal for religious evangelization of the *frayles* led to the emergence of a more cohesive system of missions as reflected in the formation of *cabeceras,* the concentrated settlements into which were incorporated the ancient barangays. The *cabeceras* which served as centers from which the missionaries radiated to other villages to evangelize and into which they herded converts to ensure their perseverance in the Catholic faith, were for the most part made up of coastal dwellers, or former hill people who were attracted by the friars to gather into more compact settlements in the lowland.[4] The bulk of the hill people with nominal subscription to Roman Catholicism seems to have been made of "dependent" villages known as "visitas". Such communities which appeared to be appendages of the often coastal *cabeceras,* usually had makeshift chapels wherein a priest from the *cabecera* can occasionally hold rites and services.

From Velarde and other Spanish accounts, we read of a great religious revival which saw the instruction and baptism of about 500 Mangyans whom the *frayles* "reduced to settlements near the existing Tagalog and Visayan villages (i.e., the *cabeceras*)". Altogether, the mission resulted in the establishment of three new Mangyan villages or "visitas" i.e., dependent villages (cf. "Mission del Colegio de la Compania de Jesus de Manila desde Julio de 1665. . ." as cited in de la Costa 1961; also Velarde 1749).

The missionary activities of the priests who rekindled the Catholic faith in the island, included instruction, preaching, hearing confessions, guidance and counselling. Many conversions and revivals of great import were made among the Christian lowlanders and the Mangyans. Velarde for instance, records the conversion of some Mangyan women and their consequent intermarriage with lowland men. This undoubtedly indicates a close lowland-Mangyan interaction during the period. One may infer this further from the reported case of one Mangyan woman used by the friars as a witness of the Catholic faith to facilitate the conversion of other Mangyans and also some lowlanders.

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[4]The Mangyans then as now, spoke different languages. To overcome this language barrier, the Jesuits fell back on the method they had successfully employed in Latin American. They persuaded the Mangyans to come down from their mountain residence and settle in small communities, each with its own chapel. As Postma (1977) points out in his article on Mindoro Missions, these settlements were usually established along, or close to the seashore, away from their home territory.

The distinction made between "Mangyans" and "christian men" in the Spanish documents need to be underscored as this possibly reflects the growing differentiation between a developing lowland Hispanic-Christian culture and the traditional highland culture. The emergent differentiation did not, however, discount the existing dependency relations between the coastal and hill peoples. In fact, the chief obstacle to the conversion of the Mangyans as the friars themselves found out was that the lowland Christians did not particularly want them to settle down in the lowlands as they were much more of use to them as "ignorant tribesmen" whom they could send into the forest for wild bees wax or employ as "slaves" in their farms (cf. Annual letter of the Jesuit. . ., 1622 and "Missiones de la Compania de Jesus" cited in de la Costa 1961). From the accounts we also read that as a result of the missionaries' exhortations, the Christian lowlanders themselves went to the hills, sought out their Mangyan "serfs", brought them down to be instructed by the fathers, fed and housed them while they were being prepared for baptism.

As early as this period, I believe one can very well build a case for the incipient satellite status of some Mangyan groups vis-a-vis the coastal Christians. From the Spanish perceptions of Mangyan-lowland relations recorded in the extant documents, it is possible to draw the Frankian model of dependency (Frank 1969) i.e., a chain of exploitation that extended from the *cabeceras* through the barrios to the hills. This chain of interlinked "center-periphery" relationship may be inferred even from this early 17th century account of Velarde:

> . . . these Mangyans fear the sea. They pay no tribute. They fear lest the Spaniards take them to man their ships. They go naked; and deliver the wax (i.e., beeswax) to the Tagals (Tagalog lowlanders), which the latter pay as tribute, and give as their share. More than three hundred quitals of wax yearly must be obtained in this island (Velarde 1749).

A better picture of the exploitative lowland-Mangyan relations is given in an 1800 account of Fray de Zuñiga who described them simply as the "non-Christians of Mindoro" who "are natives like the others, but . . . less exposed to civilizing influences. . .live a more miserable life."

The well-respected Spanish historian perceived the tenor of Mangyan-lowland social relations as constituting an unequal form of exchange:

> The Christians give them a bolo and rice to plant. What they do is to burn a piece of barren land (possibly their swidden path) and with the bolo they plant the rice; when reaping time comes he gives back one-half of his harvest in return for the bolo and the seeds. He might have to give up the whole harvest if he had back dues. The more fortunate people take too much advantage of their non-Christian fellows. They buy the honey and wax gathered by the Mangyans in

> the forest at a low price and sell or barter them with goods from Manila priced exorbitantly, which yield them much profit . . . (de Zuñiga 1893).

Ramon Morera Jordana writing almost a century after (1885) noted the existence of a quasi-patronage system between the "Hispanized Indios" and the "Manguianes". While he appears to have seen only the exploitative side of the Mangyan-lowland relations, this account nevertheless referred to the exchange of goods and services between the two communities, which would imply a measure of cooperation and collaboration.

One form which Mangyan dependency seems to have taken is the *pautangan* system, an intricate form of debt-relationship in which the lowlanders generally

> . . . give the Manguianes an advance of palay, a thing or objects for which they do not like to get the payment but instead expect that the Mangyan should give back their debts through work in their fields. This apparently legal contract transforms the Mangyan into a true slave, since the landowner gives a very low value to the work and besides adds interest to the debt which has not yet been paid through work; when a few necessity forces them to make another debt, the same thing is done so that the debt made by the Mangyans, instead of decreasing, increases enormously and he sees himself forced to work during his entire life for the small sum which he first received (Jordana 1885).

While lowland exploitation of Mangyans did exist even in the Spanish era, it should not be seen apart from the chain of exploitation which linked it up to world commerce via the Spanish colonial enclaves in the Philippines and Latin America.

