



Figure 1. Butodaol, High Fufuama of the Upper Tau-Buhid. He wishes that the Government recognize the Tau-Buhid's right to isolation. [Photo taken with his consent when consulted through an interpreter regarding the argument of this paper.]

SORCERY, RIGHTS, AND COSMOPOLITICS AMONG THE TAU-BUHID MANGYAN IN MTS. IGLIT-BACO NATIONAL PARK

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The refusal of the Tau-Buhid to be intruded upon by the Philippine Government in their ancestral domain is intensifying. The State is unaware that resistance among the inhabitants in the remote regions of Mindoro is grounded in their practice of an offensive magic called “*amurit*”. Although this term appears recurrently in mediatory discussions, it is dismissed by government agents who view it as an excuse to avoid compliance with State law, and for lack of ‘scientific validation’.

For the Tau-Buhid, *amurit* is a complex and harmful magic that is effective only when the practitioner is truly the offended party. Being ‘offended’ in this context includes betrayal of trust, insult, or cheating, as well as transgression of consensus based on customary law. It gives the aggrieved the right to retribution and to compensation, including by death. In this paper, it is held that the rights-making dynamics of *amurit* should be viewed as integral to the Tau-Buhid notion of sociality. Moreover, the Tau-Buhid assert and insist on a collective ‘right to isolation’ in order to protect the potency of their magic. The essay is a necessary reflection on the State’s concept of governance vis-a-vis the Indigenous Peoples’ assertion of the right to isolation in the context of the Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park. It argues for acknowledgment of cosmopolitical ontologies within the discourse of conservation science.

Keywords: *Amurit, magic, sorcery, Tau-Buhid, cosmopolitics, ontology, conservation*

“...the encounters between diverse social formations and Euro-modernity..., *always demand that non-moderns reform themselves to be modern.*” - Mario Blaser (2009:883, emphasis added).

Introduction

The State does not realize that “local realities are more complex than policy models suggest,” as Tania Li has pointed out,

“...any legal mechanism, policy or broadly-based program will encounter a range of local conditions and unique dilemmas in its implementation.” (Li 2002:266)

Even conservation agenda in the form of “community based natural resource management programs” are prone to delimit the rights of indigenous communities in their lands. As intrusion into their territory expands it has raised magic to the level of political discourse. The Tau-Buhid¹ in this essay may be seen as an Indigenous People who orchestrate a different kind of world, beings, abilities, and another kind of humanity to make possible their struggle against permanent ties with the State. They are a people who have strategically reversed ‘alterity’ discourse, embracing the position of ‘other’-ness to assert for the right to be isolated.

The article is organized as follows: First, I critique theories that view magic through a scientific lens. In the discussion I often interchange the terms “malign magic”, “offensive/retaliatory magic”, and sorcery even if the ethnographic subject of this article – the Tau-Buhid practice of “*amurit*” – is descriptively difficult to fit exactly into these categories. Second, I discuss the context of the Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park² as a case at point. Third, I demonstrate how the Tau-Buhid conceive of rights through sorcery practices. And last, I analyze how malign magic, which necessitates an ontological basis, helps the Tau-Buhid assert their collective right to isolation as conservation activities diffuse throughout the region.

Those who participated in this study wish that the message of this essay should now reach the public in the hope that the State and its partner conservationists in Mindoro may recognize their ‘right to be isolated’.

¹Also transliterated as “Tau-Buid” (without the /h/ sound) in *Fanabuhid*. Some scholars (see especially Gibson 2015) argue that the Buhid and the Tau-Buhid do not have the /h/ sound, however those who participated in this study believe that they also produce the /h/ sound in their language.

²A reclassification of the park into a “Natural Park” was granted by the Republic of the Philippines under Republic Act 11038 signed by President Rodrigo Duterte last June 22, 2018, amending the *National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992*. However, to retain the ‘ethnographic moment’ when I first conducted my fieldwork I continually use “National Park” all throughout.

Revisiting magic and anthropology as science

Anthropological discourse on magic seems to have been deliberately abandoned after exhaustive discussion of possible ways of interpreting magic and understanding how it functions were made in classic accounts³. I suspect that this was so because some anthropologists were obsessed with establishing anthropology as ‘science’ and hence avoided positivistic critiques that might have been provoked by discussing the topic of magic (e.g. White 1943, Wolf 1964, Harris 1979).

More recently, however, whether anthropology is indeed a science has become a controversial topic. The American Anthropological Association (AAA) was even forced to release an official statement “after its Executive Board removed the word *science* from the association’s long-range plan” (Peregrine et al. 2012:593). To correct “the mistaken impression” that the organization believes “that science no longer has a place in anthropology”, the AAA clarified that it “recognizes and endorses the crucial place of the scientific method in much anthropological research” (Kelsey 2010).

Long before this event, anthropology had been dealing with magic by defining it as both “belief and behavior” in which, “the relationship between an act and its effect is not empirically or scientifically verified” (Moro 2012). There were attempts in the discipline to re-inspect its own epistemology and to revisit literature in the hope of effacing traces of metaphysical accounts. Some treated magic, or whatever could be salvaged of it such as sorcery, witchcraft, or broadly the “spiritual”, by putting the term within the discourse of religion (e.g. Bennett 1996, Cunningham 1999, Klass 1995, Banton 1966).

Should we blame those who first cast this intellectual spell? I think that they interpreted magic the way they did because of the prevailing intellectual atmosphere of that time. For how can one who is familiar with the logic of “Cartesian rationality” or the more recent logic of Popperian falsification (Popper 1963) justify the Trobriand Islanders’ belief in ‘virgin birth’ or in the specific *baloma* [spirits] empowering the *megwa* [magical chants]? (Mosko 2017a; see also Mosko 2017b and 2014). E. E. Evans-Prichard hopelessly wrestled with the Zande practice of ‘leechcraft’ (Tambiah 2017), and according to Margaret Wiener (2017) finally took matters into his own hands by conducting a healing session in his own home. Wiener (2017) suggests that

³ For the ‘classic accounts’, see Malinowski (1916, 1922, 1948a, 1948b), and Evans-Prichard 1937. Graham Jones (2017) argues that it is as if ‘magic’ has played a central role in anthropological theorizing, mainly by highlighting the supposed irrationalities of non-Western cultures (see Mosko 2017a).

it was his attempt to grasp magical dynamics in a more ‘warranted’ form that led Evans-Prichard to interpret magical acts as an illusionist’s tricks, so that he could then had the convenience of invalidating them scientifically. Moreover, adopting the same ‘science attitude’, without realizing that it would be inappropriate to “measure and verify by the same standard” healing by magic vs. by scientific methods, he dismissed the Azande healing rituals, describing that,

“the enormous number of drugs which (they) employ and the variety of herbal products they bring to bear on a single disease at once demonstrate their lack of therapeutic value when we reflect what *scientific* pharmacology really implies.” (Evans-Prichard 1937, cited in Tambiah 2017:453, emphasis added)

It follows that obsession with the ‘validation’ of magic is only a response to the demand for scientific enquiry. However no justification of magic can ever be truly achieved using scientific investigation since the two are simply incompatible. Subsequently, while some anthropologists continue to pursue the act of *sciencing*, to use Leslie White’s (1943) term, others have confronted the limits of scientific obsession and have reached the conclusion that there is “no one way of doing anthropology, but many”, even if some are ‘non-scientific’ (Ingold 1994:xiii). As Tim Ingold puts it,

“like philosophy, the remit of anthropology is not confined to a delimited segment within a wider division of academic labor; rather it exists to subvert any tidy division, rendering problematic the very foundation on which it rests.” (Ingold 1994:xvii)

Myriad meanings of magic would have been identified earlier if only anthropology practitioners were not preoccupied with ‘sciencing’, and sorting what is and what is not ‘scientific’. This is why a return to the study of magic has emerged⁴ that is no longer after justification or validity but seeks its phenomenologically rooted meaning in the life-world of those who practice it.

⁴ Mark Mosko (2014) for example uses the ‘New Melanesian Ethnography’ (NME) to give an alternative interpretation for the concept of *megwa* in Malinowski’s ethnography, arguing that it is not the words of the spell itself, but the agency of the *Baloma* that ‘empowers’ it. Through this rendering, Mosko was able to coordinate previously fragmentary details about Trobriand magic into a coherent account of “Trobriand sociality”.

Similarly, I believe that magical acts persist especially among indigenous communities, neither for material nor pragmatic function nor for spiritual benefit only, but to facilitate an ontological construction of the deeply existential and mundane plurality of meanings, which would be unintelligible on the basis that events happen on pure accident alone. Because, like witchcraft among the Azande, magic in the case of the communities herein cited, explains *why* “events are harmful”, and “not how they happen” as science does (Evans-Prichard 1937 as cited in Tambiah 2017:454).