The point of linkage between the "peripheral" Mangyan communities and the Central Spanish colonial state at the turn of the century was the *commisario de Manguianes,* an official chosen by the Spaniards from a neighboring Christian pueblo or rancheria. Each Mangyan community or rancheria had a "chief" who, through election or general agreement, acquired this honor and was given all respect due to a person of authority. Mangyans who lived very close to the Christian settlements (and perhaps stood in a satellite-like relationship with the Tagalog communities) generally asked the provincial governor, a Spaniard, to confirm the authority of their leaders through a piece of document. Jordana was careful to note, however, that this practice was completely unknown in the rancheria of the interior.

THE BEGINNINGS OF MANGYAN ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION, DIFFERENTIATION AND INCORPORATION INTO THE STATE

Until late in the 19th century, the Mangyans were depicted in the extant Spanish documents as a homegenous group. The first mention of the

existence of actual diversity among them was made by Jordana (1885). Among other things, Jordana notes how the Mangyans set themselves apart from the Banguiles, a group described as a "half-breed-tribe" belonging to the Negrito race and who inhabited the northwestern section of Mindoro. The Mangyans themselves were classified by Jordana into three ethnic groupings:

> (1) those who occupy the occidental coast of the island, occupying the islands in Palauan to Irurun.They are fair in complexion and of intelligent physiognomy, have thick brown hair and beard, robust, graceful, and peaceful.
>
> (2) those who inhabit the territories between Abra de Ilog and Pinamalayan are tan in complexion, with wavy hair (lit. flacid), prominent checkbones, flat forehead, somewhat long-nosed and dull-looking.
>
> (3) those who inhabit that part of Pinamalayan until the South look as if they are of Chinese blood, not only because of their oblique eyes, flat nose, prominent cheekbones, flat forehead and olive skin, but also because of their custom of having a long braid in the upper part of their head while the rest of their head if not shaved, is cut short. These people who are quite hard-working, judging from the products that they bring to the Christian towns, are undoubtedly less poor than the two other breeds (Jordana 1885).

The terms by which these different groups were identified, perhaps largely exonymic in nature, are also given in this rather substantive account:

> Between Socol and Bulalacao, the name *Manguianes* is used for the pagans who live in the shore of the rivers. Those who stay in the lowlands are called *Buquil* and *Beribi* to those who are found sheltered in the peak of the mountains. In Pinamalayan, they call the inhabitants of the same localities given above as *Bangot, Buquit, Tadianan* and *Durugman,* or *Buctulan* respectively. In Naujan they substitute the last name for *Tiron* (those who live in the mountain peaks) and from this part until Abra de Ilog, they use only the generic name of *Manguian.* Lastly in Mangarin, they call *Lactan* those who stay or dwell in the river shores, *Manguian* those who reside in the mountain slopes and *Barangan* those who inhabit the peak of the mountain ranges. (Jordana 1885; underscoring mine).

It is evident from Jordana's work that he understood "Manguian" as a collective term encompassing several ethnic groups of very different origins. Ferdinand Blumentritt, the Austrian scholar who translated and annotated Jordana's study in German, affirms that the latter's description of the *Buquiles* "reveals without doubt that the group is the result of the cross between the latter (i.e., the "negrito race") and the indios, that is to say, natives of Malay origins" (Blumentritt 1896). The term *Buquil,* on the other hand, is

construed by Blumentritt to have the same sense as the root word of the ethnic name *Bukidnon* (*bukid* means "mountain" both in Malay and the Hanunoo and the Buhid Mangyan languages). In all likelihood, the Buquils Jordana referred to in his pioneering work are the predecessors of the Buhid, the group which is the focus of this study.

The name Tiron cited above may refer, according to Blumentritt, to the remnants of pirates who came from the island of Tawi-tawi, as well as from the area of Tiron (Tedun, Tidun) in the island of Borneo. This interpretation seems to be supported by the historical fact that during the first half of the 17th century, the so-called *Camucones* from Borneo generally made "follow-up" raids in the manner of vultures after the Sulus had done their depredations. Even after north Borneo was ceded to the Sulus around the 1680's, it still took them at least a century of intermittent expeditions to subdue the *Camucones* (cf. Majul 1973:123; Velarde 1749:43-44). Thus, Borneo may have indeed been involved in the ethnic history of Mindoro.

Due to their having become aware of the existence of different Mangyan groups in Mindoro, the European writers of the period were indecisive in the classification of the Mangyans as "one people." As Blumentritt writes, the Mangyans of his time

> . . . are in fact a very little known people. If in point of fact they constitute a people, for it is assumed that the name Mangyan which means as much as 'forest man' (people) is a general name for all pagans, excepting those with full Negrito blood, who live in the interior of that big island (Blumentritt 1896:21).

While they were generally considered by Spanish and other European writers as "half-savages" with a very low level of culture, the Mangyans were nonetheless discovered to be literate in their own script. This fact surprised the European scholars interested in the Mindoro groups. Blumentritt, commenting on Dr. Adolf Barnhard Meyer and Dr. A. Schadenberg's work, wrote:

> From the materials given . . . we can only see that the Mangyans are on a very low level of culture and civilization. One was therefore very little prepared to discover a script in such a people (Blumentritt 1896:21).

Though the existence of the Mangyan script (used to this day by both the Buhid and the Hanunoo) was known to some Spanish and even Filipino writers, like Pedro A. Paterno, very little has been written about it. Paterno, who mentions it in his book *Los Aetas*, was in the words of Meyer as cited by Blumentritt, "even unaware of the importance of his discovery" (Blumentritt further opines that the Spanish friars "to whom we owe so many grammars

and vocabularies of Philippine idioms have not unfortunately given attention to the Mangyans".

The first scholar who came up with really substantive findings on the Mangyan script was Dr. Schadenberg. He himself went through the island of Mindoro around 1890 and discovered that the Mangyans did not only have their own alphabet but also used it in written communication.

Apart from these linguistic notes, Jordana's pioneering ethnography on the Mangyans in the 19th century also makes some comparative observations on the Mangyan-lowland mode of livelihood. For instance, although it was generally supposed in Jordana's time that the Mangyans were nomadic people, his account not only negated this view but provided an intriguing point of comparison with that of the Christian Indio habitations. Interestingly, he wrote:

> Almost everyone has huts; only few wander about in the mountains, without any particular place of residence. These huts are small and miserable and generally are made from bamboo and bejuco. The way they are built corresponds completely to that common among the Christian Indios. Their household belongings are composed of some pots, a kind of frying pan, mats and luxury items which they got in commerce with the Christian Indios only at a high price (Jordana 1885:217).

Speaking of morals and ethics, Jordana gave the Mangyans a rating in their lowland compatriots. He observed that the legal customs of the Mangyans "are very strict". He supports his observation with the following account on how they handle various cases of offense:

> Adultery is punished with death in the same way that they also have very harsh punishments for robbery however, they are not used with extreme strictness among some tribes. In general, one cay say that the customs of the Manguianes have a good basis of legality and morality. They fulfill conscientiously their promises, they do not deceive nor cheat, on the contrary, these very high qualities combined with their natural naivete make them victims of the Christian Indios (Jordana 1885:218).

While diverse Mangyan groupings had become known in the Spanish period, a more substantive knowledge of these people was gathered during the American period and the years that followed. The American era, in fact, ushered in organized and institutional frontiers. The keen awareness that the "pagan" and Muslim groups occupying the Philippine hinterlands posed a problem similar to that of the Indians in the United States led the Americans to create the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes in 1901. The Bureau's rationale for existence as defined in the organizing act was twofold: first, to investi-

gate the actual condition of the Pagan and Mohamedan "tribes" and consequently make recommendations for legislation by the civil government; and second, to conduct scientific investigations in the ethnology of the country.

The goals of scientific studies in Philippine ethnology was preceded by interisland explorations which served the dual purpose of naturalistic-cum-reconnaissance trips. It is significant that those who headed these "exploratory" investigations later became key officials in the colonial government. Most of the writings which came out of these initial expeditions were general surveys of the "wild and tame" tribes of the Philippine Islands. Most works of this nature (e.g. Worcester 1899 and Landor 1904) provided very general descriptions, often only playing up features in the native to project the desired primitiveness.

One of the first researchers to closely carry out the mandate given to the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, thereby ending the dependence on short visits and seasonal explorations was Fletcher Gardner. A U.S. Army contract surgeon stationed in Southern Oriental Mindoro, Gardner brought greater depth into Mangyan studies with his extensive research on the language, script, culture and traditions of a Mangyan group which he identifies as "Hampangan" (Gardner 1906). His numerous field trips in the interior likewise brought him in closer contact with a number of other groups, resulting in more authoritative accounts of the Mangyans. Unlike earlier researchers, Gardner relied more heavily on empirical observations rather than on mere hearsay gleaned from prejudiced lowland informants.

Gardner identified the "Hampangan"[5] as a group occupying an ill-defined area ranging from a point somewhere toward the interior of Mangarin on the south coast to Bongabong in eastern Mindoro. He describes them as

> . . . pure Malay, of rather small stature, of light color, often plump, well-formed, and by Malay standards good-looking. The hair is usually straight, rarely wavy, and never curly or kinky. The teeth are usually black and worn from constant use of betel-nut without cleaning . . . they tattoo the body (Gardner 1906).

Compared with present studies, Gardner's account of the "Hampangan" closely corroborate the ethnographic notes on the "Hanunoo" Mangyans. It is in fact quite safe to conclude that the "Hampangan" and the "Hanunoo" are one and the same people.

Gardner's study gives a detailed account not only of the intricate way the "Hampangan" adorned themselves but likewise of their metal work, bas-

[5]In Buhid, this means a formal talk or discussion; its shorter form "Hampang" means language or speech in both Buhid and Hanunoo dialects. "Hampangan" is rendered "harampangan" in Hanunoo and may have been used by Gardner's informants to refer to their conversation with him rather than identifying themselves.

ketry and weaving. It noted that these people did not make mats nor pots. These products were procured from the coastal natives or "from the rancheria of Bukid Mangyans, who are subject to a chief called Gihitan, who himself is a Hampangan" (Gardner 1906).

Whether or not there was marked social stratification among the Hampangan or the other Mangyan groups is not clear from Gardner's account nor from that of any other writer of the same period. He only makes reference to the Mangyans of a certain district who acknowledged a chief or headman assuming various roles. Such a man according to him

> settles their [the people's] disputes, protects them from injustices and ... they owe [him] a portion of their labor and all their obediences. They are always subject to the headman's call. If he calls them for a hunt, they come; and at his suggestions, they make their kaingins, harvest the crops which they use in common (Gardner 1906).

Gardner is quick to note, however, that the authority of the headman was not absolute, the Mangyans having considerable freedom among themselves. He points out that the "chiefship" is not hereditary. The powers of the chief were limited and disputes were settled by the council of the old men of the same or neighboring rancherias. It is unfortunate that Gardner does not elucidate on the important question of the traditional sources of authority among the southern Mangyans. A later detailed ethnographic study by Conklin also failed to deal with the power structure among the Mangyans or even to simply verify the preliminary observations made by Gardner.

A citation made by Gardner from a set of Mangyan bamboo script writings which is of immediate relevance to this study is that which deals with the endonymic classification of the southern groups. According to Gardner's source, Luyon, a Mangyan informant who wrote bamboo scripts on his people and culture, there were:

> four classes of Mangyans ... Ratagnon, Hanono-o, Bukid and Bangin. Those from Bulalacao to Mangarin mixed with the Bisaya are called Ratagnons. Those who go from Bongahon to here (Manaul) are Hanono-os. The bukid Mangyans are far from town and do not visit it. The Bangon (forest) Mangyans are farther still and are without woven cloth; the bark of the tree is their clothing. Different is the Ratagnon speech, different the Hanono-o dialect, different the Bukid language, different the Bangon tongue (Luyon as cited in Gardner 1939).