Another mode of ‘rationalization’ of magic takes the form of structural-functional explanations for magic. For an example closer to home, Richard Lieban (1967) argues that malign magic practices among the Cebuano may be seen as “a product of social discord and as index of inadequacy of social controls” (1967:125, see also pp.127-149). Cebuano practice of sorcery

“has stabilizing as well as divisive aspects, and ... sorcery beliefs may be instruments of social control preventing conflict as well as giving expressions to them.” (Lieban 1967:125)

Magic helps recognize that the precarity of life makes sense in human relationships within their life-worlds. These are meanings which a ‘pure scientific’ framing may have overlooked. Indeed this intellectual turn might be called another ‘Enlightenment’ for the anthropology of magic, in that magic can now be analyzed in its own right based on the premise that “magical acts are ritual acts”, and thus, are “*performative acts*”,

“whose positive and creative meaning is missed and whose persuasive validity is misjudged if they are subjected to ... empirical verification associated with scientific activity.” (Tambiah 2017:451)

So, if anthropology is a science, “whether one defines it according to universal features or culturally specific ones” must be clear (Scott 1996:69). Moreover, anthropology must be a “philosophy with people in” as Ingold put it: “we study *with* people, rather than making studies *of* them” (Ingold 2018:11, 19).

The Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park

Sadly, the consequences of ‘sciencing’ are apparent not only in anthropology. The apparatuses of positivism [the institutional infrastructure of the State and university Education] are also employed for example in the making of governmental conservation and protection programs that acknowledge only

what seems to be ‘scientifically’ verifiable. This is the case in the Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park (MIBNP) in Mindoro (Fig.2), a declared Protected Area (PA) of approximately 106,000 hectares.

The MIBNP overlaps with the ancestral domain of the Tau-Buhid. The Tau-Buhid’s understanding of the beginning and end of their land, contrary to State’s formal claim on the extent of the park is a common problem when certain maps are used to define specific areas of land as against to how the Tau-Buhid know by experience the extent of their land/s. Conflict arises whenever “boundaries” become topic in meetings. As of this writing, leaders of the Tau-Buhid understand per the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), that their ancestral domain has not yet been given a corresponding Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT). According to *Punong Tribo* [tribal leader] Fausto Novelozo, the indigenous people’s lack of technical understanding of what land titling means (true or not) is cited by the Protected Area Superintendent (PASu) as the reason for why State initiatives in the Protected Area “cannot be resisted” by the Tau-Buhid.

The Tau-Buhid Mangyan⁵ are comprised of several different communities, namely: Tamisan, Bayanan, Bangkodo, Anyayos, Tagurades, Balagit, and Pampam, among others. These communities are temporary in nature as settlements are created, reorganized, and sometimes dissolved. The Tau-Buhid’s demand for ‘space’ is in response to both practical and cultural needs.

In terms of geography, these communities coinhabit the rough mountains and plateaus in Mindoro with an endemic faunal species: the tamaraw, (*Bubalus mindorensis* [Mindoro dwarf buffalo]), called “*unwang*” in Tau-Buhid (Figs.3 & 4). The tamaraw population numbers only 513 individuals as of the 2018 annual count. These animals can also be found in other areas of Mindoro such as in Calavite point and at Aruyan Malate, but the majority forage in the hill regions in the municipalities of Calintaan, Sablayan, and Rizal in Occidental Mindoro (Iglit) extending to as far as the province of Oriental Mindoro (Baco) in the municipalities of Bongabong, Pinamalayan, Bansud, and Gloria (DENR n.d.).

⁵ The term “*Mangyan*”, referring to the indigenous peoples of Mindoro, is an exonym which does not necessarily bind all groups. Quite the contrary, each “tribe” identifies themselves according to their ancestral locality. These eight groups are known as the *Iraya*, *Buid*, *Tau-Buhid* (sometimes called the “*Batangan*”), *Ratagnon*, *Tadyawan*, *Hanunuo*, *Alangan*, and the *Bangon*. The *Bangon* are sometimes a disputed group since their origins are similar to the Cuyonon-speaking people of Palawan, thus for many “*Mangyan*” there are only seven (7) ‘tribes’ in Mindoro.



Figure 2. Mt. Iglit. *The ‘upper Tau-Buhid’ inhabit the surrounding back areas of this mountain. Only these in the facing areas heading toward the summit are accessible to visitors at the moment. [It has an elevation of two thousand three hundred sixty four meters above sea level based on GPS (Garmin-eTrex10) verified through WHC-UNESCO information. For ‘cultural’ reasons I cannot provide a “map” showing these places.]*



Figure 3. Tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*). *This individual was injured because of a silo (snare-trap made of nylon), and is waiting to be found. Customary rules allow the indigenous people to take it for themselves, but forest rangers or “Tagalog” lowlanders are prohibited. Wounded tamaraws seldom recover from mishaps.*



Figure 4. Tamaraw remains. *The Tau-Buhid kill tamaraws once a year for collective ritual purposes. Decline in the tamaraw population is attributed to hunting, poaching, diseases, and accidents especially when males compete for territory. Remains like these are collected and stored at Station 2, and then transported to the Tamaraw Conservation Program. Sometimes conservation NGOs collect the prized V-shaped horns to serve as specimens for scientific analysis or for personal souvenirs.*

Through the Protected Areas Office (PAO) and the Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP) of the DENR, with their respective mandates in the entire region, the State has pursued “conservation” initiatives often without regard to the residing indigenous communities. The introduction of this ‘new term’⁶ has meant abrupt changes in their life-world, a typical consequence of capitalistic and globalizing activity.

According to my informants, two written agreements between Tau-Buhid and the State are currently in effect. The first agreement specifies that the location of current government facilities cannot be extended to other regions without approval from the tribal council. Informants said that it happened a ‘long-time ago’. (However I did not see the resolution; the Tau-Buhid do not have the copy of document to prove that it was really a ‘written’ one.)

The second agreement is very recent, and delineated the area where resident indigenous communities can make use of a trap called *balatik* (spear trap) [see

⁶ See Li (2002, 2014a, 2014b) for similar cases of capitalism and globalization in Indonesia. Li (2014b) discusses how the State’s introduction of new crops among the highland Indonesians forced them to invent a term to describe intensive cropping (or “agriculture” – the Indonesians during the course of Li’s year fieldwork did not have a word for agriculture). The new term, ‘lokasi’, an awkward translation of the English “location”, changes the cultural-economic life of the highland Indonesians.

Appendix A.] (Resolution No. 1 Series of 2016, DENR-PAO: “The delineation of hunting ground”). I have a copy of this document, which is on file with the PAO, TCP, and involved NGO offices. However I suspect that it is a “translation” for foreign conservation experts, since, according to an informant, the original is written in Filipino (Tagalog). The agreement is attached to the minutes of the meeting held at Station 2 on March 29, 2016. The minutes states that the meeting which started at 4:00 PM and ended at 12 midnight was attended by “more or less forty people from DENR-Tamaraw Conservation Program, Protected Areas Office and of the Tau-Buhid tribe headed by their tribal leader”. It was followed by a two-day (March 30-31, 2016) survey of hunting ground now called “strict protection zone”.

I would note however that this agreement does not necessarily represent the consent of the Tau-Buhid, especially those who reside in the upper regions. In my conversation with the highland leader Butodaol, he said that he does not accept the idea of “zoning”, although the recognized ‘over-all’ Tau-Buhid leader [*Punong Tribo*] Fausto Novelozo willingly entered into a compromise. In any case, the agreements had seemingly worked well until at one point the TCP and PAO decided to put up an additional structure called the “Lawitan Station”. Typically a station would be a house similar to an affluent Tagalog residence: with rooms, a kitchen, wash area, dining area, as well as solar power, water supply and other basic amenities. A station functioning as a patrol building requires a sizeable area of land for additional facilities such as ‘vantage points’, storage rooms, a recreational space, gardens, and small huts for visitors.

The exact year of construction of the Lawitan Station is unclear, and this confusion supports the Tau-Buhid’s complaint that construction of the station violates the ‘no expansion agreement’. According to informants, it was because an earlier structure was burned down in one of the annual burnings at MIBNP⁷ in early 2000. However one NGO in partnership with TCP and PAO dated it March 2017 based on the copy of their request for construction funding to the Center for the Conservation of Tropical Ungulates (CCTU). In this funding proposal it states that,

“the construction of a new rangers’ station to be used as a base camp for anti-poaching patrols and Tamaraw population

⁷ It is not clear whether the burning was accidental or intentional. Traditionally, the Tau-Buhid burn annually as part of their ritualized hunting activity aside from swidden cultivation. The TCP and PAO also burn once a year in order to easily spot the tamaraws during yearly counting.

monitoring...will be built on the upper Anahawin River at the head water of the Lawitan creek which has been identified as an important route passage for lowlander Mindoreño poachers coming from the west.”