As to demographic information on the southern Mangyan groups, a rare 1903 census data contained in the Mindoro-Palawan archival collection by H. Otley Beyer present a remarkably accurate listing of both Bangon and

Buhid settlements.[6] This lone extant census data on the Buhid in the early 1900s appear to have resulted from an actual survey made of the Buhid-Bangon region, something which was never repeated until the establishment of a specialized government body to administer the cultural community groups under the Philippine Republic. For purpose of comparison, this original census data is reproduced in what follows:[7]

Rancherias	Tribus	Varones (Males)	Hembras (Females)	Observ.
Basinguil	Mangyanes	4	3	Ninguno Sabe
Panuban	"	3	3	leer ni escribir
Bayangan	"	6	12	
Balgay	Mangyabes	6	5	
Tadiango	"	6	6	
Siangui	"	5	5	
Tabangan	Buquid	19	17	
Bataugan	"	90	80	
Matangos	"	8	9	
Tauga	"	80	70	
Naua	"	45	37	
Balahid	"	10	9	
Cogon Malago	"	18	15	
Bocboc	Batigon	1	2	
Daga Tubig	"	11	11	
Sapa Dagat	Buquid	1	2	
Tianin	"	6	10	
Bansud	Bangon	30	25	
Banus	"	55	25	
Guimbunan	Buquid	7	3	
Langan	"	26	28	
Papandayan	"	6	4	
	TOTAL....	861	778	

Additional information on the Buhid of the early part of the American colonial regime come largely from government documents. One such archival material is a 1906 report of Niurio Ordoñez, a Filipino town official who had jurisdiction of the Buhid. From his report, it is possible to establish the fact that the contemporary Buhids have remained largely within the well-defined

[6]The Hanunoo continue to use this ethnic identification of the Buhid to this day. This exonymic identification is marked by a phonemic alteration of the /h/ with /k/.

[7]The names of the places listed have remained essentially the same except for slight variations in orthography.

"ethnic zone" inhabited by their early twentieth century kin. Ordoñez also corroborates Luyon's informative account as may be seen in the following excerpt from his report:

> These Filipinos, like the Hanunoo, are also found scattered about family by family in the mountains, valleys, plains and slopes of Nawa, Ipondongan, Taoga, Dajol[8], Siangi, Aba, Sapa Batangan and Bongabong, places contiguous to Secul, Paclasan and Mansalay. I shall not speak of the area of their individual tracts of land, nor of their plantations, houses, love-making or other customs, as they are the same as those of the Hanunoo. But I will confine myself to the statement that they have a different dialect . . . They know the art of pottery making, but perform no labor on public or private works, either on the Christian pueblo or on the public trails within its jurisdiction, saying that if they violate this custom they will meet with the fatal calamity of dying or having the head bent over backward or stumbling and meeting with instant death (Ordoñez 1906).

In addition, Ordoñez points out that the Buhids maintain coconut groves and cacao plantations where they grow produce which they take to the pueblos and sell or exchange at market prices for bolos, fabrics, salt, dry fish and other articles. An added item of interest in Ordoñez' report is his mention of the existence of exchange of goods between the Buhid from the different areas in the southern end of Oriental Mindoro and the Hanuno-o. He makes a distinction in the exchange of goods between the Buhid and the Hanunoo and that between the Buhid and the "Kristiyanos". As he points out:

> Neither the Hanuno-o nor the Buhid make use of money in their trading which is done by barter; and if they by chance come into possession of any money they keep it as a relic, for they are as a general rule fanatics, fond of *anting-anting*. . .

A record of Gardner's interviews with Buhid informants living within the peripheral areas of Bongabon reveals interesting information about the possible origin of these people. According to Gardner's informants, the people's oral tradition points on the island of Tables, which lies between Mindoro and southern Luzon, as their place of origin. It pictures their ancestors as being formerly prosperous. In the settlement patterns of the past, one sees a clear example of the operation of the earlier Spanish idea of "reducciones"' i.e., the practice of gathering the natives from scattered hamlets into agglomerated settlements.

[8]This should actually read "Taoga dajol" meaning literally "big Taoga" referring to the larger river in the area.

The American colonizers picked up the idea of "reducciones" and tried to bring the unconverted hill groups like the Mangyans into reservations. This revived approach in the integration of the natives is based on the American thinking that the Mangyans pose the same problems as the Indians in America. This view may be inferred from the following excerpt of the official statement of Dean C. Worcester, Secretary of Interior of the colonial government during its first thirteen years of rule in the Philippines:

> May the Manguianes not be considered, as are the Indians in the United States, proper wards of the Filipino people? . . . In so far as the Manguianes themselves are concerned, the purpose of the government is evident. Here, we have on the island of Mindoro, the Manguianes, leading a nomadic life, making depredations on their more fortunate neighbors, uneducated in the ways of civilization, and doing nothing for the advancement of the Philippine Island. What the Government wished to do by bringing them into a reservation was to gather together the children for educational purposes, and to improve their health and morals (Worcester as cited in Reports of Cases, 1918-1919).

The actual task of governing the "pagan" groups from the onset of the American rule up to 1916 fell directly under the Office of the Secretary of Interior. Under this system, the Secretary of Interior exercised control over the affairs of all members of non-Christian tribes outside the "Moro province". Likewise, he had the power to approve executive orders and memoranda which once promulgated had the force of law for the pagan groups.

As Secretary of Interior, Worcester drafted and authored the so-called "Special Provincial Act" which was officially promulgated by the Philippine Commission of which he was also a member. This act ensured the bringing of the pagan groups within the domain of control of the Secretary of Interior through the respective governors of the organized "special provinces" where the pagan groups may be found. Section 18 of the same act authorized the governor of Mindoro, subject to the approval of the Secretary of Interior, to deal with and to provide for the administration of the Mangyans.

The multiplex roles which the provincial governor assumed in his post hindered him from doing concentrated work among the Mangyans. Thus, the colonial government's activities were confined largely to the establishment of reservations. The local governmental structure in such settlements demonstrates quite clearly their satellite relationship with the town government. In effect,

> A president and consejal were appointed, but no attempt was made to organize any form of township government. Orders were given these officials to keep the place clean, plant anything they saw fit, and to encourage others to join them.

> The regular form of municipal appointment was given the president to which was added brightly colored seals and ribbons, and it would be a matter to attach as much importance to his position as do these savages.

Structurally, the Americans established a form of government for the Mangyans which entailed a chain of command from the elected lowlanders who directly supervised Mangyans affairs. The Mangyans were not given a chance to govern themselves and were administered by townspeople who frequently were the major sources of abuses. As one American official himself reported, the biggest rascal in the community was often the elected *presidente*, who owed his power to the fear the Mangyans had of him.

By and large, the efforts of the Americans to organize Mangyan settlements turned out to be a major failure. The colonial officers attributed this failure to the supposedly nomadic character of the Mangyans as well as to the alleged absence of intergroup relations among them. These explanations would hardly hold water as it is quite obvious that the American use of sheriff force in the establishment of some settlements simply pushed the Mangyans deeper into the interior, and out of their sphere of power. Worcester, the author of the reservation scheme in the Philippines attributed its failure to the attitude of "Tagalog Filipinos" who, according to him,

> look with great disfavor to the gathering of the Mangyans into settlements where they can be protected, as it renders it difficult to hold them in a state of peonage. Whenever Gen. Offley got a little group together they did their best to scatter it (Report of the Philippine Commission 1905).

An outsider's view of the American scheme for the administration of Mangyan affairs is given by Paul Schebesta, a German anthropologist who visited one of the settlements. Speaking of the role of his informant Kaig in the colonial administration of Mangyan affairs, Schebesta wrote:

> For a certain length of time, Kaig played the role of superintendent among the savage Mangyans. At that time, when the American government went about in an hyperphilantropic way to build modern schools among the Mangyans, Kaig was given the responsibility of overseeing the Mangyan in the north of the land. Kaig knew and fulfilled the responsibility given him. The enterprise which was extraordinarily expensive was in no way related, however, to the result which it showed. Kaig himself had a very pessimistic opinion of it; he was convinced that the desired goal could not be reached with the paid civil forces or servants (Schebesta 1935).

Apart from his more sociological observations, Schebesta also made a significant contribution to the growing knowledge of the various Mangyan

ethnolinguistic groups. While previous writers like Gardner classified these people according to their geographical location, Schebesta grouped them according to salient points in their culture – according to such classifications as "primitive" or "civilized", "savage" or "domesticated" groups. He theorized that the great disparity between northern and southern Mangyan cultures might have resulted from the intermingling of the coastal dwelling "Moros" with the southern Mangyans who, as a result, "took on higher culture forms and habits". He further observed that "these southern Mangyans are usually easier to approach and cannot be compared with the primitive Mangyans of the North" (Schebesta 1935).

A growing demand by the Filipino nationalists that the administration of the non-Christian groups be turned over to their leaders caused the American civil government to reexamine its policies toward the minority groups beginning the year 1909. Worcester in his annual report noted how the demand has been made "so publicly and so persistently as practically to force its consideration (Report of the Philippine Commission, 1909-1911). In defense of the status quo, Worcester reiterated the oft-repeated point made by the Americans in support of their policy–the question of the Filipinos'

> ability and fitness to dominate, justly control and wisely guide along the pathway of civilization alien people . . . (i.e., the non-Christian tribes).

Worcester argued on three major points to support his strong opposition against the Filipino demand for self government of the non-Christian tribes: first, there existed a wide cultural gap between the Filipino and the minority groups; second, the Filipino had no just claim to ownership of the territory occupied by "wild men"; and third, the Filipino was ignorant of the hill tribes. "Mutual distrust and hatred" formed, according to the irate colonial master, "an insurmountable barrier between Filipino and non-Christian" (Report of the Philippine Commission, 1909-1911).

In effect, Worcester's view of majority-minority relations outlined the United States' policy on the existing ethnic problems. As Secretary of Interior, Worcester decided the tenor of the U.S. attitude toward the minorities, which at this point of time favored isolation rather than admixture of pagans, Muslims and Christians. This divisive policy did not last for long as the Philippine Bill was passed in 1913 which provided for extended powers of self-government to the Filipinos. The Bill of course effected a radical change in the American policy regarding the issue of inter-ethnic group relations in the country. This change was further defined in the 1914 report of the governor general, a part of which is quoted below:

> By this means also, the distrust heretofore reported to exist between the hill people and the civilized people of the plains will be eliminated and a feeling of mutual regard and

respect will be engendered. It is obvious that common feelings of nationality among the peoples of the Philippines can only be secured by bringing them into association and contact with each other. Maintaining and strengthening the barrier which has in the past been erected between them will not serve (Report of the Philippine Commission, 1915).

The idea of a common nationality, engendered by the propagandists and finding its most intense expression in the revolution of 1896, reached at this point a form so distinct and intense as to form or force the Americans to come to terms with it. Thus, in the "Moro country" as well as in the Mt. Province, a new policy was inaugurated of "cultivating confidence and good-will between the non-Christians, and their Christian neighbors". In Mindoro, however, the death of the assigned American officer among the Mangyans, momentarily hindered the implementation of the change in policy.