According to *Fufuama* Kondi and *Fufuama* Poldo of middle regions however, construction took place even earlier based on the quality of cement foundation. They can trace back the age of construction through ‘cement analysis’. Their reference point for “cement-quality” as indicator of development is the time of a “Russian” businessman who used cement for his buildings. Before the Government possession of the park a small part of it at Station 2 was a ranch owned by a “Russian” businessman. Some edifices he left such as a house, a small water tank, and a swimming pool became properties of the first batch of rangers in the early 1960s. However with widespread and intensive conservation activities in the 1990s, these structures were replaced by new ones, such as larger rangers’ houses, a bigger underground water tank, and small patrol stations, to follow “international standards”. Since then new buildings were also created, now called Stations 1 and 3, including cable bridges, and just recently an ecolodge for visitors, and an NGO field office. The PAO and TCP offices that were located in another town in San Jose when I started my fieldwork were also transferred inside the park.

While several ‘consultations’ on proposed expansions have been held, the communities have never reached a consensus to allow other station facilities and vantage points to be built in nineteen (19) target areas located in what Tau-Buhid consider to be the ‘reserved’ sacred mountains of *Talafu* East and West, and ‘restricted places’⁸ of Iyan, Tarzan, Saligue, Nagbobong, Malibayong, Fangandatan, Mibluan, Inoban, Loibfu, Malitwang, Lanas I and II, Bato Fidel, Bayokbok, Magawang, and Anyayos, except for some of these already existing structures at Stations 1 (Magtangkob), Station 2 (Iglit Station), and Station 3 (Magawang Station) or “Tamaraw Plaza.”

⁸ “Reserved areas” are rich in indigenous medicinal supplies and are considered sacred, while “restricted areas” are economic places abundant in edible resources. These terms are part of conservationists’ rhetoric used in capturing how the Tau-Buhid describe these spatial domains. During my fieldwork, when I talked to foreign and local experts, these terms are what they used. The Tau-Buhid for their part have long explanations about these places sometimes also associating them with myths and other ancestral narratives.

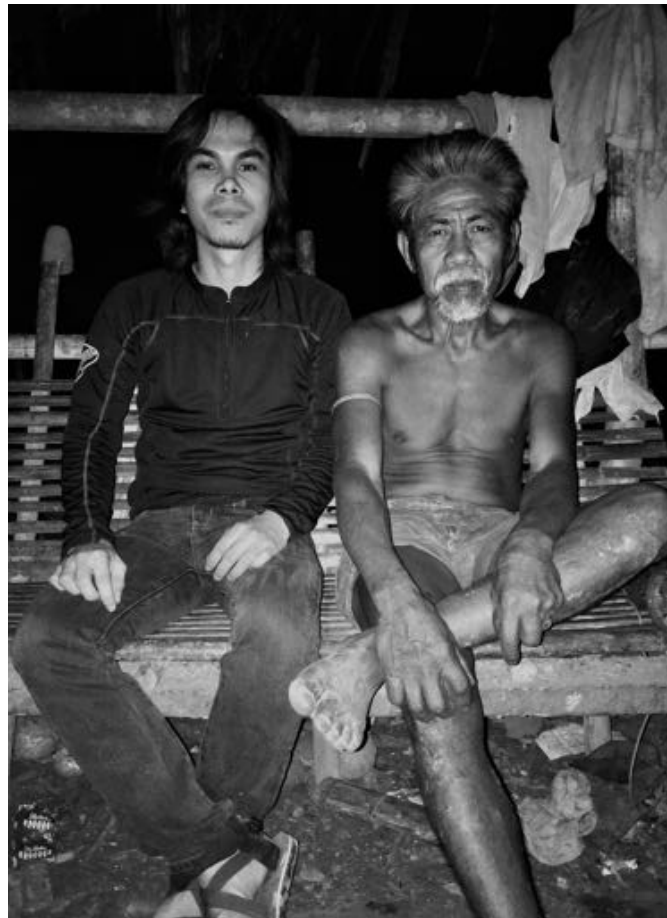


Figure 5. The author (left), with Fausto Novelozo (right), “*Punong Tribo*” (‘Tribal Leader’) of the Tau-Buhid. *By birthright Novelozo is the current head of the entire ‘Tribe’. Butodaol (Fig.1), however is by custom respected as the High Fufuama of the Upper regions including the secluded communities. There is no conflict between them as the arrangement is that Butodaol shall protect the upper regions and Novelozo shall protect the lowland regions while governing as the overall leader of the tribe. However, state-sponsored Tau-Buhid political figures challenge this leadership including succession, by promoting the “democratic” idea of choosing a head by election. Still, for most Tau-Buhid, legitimacy is dictated by culture and tradition.*

[Photo taken at Fausto Novelozo’s house in Tamisan. It is a sign of trust and good intention in Tamisan and other lowland communities to be photographed with the people. This is in contrast with their experience of having their photos captured to be used for magazines and NGO “sponsors”.]

For the government, the Station is a vantage point to detect the entry of poachers and hunters. But for the indigenous communities this is an attempt to penetrate the boundaries of areas access to which are restricted for customary reasons. Lands, including spaces that divide and connect such as the swidden, trails, rivers, forest edges, and other ecotones including human settlements, are protected by ancestral spirits. These spirits are communicated with in both the spiritual and earthly planes, and for certain areas they deny entry to *Siganon* ['outsiders']. Several *fufuama* or elders explained to me that the ancestors will be offended if they allow entry beyond what had already been agreed upon. They argue that unlike the lowland Tau Buhid who now enjoy [Christian] religion and believe that the soul shall go to heaven, for the Tau Buhid of the upper regions their dead are still living among them. This situation makes it difficult for the resident indigenous communities to accept lowlanders into their communities. Apart from fear that offended spirits could bring disaster to the communities, they also fear to lose their capacity for malign magic.

However, conservation workers think that indigenous communities are just making up excuses to deny entry. It also boosts outsider suspicions that the indigenous communities provide refuge to the New Peoples' Army (NPA), or that they are hiding evidence of butchered tamaraws and other protected species, or even, as some imagine, that the indigenous possess golden treasures, hence the desire for seclusion.⁹ The Tau-Buhid may be aware of these views, however even under intense interrogation they consistently insist that the ancestors will not permit access and that they would lose the efficacy of their *amurit*.

Magic is an essential aspect of Tau-Buhid community life and a substantive aspect of the Tau-Buhid identity. Malign magic empowers individuals to seek retribution on the premise that the right to live is not only innate in an individual but also communally created. To clarify, one who deviates from one's obligation to another may be subjected to malign magic, if not one's properties (sentient and nonsentient). The exercise of malign magic results from an enemy's moral transgression of established consensus, and respect of consensus is the basis for their collective struggle for the right to isolation. Without malign magic it will be too difficult for them to conceive of such rights. Loss of its 'power' through lowland intrusion may therefore amount to ethnic collapse.

⁹ These kinds of suspicions apparently occur elsewhere 'development' is brought to out-of-the-way places by outsiders, Li (2004) for example, might concur.

In the context of limited space shared by people with conserved species (specifically the tamaraw), unfortunately continual intrusion on what for the Tau-Buhid are restricted areas is seen by the State as connected to its mandate. In its perception, this is historically well-established (see Fig.6). The state also assumes that right of access extends to foreign NGO partners whose entry consequently contributed to the exacerbation of the problem.



Figure 6. Marker at Station 2, a.k.a. “Iglit Station”. *Among the names etched on it is that of “Manuel Elizalde” [Presidential Assistant for National Minorities (PANAMIN)]. Government control of the area had been authorized by then President Ferdinand Marcos in May 1967.*

According to my informants, when intensification of conservation and preservation efforts began (roughly since 1993), the residing indigenous communities did not support such programs. But when this sentiment reached the DENR Protected Areas Office (PAO) and Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP) they did not consider it to be relevant. As one foreign expert recommended in a meeting in 2017 with various specialists at the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau in Quezon City, the problem can be solved through the “full enforcement of the law” and the Tau-Buhid will have no choice but to cooperate. Regrettably, “cooperation” has been legally reconfigured from its original meaning of voluntary participation founded on “Free and Prior-Informed Consent” into a coerced behavior.

Entry of outsiders in their indigenous territories is seen by the Tau-Buhid as being done in deliberate disregard of their autonomy and collective decision-making, and as expression of the State's coercive power. This power is reinforced through the way Mts. Iglit-Baco is re-organized into a park in accordance with 'international standards'.¹⁰ The upland Tau-Buhid appreciate the conservation projects as clear manifestations of capitalism, globalization (Appadurai 2006), and other "modernizing" State-sponsored devices (though the Tau-Buhid do not use these terms).