Further changes were also introduced to centralize the work of the Department of Interior among the non-Christians. Winfred T. Dennison, the successor of Worcester, introduced a bill in the Philippine Commission placing the administration of the pagan groups in the charge of a new officer known as the "delegate of the Secretary of Interior for the non-Christian people". However, direct supervision of the hill groups was increasingly delegated to the provincial and municipal governments.

Howbeit, the apparent failure of the new system, as well as the general disorganization of the work among the hill groups, led to the reconstitution of the defunct Bureau of non-Christian Tribes in 1917. The rationale behind its reorganization was the advancement of what the Americans characteristically described as "backward elements of the population" to economic, political and social equality and unification with the dominant Kristiyano population. The law creating it gave it the duty

to continue the work for advancement and liberty in favor of the regions inhabited by non-Christian Filipinos and to foster by all adequate means and in a systematic, rapid and complete manner the moral, material, economic, social and political development of those regions always having in view the aim of rendering permanent the mutual intelligence between and complete fusion of all the Christian and non-Christian elements populating the province of the archipelago . . . (Report of the Philippine Commission 1918).

The newly defined goals of the bureau constituted a clear departure from what it normally stood for—an arm for an ethnological research and a policy making body for the minorities. In a word, the bureau was revived to work for the eventual assimilation of all the different ethnolinguistic groups into the mainstreams of the Filipino national life. For the first time, too, the supervision and administration of the work in Mindanao and Sulu (i.e., the

Muslim areas) were integrated into the totality of government programs for the pagan and Muslim communities. The department of Mindanao and Sulu was thus abolished and the domain of the newly reconstituted bureau expanded to include the special provinces of Agusan, Bukidnon, Cotabato, Davao, Lanao, Mt. Province, Nueva Vizcaya, Sulu, and Zamboanga. Obviously, Mindoro was not classified as a special province. This omission was presumably because the island's hill groups, the Mangyans, unlike the Muslim and the Mt. Province ethnolinguistic groups, did not constitute a political voice nor a threat to the security of the colonial government. On the other hand, the areas listed as special provinces (where most of the non-Christian funds or budget went) were all troubled areas–that is, the scene of armed native resistance. Thus, the Muslims and the ethnic groups from the Mt. Province and Nueva Vizcaya were the sole communities which truly benefited from the positive measures taken by the colonial government.

The disciminatory administration of the Mangyans by the Americans is evident even in their dispensation of justice toward these people. A good example of this is the way the American colonial government handled a lawsuit filed by a group of concerned Filipino nationalists against the use cf sheriff force in the establishment of Mangyan settlements. The Supreme Court decision reiterated that it was legal for the colonial government to do so and to have Mangyans imprisoned for failure to comply with existing policies regarding the establishment of reservations. The same Supreme Court decision opines that:

> Theoretically, all men are created free and equal. Practically, we know that the action is not precisely accurate. The Mangyans for instance, are not free, as civilized men are free, and they are not the equals of their more fortunate brothers. True indeed, they are citizens, with many but not all the rights which citizenship implies ... but just as surely, the Manquines are citizens of a low degree of intelligence, and Filipinos who are a drag upon the progress of the state ... (Block and Noble 1927).

The conscious promulgation of the idea that the Mangyans are an "inferior" people in comparison with the lowlanders, the promulgation of specialized laws and government for them, the creation of settlements away from the "Tagalog Filipinos" all congealed the developing lines of ethnic distinctions emanating from the separate historical developments of the hill-dwelling Mangyans and the Hispanized coastal-dwelling Kristiyano. It must be pointed out that this solidification of ethnic boundaries between the Mangyans and Kristiyanos naturally encouraged members of the latter group to exploit the position of cultural superiority accorded them by the Americans. The contradictory American policy of wanting to protect the Mangyans and at the same time relegating them to an inferior position vis-a-vis dominant Kristiyano

groups all the more encouraged the enterprising lowland migrants to exploit the Mangyans through unequal exchange of goods and services, grabbing of their lands and direct plundering.

From one letter of an American official in Mindoro, we have an example of the form lowland exploitation took. The letter cites how a whole town lived principally by trading cloth, bolos, beads, and earthen vessels with the Mangyans who grew the crops essentially for them. Such practice led him to conclude that the Mangyans

> . . . did most of the work in the region and that the Christian Filipinos lived on the industry of the Mangyans (Miller 1904, letter in Mindoro-Palawan papers, #2).

Gardner writing about this issue cited instances of Kristiyano labor exploitation of the Mangyans. He notes how these people were much oppressed by fictitious debts with which they were charged by their Tagalog and Bisayan neighbors and made to pay in labor form. Gardner describes this in part in what follows:

> They are compelled to cultivate the fields of the coast natives and to bring in tribute of bees wax, honey, and crops from their own fields. Strong efforts have been made by the Provincial authorities to break up this practice so demoralizing to both parties, but evidence is hard to procure (Gardner, in Mindoro-Palawan Paper #2).

Another convenient way by which lowlanders exploited the Mangyans was through maintaining ritual forms of kinship with them, a good example of which is the *sanduguan* or blood brotherhood, where blood taken from the arm or breast was drunk by each participant, thereby forging a "compact which endures until death." Describing an aspect of this compact, Gardner reports that

> If it becomes necessary that an enemy should be killed it is possible to get a blood brother among the Mangyans to accomplish it. If at any time, a blood brother's life is in danger a blood brother warns him and will never leave him until the threatened danger is passed.

The rite, however, held no meaning for the lowlander except that of his own gain, "and the simpler mountain-dweller is thoroughly cheated in the long run". What was thus conceived as noble by the Mangyans was turned into a convenient tool for exploitation by the Kristiyanos. Among the Mangyan blood-brothers, however, it is reported that the exalted rite is fulfilled with almost fanatical devotion; that even the "poorest always have rice on hand for the *sandugo* when he comes to visit even at the time of the greatest scarcity of food". (Ordoñez, in Mindoro-Palawan Paper #3).