The government is also aware of the issue. Toward more 'inclusive' conservation it needed to consider the subsistence technologies of the indigenous cultural communities in creating alternative livelihood to replace them. But these efforts did not receive attention from the Tau-Buhid, who know it will result to limited access to their lands. Scientific conservation projects also never gain support from the locals, not only because they start from a different narrative about life, but because they are supported by the same legal structure that is regulating traditional resource use activities such as swidden cultivation, hunting, foraging for medicinal plants, and other activities within the 'indigenous cultural conservation areas' (ICCAs).

The Tau-Buhid are trying to salvage their remaining resource areas and protect those which have not been penetrated as yet, and to pursue a more "autonomous" way of life. To resist an imagined future imposed upon them, they use magic beyond its supernatural context as source of leverage against the State (*cf.* Li 1996:503). The failure of government initiatives comes from disregard of Tau-Buhid local realities constructed along the dynamics of rights exercised through magic. Hence, rather than recklessly assigning legal boundaries in different regions within the park, it may be best to understand first how magic captures the Tau-Buhid's resistance against the State.

In the next section I present *elevation* or association with the upper reaches of the mountains, and, *local alterity* or maintaining 'otherness', as modes of confrontation guised through the practice of magic, and superficially reinforced through the notion of supernatural power in sorcery.

¹⁰ This political catastrophe is found not only in the Philippines. For example, Li (2014a) captures opposing political forces in her fieldwork among the Lauje-speaking people of Sulawesi, Indonesia. There, as is happening now in Iglit-Baco, intensified capitalistic activity forces the highlanders to compromise their life-ways, and their land rights, to the "march of progress promised in modernization narratives" (Li 2014a:2). With these new relations of inequality, the Lauje realized that their lands, including their capacity to autonomously produce crops, were lost.

The potency of Tau-Buhid ‘culture’

Amurit is believed to inflict harm to an enemy through ‘supernormal power’. Such power is often calculated in terms of how efficacious or potent is a certain magic one possesses. According to informants, this power is diluted by lowland contact, which is made visible in the acquisition of certain goods, or by remarked-on changes in one’s personal character or behavior. Lowland goods include: wristwatches to measure time instead of the traditional *unon*, mobile phones, flashlights used when traversing the mountains at night, utensils for cooking or eating, plastic pouches for storing *sulud* (tobacco) instead of the *sulpa* made of bamboo, footwear, and any other belongings sourced from the lowlands. As to the latter, this is constrained by how much Tagalog one knows (sometimes English too because of visiting “foreign experts”), and by having been given a name by the *Siganon*.

In the upper regions it often appears that names are not used, especially among men; they only call each other “*fagwes*” or “*faduksay*” which means ‘sibling’ or sometimes ‘friend’ depending on the context. Calling each other this way is a form of endearment, it is false to assume that they do not have names. When a *Siganon* asks a Tau-Buhid for their names however, they usually answer “*way ngayan*” (‘no name’) as an excuse to conceal their (or their children’s) real names, because the *Siganon* are ‘outsiders,’ non-friends, non-siblings. A *Siganon*’s response is to *give* names to Tau-Buhid instead, thereby allowing a Tau-Buhid to have a flexible identity. In practical terms, acquiring a lowland name enables one to conduct dealings with the lowlanders. The name is gratefully accepted in the belief that it will protect Tau-Buhid from the Tagalog’s own malevolent ‘magic’ (e.g. “*gaway*”, “*usog*”, or “*daw-daw*” / “*kilkig*” / poisons put in food/water, or curses).

Interaction with lowlanders is also manifested in clothing. But one who wears lowland clothing is considered ‘impure’ as one not fully living according to the instructions of the ancestors. Informants held that ‘purity’ is determined by how much of one’s body is covered with fabric. For example, both adult men and women members of the tribe who wear shirts as upper garments but retain the *gime* (g-string) are considered ‘contaminated’ but still living within the ‘culture’. [“*Kultura*” is a term that the Tau-Buhid are using to reconfigure their ‘collective identity’¹¹ in the face of the environmental

¹¹Let us be reminded of the classics: in Melanesia, a cultural category called *kastom* means values, traditions, ways of behaving, *despite* modern influences. Melanesian peoples, “are conscious of the need to retain traditional cultural forms in order to avoid the loss of personal and collective autonomy” (Eriksen 2004:38).

conservation initiatives from outside.^{12]} Those who wear both upper and lower garments – shirts, shorts, skirts, or other ‘Tagalog clothes’ – are considered well integrated in the *Siganon*’s way of life, hence not within Tau-Buhid culture anymore. Some wear only the *gime* but made from a piece of lowland textile. This is ‘acceptable,’ but considered unclean.

Most revered, if not feared, are Tau-Buhid who wear a g-string made from the bark of a soft-skinned tree (*au-yan*, T. Buhid), without an upper garment. They refuse contact with lowlanders and live by what is perceived as the ‘original culture’ as described in oral narratives. The lowlanders derogatorily call them the “*Hubad*” [‘naked people’], and sometimes “*Batangan*,” which they believe to be another of the Mangyan tribes in Mindoro¹³. The *Hubad* are stereotyped as the people who refuse to eat rice or drink coffee, avoid salt, sugar, and any food outside of those they themselves produce from their kaingin field (*gamason*)— such as squash (*badu*), *gabi*, potato (*bukay*), cassava, banana (*saba*), ‘banana heart’ (*tabobo*) and other swidden-grown vegetables, as well as the meat procured by hunting.

Potency is buttressed by ‘other’-ness or “alterity” (High 2013) in these distinctions. An *amurit* is most powerful when performed by one who refuses interaction with the lowlands. Thus, when the Tau-Buhid catch sight of *Siganon* or outsiders approaching from afar, in everyday behavior they would hide from sight to avoid contact. A “*Hubad*” refuses to receive relief goods or to eat rice for fear of losing the power of his magic through such contact, and in the belief that one becomes vulnerable to supernatural afflictions coming from the lowland. In some spells for example, one’s bidding is sealed with the phrase: “for as long as he has tasted rice”, therefore if one has indeed consumed rice one becomes susceptible to *amurit*.¹⁴ The rule is simple: the more interaction one has with the lowland the less magical power one possesses, the more secluded one is, the stronger one’s power becomes.

¹²Novellino (2011) discusses a similar case among the Batak, who use the concept “*kultura*” to define themselves in the face of an extensive ‘bureaucratization of the environment’ in Palawan.

¹³ For the lowlanders the “*Batangan*” are a separate group. However Gibson (2015:246, Map III), Conklin (1949), my fieldwork, and the Tau-Buhid themselves confirm that “*Tau-Buhid*” and “*Batangan*” are the same Mangyan ethnic group.

¹⁴ James Scott has analyzed how, in resistance to the State, some rice-cultivating communities in Southeast Asia gave it up in order to live more autonomously as swidden cultivators in the highlands, away from State control (Scott 2009:64-178).



Figure 7. Butodaol and his attendant. *Butodaol is in complete indigenous regalia: gime (g-string of bark), bagtu (smoke pipe), unon, sulpa, subat, and a fiso. He is assisted by a boy attendant (left), whose main responsibility is to ensure that there is always small coal available from the unon, and that sulud (tobacco) is always available to keep Butodaol's pipe smoking, especially during meetings. The boy is prohibited to talk to anyone, not even mention to his name. Based on his gime, he is not from the secluded regions.*

[Note: Butodaol's name is a coinage of two words from Ilocano (Buto, lit. 'penis') and Tau-Buhid (Daol, lit. 'huge'). By custom his own people simply call him fufuama or sometimes mama. No one wants to reveal his real name for fear of his conceived malign supernormal power which might be accidentally invoked through his name. He is happy to accept the outsider or Siganon-conferred name on him, "Butodaol". I respect his request not to tell anyone his real name.]

In turn, since ascending location and the degree of interaction with the lowland affect the effectiveness of malign magic, those who know a spell but are already assimilated to lowland ways cannot access its power anymore. This is the case for the Tamisan community located at Station 1, where lowland assimilation is evident not only in clothing but also in the symbolically meaningful presence of edifices such as a school, NGO facilities, chapels, a newly constructed road, and electricity.

Informants aver that road construction has been a source of tension as the upland Tau-Buhid fear it might encourage more visitors to the park, and given the presence of the NPA. Recently, when heavy equipment was burned down by unknown parties, suspicion was directed to the tribesmen. The government subsequently sent military troops to prevent sabotage, which has militarized the park now. To remove the suspicion that they are “anti-government”, some lowland Tau-Buhid have joined the paramilitary Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU).

The ceremony to ‘switch on’ the first electricity connection in Tamisan was held on the evening of February 14, 2018. But before it took place, I was told that some conservative Tau-Buhid have already started to separate from Tamisan to create new communities away from where there is electricity. They appreciate that electrification will bring new commodities and will force them to secure extra work to pay monthly dues. According to them, ‘it is not electricity that they wanted but only light’.

In this area has also been a shift from how the *amurit*, once an important aspect of their life-ways, is now being described as something that is “evil”, an idea acquired from Christian canonical teachings. Several missionary movements (*cf.* Gibson 2015) have wiped out most of the animistic aspects of lowland Tau-Buhid life in favor of the idea of one God. Today, monotheistic dogma is maintained by different competing Protestant groups such as the Dating Daan, Pentecostal Church, and the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA) among others, as well as the Catholic Church [which the Tau-Buhid had expelled recently¹⁵] and with room for syncretic beliefs and practices. According to my informants, when they cannot defend themselves against powerful sorcerers, those who are subjected to *amurit* in the isolated regions seek refuge in Tamisan. This community ‘in the middle’ had transformed itself into a new kind of Christian ‘sanctuary’ where “evil” cannot penetrate. It is undeniable that the present hierarchy of local alterity is

¹⁵ According to informants, the nuns repeatedly interfered with community decisions.

formulated through a contact-resistance strategy. Whether this order indeed maintains the power of sorcery is immaterial to how it is used by the Tau-Buhid to politically insist on their right to isolation.

In what follows will be discussed the configuration of gender roles aimed at achieving an autonomous way of life, a cooperative privileging of alterity.

Women as ‘property of men’, gendered magic

It is a Tau-Buhid premise that women (*mangena*) are men’s ‘property’ (‘disposable possessions’). Women’s ‘property-status’ is discerned based on a complex body of customs in daily life. It is noteworthy that this is defined in terms of magic, rather than in any kind of low regard for the place of women in the community.¹⁶

Strategically, women submit themselves to men to insist on the image of an ideal man. The ideal man is conceived as one highly skilled in the arts of magic, hunting, gardening, and foraging, among others; one who can provide food and protection for the household. Being women’s ‘owners’, Tau-Buhid men assume the responsibility of imparting practical skills to women and of being efficient partners. For a man to be lacking in these attributes is unfortunate since it reflects incompetence, it makes a man unworthy to have a woman. It also ensures that women become effective community members.

Women willingly submit themselves to men without being reduced to passive sentient possessions. This does not mean to assert for recognition nor to fall into a duality but to allow, borrowing from Marilyn Strathern, a “connection”¹⁷ between men and women (Strathern 2004 cited in De La Cadena 2010:347) built on the premise that both of them understand the implications of their “gender-agency” within a small community bounded by custom. The chance to deviate is available, but they would rather conform for the sake of the community.

The role of women is indeed important in Tau-Buhid customs. To give an example: if a woman dies from giving birth, during a death ritual her living infant is placed by her side and they are put together inside a cave or between massive rocks in a secluded location. This symbolizes that women alone can

¹⁶ It is indeed controversial considering the amount of literature charting the progression of gender discourse based on the “passive-active divide” in Western paradigm (Irigaray 1985, Butler 1988, and Strathern [1972] 1988, 1995, and 2004, among others).

¹⁷ “Partial connection” is Strathern’s (2004) original term.

nurture the life of any child in the tribe. Even if the husband of the deceased wants to care for their child, custom forbids it since he is ‘not a woman’. Instead, a nursing woman in another community who has lost a child and finds the infant in the tomb may take care of it as her own child— according to custom, being a woman she is legitimately capable.

It is held that only a nursing woman from *another* community can break the curse the child inherits from the deceased mother. If we analyze it, this is done to prevent disruption of available limited resources. Informants reasoned that if a nursing mother in the same community takes the orphan the infant will compete against her own. This shows how women are not only ‘parts’ or gender components, but they are also the ones who create the ‘connections’ in the Tau-Buhid lifeworld, ensuring that resource sharing remains intact. In some communities any able woman from another community whether nursing or not, may adopt the infant if she finds it. This rule is strictly observed in the secluded upland regions. However, in Tamisan and in other lowland communities the custom is not observed anymore.

In swidden cultivation women contribute to decisions on seeds to be sown and the estimate of their equivalent yields. Men take care of the ritual necessities such as making the first cut to a tree deemed critical to the growth of plants, or uprooting the first weed, or making the first fire before the swidden is entirely burned. Women join in the clearing, weeding, tending, harvesting, and exchange and selling of produce from the swidden to the middle regions, from where they are brought to lowland markets. Men, bound by some active magical constraints in *balatik* areas, wait patiently until their trap has captured game, while women, who cannot take part in a ritually grounded *balatik*, hunt for birds, frogs, *labuyo* (wild chicken), rats, or fish in the nearby streams, until the men bring a large amount of meat for redistribution.

A Tau-Buhid woman’s ‘resourcefulness’ combined with the ‘training’ she acquired from her man makes her ‘priceless’. Diminution in resourcefulness would allow her husband to exchange her for another (single) more productive woman. If he may decide to return her to her parents the man knows that the community will subject him to ridicule because such act also reflects *his* incompetence as ‘owner’. A woman considered ‘less resourceful’ (such as someone who is still young) should be paired with a man willing to train her to become more skilled. Women who are considered ‘too old to be trained’ may stay home, or in a *balefamoy* [swidden house] to protect the crops, trapping birds and other edible animals. Women are ‘priceless possessions’ of

men for as long as they are productively reciprocating what men can do in the community.

Decisions that are collectively made in the tribe are joined in by women, whose lapses can also have a detrimental effect in the entire communal economy just like men's. In short, women enjoy the full privilege of being members of the community, participating in various activities extending beyond the household. Nevertheless, there are areas exclusive to men. These areas of life are *anything* involving the supernatural.

Hence, while women can hunt, plant, or administer a cure, they must consult men since these are ritually bounded processes governed by taboos which men are tasked to perform. These acts are also complex in that they are charted in the cosmological order— areas which men alone are deemed skilled to interpret. While women may not be practitioners of magic, they also share in its effect and are agents in the dynamics as either victims, object of disputes, or in providing cure or convincing their men to effect or withdraw an *amurit*. It follows that even if women know that they can only freely act in the absence of any supernatural injunction, including in political affairs, as men's properties they do influence 'men's affairs'.

To be clear, this does not mean that women are not capable of learning magic. In fact, some women are also known to possess forms of what may be called an *amurit*. They learned them from their fathers, who saw them as more worthy to transfer such knowledge to than their male relatives. But, these *amurit* are regarded as weak; informants held that they cannot really be called *amurit*. For Tau-Buhid, a true *amurit* is reserved to men. In other words, women refrain from magic because magic is associated with men, and such choice also defines their collective identity as Tau-Buhid.

Neither is it to say that women are not capable of leadership, but within Tau-Buhid communities the role of formal leader is deeply anchored on cosmologic connections. For example, in Tamisan the daughter of the Chief sometimes assumes the role of dealing with government in place of her father. She assumes this role because she is the most outspoken among them and highly familiar with these matters, but also because it has no magic requisites. She is vigilant as to the entry of conservation NGOs and as a consequence is seen negatively by different parties with interests in MIBNP. They accuse her

of inciting people to distrust various organizations and to resist governmental initiatives in the park.¹⁸

Traditionally, the successor of the chief is his youngest son. If there is no son, the daughter may also become the next chief. But since the ‘chief-making’ process is traced along intricate magico-ancestral origination the male succession has not been broken even once as of this writing; no woman has ever risen to formal political rank. Again, it is not the image of women as the “weaker sex” in the popular ‘Western gender paradigm’ which makes them ‘property’ of men, it is rather based on how much they can contribute to the community. Being ‘property’ is the agency of women submitting themselves to men, and constantly requires reflection by men on the limits of the ideals imposed on them. By this mutual submission to each other the egalitarian characteristic of the Tau-Buhid society is constantly reinforced.¹⁹

The ‘connection’ between previously separate men and women constitutes a collective self; a ‘self’ is always referenced to a shared understanding. Following this principle, a very young child for example ‘has no name’ (“*way ngayan*”) until he reaches a certain age where the community sympathetically confers a ‘self’ on him through a name. Selfhood arises from and returns to the community, thus to take advantage of others is seen as an act offending to one’s own communal roots. When this happens, one can be denied of his right to live, as it is by custom alone that one exists as a ‘living self.’

To take life requires an understanding of the basic tenets governing magical acts, the only permissible way to take away the life of a now ‘selfless’ offender.