Apart from the sanduguan, the Mangyans likewise fell prey to various rackets made by wily lowlanders. Reports given some American officials directly in charge of them note how on different occasions, Kristiyanos obtained goods and money by taking advantage of the Mangyans' easily trusting nature. One such incident described in a court case involved a Mangyan who was induced to accept at the price of a carabao a certain piece of paper which allegedly would be changed into some

> coin paper and silver money after the lapse of seven Fridays, provided that on each of said Friday he would offer appropriate prayers for the success of the enterprise, and that said paper would make him a rich man, without any other consideration than said paper . . . (Philippine Report's 1918).

As in the other spheres of lowland-Mangyan relations, the exchange of goods itself served as a handy means for further profit-making on the part of the lowlanders. In one of Gardner's official government reports, he points out that the Mangyans clearly always opted to take their pay in cloth, beads, little bells, rings and salt which provided ample opportunity to the *tiendas* (i.e., market stalls) to clear a still larger profit (Gardner, Mindoro-Palawan Paper #2).

Profit-making also took other forms like underpayment of Mangyan labor, and in some cases total non-payment through the exercise of cunning and force. This unequal exchange of goods and services is illustrated in a government report which tells of the case of a Mangyan who was promised a chupa of sea salt in exchange for a boat fifty feet long which he made for a Kristiyano. This Mangyan complained to the American governor only because the promised wage, a liter of salt, was not paid (Annual Report of the War Department, Vol. 10, 1905:316).

The Kristiyano exploitation of the Mangyan also took the form of usury. The Kristiyanos' usurious system is described in the following account by Offley, the American Governor who also tried the case just mentioned:

> The *tao* (literally person) borrows a peso or two and gives one of his numerous children as a guarantee of payment. This child becomes the household slave and is allowed a credit of fifty centavos a month for its labor. But the child must eat and have a new shirt occasionally, the cost of which is added to the original debt, and by some means of reckoning the original two pesos become 72 at the end of the year. The debt continues to grow, though its payment in cash is not desired and is passed down from one generation to another (Annual Reports, 1905:542).

In relation to the preceeding case of labor exploitation through usurious credit system, Offley also reports one instance where two "Filipinos" were prosecuted by him, "for kidnapping Manguian children for an alleged debt of the father," while in another related case the accused stated that although

a Mangyan had worked for him for eight years in payment for a *sinamay*[9] shirt, the local value of which was 75 Mexican centavos, the debt still has not been paid for (Annual Report of the War Department, 1905:542).

One of the more compelling forces encountered by the Mangyans in this period was the influx of Tagalog, Visayan, and Ilocano migrants. The improved means of interisland transport to and from the surrounding regions, the reported well-being of Mindoro's coastal dwellers and the additional incentives from the colonial government attracted a great number of migrants to the island. Worcester, reporting on the overall achievement of the colonial government in Mindoro noted that between 1913 and 1929,

> An excellent state of public order has been established, and there has not been an armed *ladrone* (i.e., bandit) in the province for years. It was famous for "bad climate". We have shown that its climate is good, making its own really healthful by merely cleaning them up (Worcester 1934:464).

While the improvement proved beneficial for the Kristiyanos, it gave rise to manifold problems for the Mangyans who were faced with an ever-increasing number of land-hungry settlers who took every opportunity to grab lands cleared and cultivated by the natives. In a 1925 report of the Philippine Commission, land conflicts were noted to be increasing in alarming number due to the "intrusion of Christian home seekers over homesteads already occupied by non-Christians (Report of the Philippine Commission 1926:262). To protect the interest of the Mangyan and other ethnic groups classified under the regular provinces, a new policy was implemented by the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes. It was agreed with the officials of the regularly organized provinces that the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes through the provincial governor shall exercise control and supervision over the territory inhabited by non-Christians in these provinces. It was likewise decreed that the provincial board and the governor will transact business with the bureau in all matters affecting territories inhabited by non-Christians. In Mindoro, particular steps were taken to reserve the lands inhabited by different Mangyan groups, but this preventive measure as may be inferred from the annual reports, was not successful in arresting the swift flow of lowland migrants into traditional areas of Mangyan habitation.

An overall change in the American policy toward the non-Christian groups is apparent with the beginning of a new era in Philippine History in the '30s. At this point, the embryonic total concept of a national community acquired a more definite form which, in turn, paved the way for the creation of the concept of integration. One of the first acts passed in the inaugural session of the First Filipino National Assembly under the Commonwealth government mandated the abolition of the Bureau of Non-Christian

[9] a local fiber made from abaca plant.

Tribes. This action significantly expressed the keen aspirations of the pioneer Filipino lawmakers to foster national unity and solidarity by doing away with existing lines of ethnic distinctions based on subscription or non-subscription to the Hispanic religio-cultural base.

The whole tenor of the Philippine policy toward the "minorities" in fact centered around the idea of integration. Justifying the changes in policy, the first president of the Philippine Commonwealth declared in his inaugural speech before the National Assembly that there was no longer a need for the continued existence of a specialized role for the hill groups of Luzon, including Mindoro and Palawan:

> ... they today no longer exist to an extent sufficient to justify the continuation of the Bureau of the Non-Christian Tribes. Considering the marked advancement in the civilization and general progress of the special provinces, the so-called non-Christian problem has been reduced to one of solidification and development and our present effort is directed towards the simplification of our government agencies so as to insure efficiency (Message of the President, 1938:200).

Hence, under the Commonwealth government, the task of administering the "minority" groups was assigned to the Department of Interior, in an effort to ensure a better coordination of the development work authorized by the national government for the said program or regions. However, the traditional Filipino government, recognizing the difficulty of integrating the Muslims in the South, created the Office of the Commissioner for Mindanao and Sulu to direct the development work for the said area. This organizational structure continued to function as such until the outbreak of the Pacific war in 1941.