Tenets of magic, sorcery as justice

Assigning *amurit* to the categories of ‘sorcery’ or ‘witchcraft’ is difficult if only ritual is considered. In the notion of witchcraft the power to harm emanates from the witch, while sorcery is commonly held to be effective when objects derived from the victim are used, or with the help of a spirit familiar, sought during ritual (*cf.* Lieban 1967:65-66; Greenwood 2009, 2005). By

¹⁸ It was refused for her to be present during a dialogue-meeting by the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in collaboration with the DENR. They consider her to be ‘difficult to deal with’ because she ‘asks too many questions’. (Gloria Noveloza-Sunggalom, personal communication, March 2018).

¹⁹ As of this writing, women residing in the uplands cannot initiate a divorce. In contrast, a woman in the lowland regions (Tamisan and others) can divorce her husband through mediation by the Punong Tribo and his *fagtainan*.

contrast, an *amurit* relies on the incantation and on certain cosmological conditions for it to be effective. (However an *amurit* incantation also informs other beings that a spell is placed in the area.)

Although some deceased elders may be called in during rituals, or certain beings may be communicated with when hexes are put (in specific trails for instance), they are not considered familiars that are bound to their keepers.²⁰ The spirits conjured in *amurit* exercise their own agency, and are capable of refusing to partake in it. Their refusal to participate does not hinder the success of a certain spell, but when they conspire it increases the force of such magic. For this reason, spirits are only conjured to seek their cooperation during rituals, but not as necessary entities employed for their powers.

Beyond ritual, an *amurit* as a form of sorcery conforms to universally held requisites such as guilt and justice (see Lieban 1967:50-54). This is an important tenet of the ‘ideology of sorcery’: only within the context of its own morality may a sorcerer practice his magic against someone (Lieban 1967:26, Navokob 2000). An *amurit* is performed primarily as a source of justice, justice for *oneself*. This sets it apart from ‘Cebuano sorcery’ for instance, which can be performed “for hire”, with financial gain as motive, to augment the insufficient household income of the sorcerer, but even so an investigation of whether the client is the aggrieved one must be established first (Lieban 1967). Again, this is because of the values upheld in sorcery.

***Amurit* morality: the ‘right to take away life’**

Moral precepts in the practice of sorcery are not universal; sorcery-related sicknesses and accountabilities in the malign magic traditions in different settings should be approached with ‘cultural relativism’. Tau-Buhid sorcery can be contrasted with Cebuano sorcery. Both uphold the tenet that ‘he who is guilty may be harmed’. In Cebuano sorcery harm cannot be inflicted on the innocent, and on children who are considered too young to realize the consequences of their deeds and are therefore unable to feel guilt for having made those choices (Lieban 1967:107-108).

²⁰ By contrast, Buid ethnographer Thomas Gibson explains that engaging powerful familiars during seances is important when one is chanting alone because as a bounded spirit to its keeper any event which it may encounter when it flies happens also to the medium himself and hence a powerful one assures its keeper that it will be able to accomplish his bidding without mishaps (Gibson 2015:150-169).

Making the assumption that children are neutral agents is challenged by the way the Tau-Buhid assign them roles in a household. For them, children are disposable ‘assets’ who can serve as repayment of their parents’ debts. Not in a purely economic manner such as ‘value conversion’ or trade, but in terms of how a creditor-sorcerer may feel gratified by taking the life of his debtor’s child. The rationale is that a child who would soon become an adult helps in swidden cultivation and contributes to the household economy, and is thus valuable ‘property’. Clearly, the sorcerer’s intention can be to lessen the manpower in his debtor’s house instead of taking the guilty person’s life, amounting to sorcery’s economic equivalent of payment.

This is not however without moral parameters. It may not be applied to families with only one child, but only to those with several offspring. In the former case only the actual debtor is dealt with *amurit*, in the latter the sorcerer has the option to take the life of a child instead of the parent. It may also not be applied where the children are too young to cultivate the swidden or cannot be adopted by their less affluent relatives. If a sorcerer kills one of the parents the living one will find it difficult to raise their children, killing both parents will force the orphaned to fend for themselves. If one of their children is taken as ‘payment,’ it lessens the damage to the remaining siblings, ‘saving’ them from the misfortune of losing parental support.

Confronting the reality of sickness and death is an aspect of everyday life for the Tau-Buhid. Children’s deaths are usually seen as debt ‘repayment’ regardless of the cause, because children are economic ‘assets’ whose value is ‘enough’ for debts repayment. This moral interpretation for the alarming mortality of children makes such deaths bearable for residents of the middle region.

During the course of my fieldwork, I was witness to two such cases, in one of which a visiting paramedic concluded that the boy died of “asthma” (see Fig.8). But the boy’s father whom I have made friends with, told me that such death occurs after every 3 or 6 months in children of other households too (the deaths are abrupt, following a one full day duration of the symptoms). According to him this is a ‘typical cycle’ of an *amurit* seeking for payment.²¹ He admitted that he has several debts among the people in the upper regions and considered that his child’s “asthma” was symptomatic of *amurit*. As he

²¹ Redacted from the original Tau-Buhid: “*Ngay sisian at gfangang katian galay an dasug tolo o unom magdanun...masakit at gfangakate.*” [“*May batang namamatay kada 3 o 6 na buwan. Ito ay tipikal na panahon ng isang amurit na naniningil ng kabayaran. Biglaan din ang kamatayan ng mga bata.*” - Tag. context translation].

knew it would happen, there was a sense of relief in him that he had repaid a debt, but also worries that he has still to pay creditors to prevent further losses.

The morality of sorcery may be seen to work in terms of two practical purposes. First, it seeks to calculate the possible damages a family would incur while dispensing justice for oneself. Second, moral consideration is also geared towards self-protection because careless acts may cause the spell to rebound against the sorcerer. To demonstrate, Tau-Buhid always compare specific *amurit* to a *pugakang* or homemade rifle. Some park rangers own improvised guns as precautionary measures. The Tau-Buhid have observed how these guns are fired one bullet at a time. Just as someone could resort to a firearm when his own life is in danger, so as with sorcery, the one who carries a rifle must not harm the innocent. Like the improvised gun which can only fire one shot at a time so as with the *amurit*. Following the analogy, anyone who would cast a spell must be wise enough to ensure that the requirements of ritual are observed in order to sharply ‘shoot the target’. Because in case it is done without observing the strict rules, or when the target is far distant, if the sorcerer and his enemy are separated by bodies of water, or mountains, or areas impenetrable by sunlight, the spell may, as I said, ‘ricochet’.

Unable to complete its mission it can ‘ferociously’ deviate from its original trajectory. Informants compare it to how a slithering viper full of venom in the heat of noontime just has to release it to cool itself down. Should this happen, animals are usually least affected. But it may also happen that an animal is seen to have died as a result of a ‘lose bullet’ spell. This may lead to a new conflict, especially if the animal’s owner also possesses knowledge of the art of sorcery. In such a case the owner of the animal may demand that he too has to be paid damages. The guilt dynamic unintendedly reverses, granting an unintended victim all the moral requisites so that, as an offended party, he has now the right to cast a retaliatory spell.

Transmission of the magic arts

Given its moral and ritual intricacies, *amurit* must be passed on in its exact entirety just as it was received.²² Transmission to another is purposefully done. This ensures the continuity of this system for regulating behavior. It also guarantees that the knowledge stays with the Tau-Buhid.

²²In marked contrast to the Cebuano sorcerers who “are always trying new ideas” (Lieban 1967:21).



Figure 8. Children as ‘payment’. *Langkano* (second from upper left), one of the children in the middle region who frequently visited me (middle) at Station 2 had a habit of smoking a traditional *sulud* (tobacco). It is a practice widespread across ages among the Tau-Buhid. He died from a lung-related illness according to a visiting paramedic. But his father believes that his illness was symptomatic of *amurit*, and that his son died in ‘repayment’ to one of his creditors in the upper regions.

Any keeper of magic is obliged by custom to pass it on to another when he realizes the time is right, as in old age. Transference is from one generation to the next of an individual family. The elders are regarded to have been its first keepers and they have the responsibility to ultimately pass it on to any of their sons. There are claims that women also possess some types of *amurit*, however theirs are regarded as less effective than those of men. To reiterate, this is from the belief that men are ‘guardians,’ with their *amurit* as weapons, while women as property must be protected. It is men’s shared responsibility to inherit, continue, and transfer *amurit* practice. Custom dictates that only one individual man in a family may receive the *amurit* of an elder or his father. Other older males within the kinship group who are related to the new keeper may accomplish transmission to other male relatives provided that the ratio should be one *amurit* for one male individual in a family only. Nowadays, because of limited male population in most communities some mature men in a family may inherit more than one *amurit* type from older male relatives— if deemed worthy.

Given the responsibility to transfer such supernatural knowledge, most males in a community possess some kind of *amurit*, but those of the elders are most powerful. Even if one receives an *amurit* from a certain powerful *fufuama* it will also take time before one can master it to perfection because its power grows along with age. Powerful spells can only be found among the elders who originally possessed them. An elder does not share his spells with other *fufuama* as it may be used against him in complex situations²³. For the Tau-Buhid, this is to prevent ‘arming’ other elders with potent incantations they can ‘shoot’ against each other in times of ‘*amurit* war.’ An elder who has just transferred his spells to his apprentice may continue to use it against an enemy. And it stays with him, even as he becomes a *falad* [spirit]. When the last will of deceased elders is broken, their *amurit* is directed to their *own* communities.

Tau-Buhid sorcery is not a knowledge that is transferred outright. The incantations have to be mastered by a novice as exactly as they were handed to him. The receiver must have wisdom, patience, and status in the community, such as becoming a *fufuama* [‘white-haired grandfather’] before he can use an *amurit* to its fullness. Because powerful spells belong to the elders, they command great deference in the community. Master sorcerers are those who can manifest the result of their bidding in a certain spell (e.g. for killing) even before sunset.

²³ Sharing of spells is also a sensitive matter to other ‘tribes’ such as the Iraya (see Rosales 2016:284-300).

Malevolence, duration, and cure of sorcery

As sorcery symptoms are perceived to be manifested on a presumed target or to the persons or animals around him, they are immediately interpreted. A healer is mindful that an *amurit* spell has swift effect. In Tau-Buhid folk medicine the cure is called “*balugbugan*”, a magic that makes use of herbs, vines, roots, soil, and stones among other items. *Balugbugan* is a broad category that can also denote magic for love and sexual stamina. Different formula address what is lacking in an individual, but there are healing cures that are exclusive only for *amurit*.

It is difficult to administer a treatment for *amurit*. As its preparation requires time, no cure is really available. Moreover, these require corresponding ritual to effect (‘perform’) their cure. Healers in an allied community may be called in for help when there are no available healers, or certain cures can be sourced from somewhere else when they run out of ingredients. But the development of symptoms in a victim cannot be delayed. As the sun changes its position within the day and never returns to that location until the next day, so too progress of symptoms inherent in the location of the sun become irreversible (Table 1). Thus, it is a race against time— the *amurit* takes full effect upon completion of one ‘daylight cycle’ of the sun.

For *fufuama*, who switch roles as sorcerers or healers, the symptoms are noticeable at sunrise, and worsen until they become fully manifested at sunset or just before dusk [esp. in the case where death is the intended effect]. In the Tau-Buhid context, ‘sunrise’ is when the ‘tip of the sun’s rays radiate first light ‘without blinding the eye.’ At this stage of the day, it is believed that an *amurit* begins to enter the enemy through the parts of the body [see Appendix C] which are mentioned in the incantation. End of daylight closes a limited window (duration) to administer a cure.

Careful interpretation of the proper sunlight is crucial in all types of *amurit*. It is said to be through the sun that an *amurit* is channeled although, depending on the incantation, even bodies of water, a certain food like rice, and the wind can also be used as conduits to effect a sorcery bidding. The sun²⁴ shines on everyone, and hence, *no one can escape*.

²⁴ The sun as a cosmic body plays a significant role in many ritual traditions. Among the Sama-Badjao, rituals may be postponed to another favorable time even when they are already prepared, because the sun, or the “sunlight”, is deemed insufficiently visible on that day (Bottignolo 1998).

Table 1. Development of *amurit* symptoms

Intended Result	Sunrise <i>[fag/bukngamenit</i> / <i>[fag/balabag</i>	Mid-morning <i>[fag/bukngamenit</i>	Noon <i>[fag/tanghali</i>	Mid-afternoon <i>[fag/fafon</i>	Sunset <i>[fag/yabi</i>
Death	Start of symptoms	Symptoms begin to worsen	Fully developed symptoms	Bleeding, difficulty in breathing, total weakness	Death
Sickness ending in death	Start of symptoms	Symptoms begin to worsen	Fully developed symptoms	Intended disease fully inflicted	Long term effect: eventual Death
Sickness without death	Start of symptoms	Symptoms begin to worsen	Fully developed symptoms	Intended disease fully inflicted	Long term effect: until lifted (without death)
Misfortunes	Start of symptoms	Effect may or may not be apparent	Effect may or may not be apparent	Effect may or may not be apparent	Cannot work well until curse is lifted

Note: Variations in effect are dependent on the target's location including the weather condition where the spell was created. The prefix '*fag-*' indicates 'beginning' of a certain 'cycle' of a day. For example, mid-morning still carries the prefix because it is the time when the sun gets brighter indicating a prelude to another part of the cycle. In its cultural context such as in conversation and most especially in the interpretation of symptoms, it is unusual to remove this prefix

Dynamics of rights, conflicting ontologies, and cosmopolitics

Sorcery is a sensitive issue that can only be invoked formally. Thus, it is forbidden to thoughtlessly bring *amurit* to causal conversation. This state of deference toward sorcery exists since to talk about it they interpret as an act of ventilating one's anger against another. To speak of *amurit* is always tantamount to airing a dispute. It is through *amurit* that one can argue about one's rights over something, or over someone else.

Disputes are always a serious matter among the Tau-Buhid. They usually arise when agreements are not fulfilled as custom requires. If one party breaks the common promise and if the aggrieved one demands damages, they are enjoined to discuss the matter among themselves or through mediation by a *Fagtainan* [member of the *Emfagtainan* / consultative body of the tribe].

A communal discussion like this is not always accorded to conflicting parties in cases where elders are involved. It is difficult for the community leader to initiate such a dialogue out of courtesy to the subject elders. Elders are left to settle their disputes among themselves even by means of casting spells against each other. In cases where an elder willingly submits himself to a conversation with a disputing community member, such elder is always presumed to be the aggrieved one.

Consensus obliges all parties to an agreement to conform on the basis that everyone does one's duty in the manner of 'how we do things here' (Hauggard 1997). That is why, (with exception of the elders) it is important to gain the favorable position.

Ideally one should take the position of being the aggrieved party in a dispute. This is strategically done through telling an emotionally charged narrative. Typically, the opposing parties challenge each other. If the one telling the story is able to convince the elder and the community on how "aggrieved" he is, this gives grounds to claim the right to retribution, and exact material compensation for damages from the offending one. A communal recourse to reconcile the two is to collectively share in the payment of the damages. If the said reconciliation becomes impossible, as in most cases, the aggrieved is left to exercise his right to retribution or to kill.

In the absence of means to verify their claims, the one who claims to be the aggrieved carries the burden of proving it by casting a spell against the offending party. If the enemy is guilty then he dies. Relying on the "principle

of sorcery” an *amurit* cannot perform one’s bidding against an enemy if it finds no guilt in his *baga* (heart).

There are cases of enmity between communities. Typically, such animosity starts from simple disputes of families which may aggravate when no consensus is reached to resolve the case. For example, if trails to different *gamason* or fields were not properly defined in a meeting because of doubts on the accuracy of the measuring instrument used, disputes as to who really own the pathways may arise from the feeling that another community was cheated. In this case, both communities may wage an “*amurit* war” as a final recourse. In situations like this, guilt is imposed by communities on one another. Whichever community acquires more deaths is interpreted as the offending one, and therefore conceived to be the ‘guilty one’ (but the afflictions accompanying this are always personal).

The Tau-Buhid’s steady refusal to be intruded upon relates to protecting themselves against blame (by other community members) for giving the *Siganon* access to ‘restricted lands’. Informants stated that protecting boundaries against outsider entry is everyone’s responsibility. Failure to do so is tantamount to committing a collective offense against the ancestors, and those guilty of breaking commands left by the ancestors before they died become victims of their *amurit*. The *falad*, or the spirit of the ancestors, perceived to reside in those areas together with many other beings co-existing with humans have the right to be left alone; abiding by the morality of magic they are attributed their own agency. The spirits of the elders may abandon the communities to sicknesses (*efakasaytan*) and other disasters.

It is to ensure safety that Tau-Buhid communities specified ‘restricted locations’ in several meetings with the government and its partner NGOs. By indicating boundaries, it is thus formally understood that any forms of trespassing are deliberate, offending the tribe and their ancestors; in the linear politics of ‘guilt’, liability is deflected toward the ‘outsiders’, who are now transformed into enemies. Magical enforcement of the system extends to conjuring up other beings to place hexes in conserved areas. Thus, it comes as no surprise when some rangers report to have been afflicted with illnesses and even some deaths that are symptomatic of *amurit*.