The coming of the Japanese in 1942 further pushed the Mangyans into the interior as the coastal Kristiyanos evacuated to the hills to avoid the brute exercise of power and outright use of terrorism by the invading forces. Save for some who were captured, taken as captives and forcibly used as guerilla guides, most of the Mangyans found refuge in the deep jungles of Mt. Halcon.

As the Japanese rule was short-lived, and their interest was primarily to stabilize their rule and extract maximum economic benefits from the archipelago in line with the greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, no direct assault was made on the Mangyans hiding in the interior. Japanese contact with the Mangyans came only when the Japanese retreated and hid in the hills as a consequence of their defeat. Some held out for years, living as "stragglers" or intermarrying with the more interior-dwelling Bangons.

The post-war reports on lowland Mangyan relations give a clear picture of the resumption and in fact intensification of the manifold external pressures which had accumulated during the American colonial regime. The result of a thorough survey done by a team of evangelical missionaries interested in

starting mission work in the island underscored the marked exploitation of the Mangyans in terms of labor, land and the exchange of goods. In brief, the team reported that

> . . . "Christiano" farmer persuaded them to do rough work in their farms and then give them little more than their food for their wages. The government has set aside reservations for them, but frequently, the government agent persuades the Mangyans who have cleared a piece of this land for farming purposes, to sell it for a small sum. Fearing to disobey the government appointed agent, superintendent of the Mangyan, the tribesman, will sell his land for a few pesos. The agent will then sell it to a neighboring "Christiano" farmer for a much higher figure (Philippine Island Survey Report 1951:9).

On the other hand, the end of World War II and the declaration of Philippine Independence from the United States brought to the force the existing undercurrents in Muslim-Kristiyano relations in Mindanao and Sulu. In the early '50s, armed conflicts between the government forces and the 'Moro' bandits broke out. These developments further underscored for the government the age-old problem of Muslim non-incorporation into the national community. To resolve this major threat to the integrity of this young Philippine Republic, a congressional committee was formed in 1954 to investigate the national problem involving interethnic relations. The findings of the committee revealed that the problem had deeply-rooted sources, transcending the sheer question of peace and order in the South. It was found out that the problem had assumed historic, economic, social, educational, and political significance.

One of the primary achievements of the committee was the creation of the Commission on National Integration (C.N.I.) charged with the specific mission of enhancing the progress of the Muslims and the other cultural community groups. Specifically, the law creating the Commission on National Integration (Republic Act 1888) on June 22, 1957 declared that henceforth the government policy towards the "minorities" was

> . . . to effectuate in a more rapid and complete manner the economic, social, moral and political advancement of the non-Christian Filipinos or the national cultural minorities and to render real, complete and permanent the integration of all said natural cultural minorities or communities into the body politic (Republic Act No. 1888).

While the vision behind the creation of the C.N.I. is impressive, its actual record of performance among the Mangyans does not appear equally laudable. In its almost two decades of existence, the C.N.I. managed only to establish showcase windows of its operations, i.e., the creation of one pilot community per ethnolinguistic group. Among the Mangyans, only one settle-

ment could be rightfully said to have received regular assistance from the defunct government body.

As defined by the Republic Act which created it, the CNI was to serve as the government's arm for national integration. While this concept acquired greater prominence within its years of operation, the CNI's assistance programs were confined mainly to the majority group among the Philippine Non-Christian Groups. The Muslims, being large in number and constituting a political force, have received massive government funds for the development of their region. On account perhaps of their generally passive and withdrawing character, the Mangyans have never been accorded the same or remotely similar assistance or support. To make matters worse, the CNI agents sent to work among the Mangyans, in a number of instances, have been the source of fraud and treachery themselves. The first CNI representative to the Mangyans (a Kalinga, and thus, a member of the cultural community himself) did not only swindle hundreds of Mangyans of their small earnings but likewise illegally had reservation lands surveyed and sold to some lowlanders.

On account of its failure to realize the original mandate given to it, the CNI was abolished early in 1976 by the President of the Republic of the Philippines. Instead, the Presidential Arm for the Administration of National Minorities (PANAMIN) was created and given official sanction under the country's Martial Law to directly administer the different hill groups.

SUMMARY

From our review of Mangyan ethnohistory within the context of the currents and tides of the regional and national events, several things come into sharper focus. We have seen how colonization and the long process of Hispanization laid the groundwork for the formation of the Mangyan-Kristiyano dichotomy within the microcosm of the emerging Filipino nation. This was the product as we have seen, of the ingenious Spanish policy of *reducciones* which paved the way for the restructuring of the traditional social order. A new form of social organization hinged on a different ideology, was formed out of the converts from the native community. The constant and continuous whitting away on the traditional communities of the Spanish colonial government through its religious agents ushered the converts into a new stream of historical experience. The consequent separate flows of historical currents which the converts and the non-converts went through inevitably led to marked differentiation in the Hispanic and market-oriented communities of those who chose to withdraw deeper into the hills and interior sections of Mindoro.

From the corpora of relevant historical data, one may easily establish the view that the slow congealing lines of ethnic distinctions based largely on the natives' diverting response to colonization, became solidified through

bureaucratic determination of the strong, centralized colonial government. We have seen how the concept of a minority became increasingly manifest with the keen American pursuit of the *reducciones* concept—the colonial government actively implementing a policy of isolation rather than a mixing of the lowland and hill groups. The idea of "non-Christian" tribes, fostered by the creation of special government rules for them and by efforts to restructure them into Indian-like reservations, all the more enhanced their position as a group distinct from what the Americans considered sociopolitically as "Filipinos". In apparent response to this divisive approach of the Americans, an antithetical idea emerged—that of "integration". This sprang from the concept of nationality which became a more dominant force from the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth onwards, as the ideals which brought forth the Filipino nation late in the 19th century acquired more urgency and relevance with the approach and the final attainment of independence.

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