Bringing magic to politics has put the entire MIBNP “biosphere” in question in regard to what kinds of life may be recognized there. For the Tau-Buhid, ‘life forms’ encompass the limits of metaphysics while the State holds to the idea that it is constrained only in a biological substance. Magic has a malleable character which can be reshaped into a tool to force MIBNP to

reformulate the concept of ‘biodiversity’ employed in conservation to include other existences. This is if it would reach an identity acceptable to both the State and the indigenous communities.

The movement of magic towards the political sphere calls for acknowledgement of a “pluriverse” (Blaser 2016), against the notion of a “common world” which serves as the ideological instrument of intrusive conservation politics employed to evoke a feeling of a ‘common anxiety’ (to include the indigenous communities) that endangered species and the planet must be saved, while subsequently enticing the lowlanders to consume beauty and leisure packaged together in tourism if such world continue to flourish.

For the upland Tau-Buhid conservation is not their concern since all beings exist within the time requirement by which their “becoming” is bounded. Thus, some species in the earthly plains will gradually cease to be, while others will appear again just as they have existed in their own worlds. The tamaraw, is one of the myriad “other-than-human-beings” (*cf.* De La Cadena 2010) which will eventually be gone. Based on this idea, the indigenous communities cannot understand why tamaraws are more important than others when in reality they are only one of the many beings in the mountains. For the Tau-Buhid, the forest is not a ‘common world’ but rather is composed of different worlds constantly interconnecting with each other, and these can only be grasped with the practice of magic.

In the Tau-Buhid life-world magic accommodates a multitude of presences of what may be referred to as “earth-beings” (De La Cadena 2010:336). These clusters of influential spirits include the malicious ones called “*Sandugo*” as among the Buid (Gibson 2015), whose presence controls human activities by forbidding premature gathering of resources and causing sicknesses and other misfortunes for entry into their spaces. Tau-Buhid do not venture there without communicating with them first using an appropriate ritual gesture which recognizes the agency of these beings. When an *amurit* is placed in one of these areas the sorcerer invokes these beings first to ensure that they will not be in conflict with the power of such *amurit*.

An *amurit* intended for killing humans may also be placed along reserved access trails in the mountains to prevent trespassing in sacred places or in locations where they have stored some resources. It is also for instance taboo to harvest camote tops from a garden without the consent of the owner. Dread of the hexes placed in the plots enforces this. Edible camote leaves may be cooked to temporarily alleviate one’s hunger, but according to the elders,

trimming the camote leaves causes the rootcrops to shrink from the usual size of an adult fist to a size that is too small even to feed a child.

A plateau of more than 100 hectares called “*Sagrado*” [‘sacred’] and termed as such because of how the Tagalogs describe it, near Mt. Iglit and Mount Talafu is surrounded with several hexes. It is reported that those who trespass in this place are afflicted with illnesses with symptoms indicating *amurit*. The spells were placed there to avoid premature trapping of the animals which seek refuge there until the collective annual hunt begins sometime in April or May. Each year, headed by their respective *fufuama*, all communities reunite (despite conflicts) in order to join in the said hunt. For informants, sorcery helps preserve their communal hunting grounds and regulates the availability of game. Access to these resource areas is considered a collective right and violation of such right is punishable through *amurit*.

The practice of *amurit* is, among other things, reflective of resource scarcity. *Amurit* serves to equitably share resources— spread through rumor and gossip, fear of sorcery is effective in controlling behavior (Stewart & Strathern 2004). The Tau-Buhid attitude also shows how the supernatural is connected to the understanding of space (hence “earth-beings”); lands are valued by how they contain the ‘sacred’²⁵. Spaces are divided differently according to the beings that can co-exist with each other, this is why Mount Talafu (east and west) located near Mt. Iglit, cannot be inhabited by humans. This mountain is ascribed with its own personality reflective of the shared characteristics of those inhabiting beings there. The reverence shown to it through non-disturbance renders abundant food supply, especially game during hunting season. Meanwhile, in areas designated for human settlement, houses are distanced from approximately 500 meters to more than a kilometer²⁶ (especially among the upper regions) because spirit protectors live in the space between houses and a certain area is required to accommodate

²⁵ Following the dichotomy of ‘the sacred and the profane’ (Durkheim [1915]1965) for lack of a better term, the ‘sacred’ in this context describes how they treat these places and the beings there.

²⁶ This is based on my GPS (Global Positioning Device) data. [I used a Garmin eTrex10.] The concept of ‘neighborhood’ is quite distinct among the Tau-Buhid. For example a group of houses may be considered as one household-cluster connected to another group of houses or to a single house (*bale*). This arrangement creates a ‘community’ whose borders are marked by ecoscapes such as a mountain ridge, streams, trees, or huge rocks, among other boundary markers. The mid-region, and especially the lowland Tau-Buhid however do not follow this settlement pattern anymore.

them. In turn, the cultural need for distance between houses indeed helps in reducing conflict (see Li 2014a) through relative isolation.

The Tau-Buhid see malign magic as inherent in their shared identity, an “inalienable possession” (Weiner 1992), with its own agency. This conceptual rupture with the conservationists forces an ontological turn against the prejudice of ‘science’ in the political discourse at MIBNP. Indeed, the better approach to the problem perhaps is to “treat these kinds of conflict as ontological conflicts” (Blaser (2016:549). Sadly, when mediating in conservation meetings with the Tau-Buhid, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP-Occidental Mindoro, acting as the “cultural house” of all the Mangyan tribes) treats all these (re)surfacing issues only as an issue of “cultural differences”. It believes that these problems can be resolved by means of strategic negotiation. But it has never succeeded.

In the face of this complex indigenous reality the State and its partners opt for ‘science’ combined with ‘law’ to bind people in a common cause to ‘save the Earth’. But in this “mission”, the strategy is to gather some and divide others, hence the “lowland” and “upland” Tau-Buhid. As a concrete example, employment for locals especially the lowland Tau-Buhid is offered as a way to manage local resistance against the program, so far this work is mainly to assist MIBNP visitors – as tour guides, porters, entertainers, or sometimes even ‘sex workers’²⁷. For those who accept such jobs these are means to obtain cash for the new commodities that have been introduced along with conservation initiatives. A few Tau-Buhid individuals have secured contractual government work as rangers, however they do not enjoy the same privileges as *Siganon* forest guards. They are hired for such positions because of their ability to speak Tau-Buhid, so that the State can gain access to information reserved to the indigenous communities. Some indigenous rangers had realized this, and they resigned from their posts, but others who opted for the monetary gain have been ‘ostracized’ forever from their communities.

²⁷ “*Togtogan*”, which means ‘to engage in sexual activity’ in Tau-Buhid, is used as a ‘market code’ among visitors when they want to procure libidinous service from the locals. Its Tagalog phoneme (*tugtogan*) means ‘playing songs’ such as through a mobile phone. As such, when one wants to have sex with another one should say “*magpatugtog ka naman*” (‘could you play some music’). Upon agreement of the price, literally there would be ‘music’ in a distant bushy area or in a nearby *balefamoy*. It warns anyone only not to approach such locations because sexual activity is going on.

As of now, only a tribe-designated representative of the upper regions appears in the meetings which are organized by the NCIP, DENR and conservation NGOs with the idea of “consulting” the tribe. But most of those in the upper regions avoid participation. Such denial and avoidance signify resistance against being incorporated in the nation-state, or even imagining themselves as part of the nation [sharing one country, one law, and one history]. The upper regions perceive that the agenda of the same State that is encroaching upon their territories is to assimilate them to a homogenous identity. In fact, those who live in the innermost parts maintain that they are “Tau-Buhid” and “not Filipinos”.

Conservationists are keen to assimilate the people in a more participative enforcement of their mandates. To include locals is also supposed to ‘fuse’ together ‘science’ and ‘indigenous knowledge’ in conservation work. Several workshops in the name of ‘capacity building’ have been done. The Tau-Buhid [like other IPs elsewhere, *e.g.* in the Amazon] “tend to perform these tasks despite often finding them to be flawed, demeaning, or based on erroneous assumptions about their lifeways and perspective”, while the organizers view participation in itself as a “straightforward indicator of success... to the neglect of a more complex picture” (Mentore 2017:279).

One NGO ‘expert’ traversed the boundary regions of MIBNP without going through consultation with the Tau-Buhid communities. Several cartographers were subsequently commissioned to create a detailed map based on that “exploration” but first the DENR and its partners conducted workshops with tribe representatives with the aim of naming their “resource areas”. At first, the representatives from both lower and upper regions declined to participate since they simply could not understand how Mts. Iglit-Baco could be divided into such “resource” spaces – what they know is that all lands in the region are connected and are a “source of life.” Nevertheless, some members were persuaded to draw how these spaces may look like and to declare the names they attribute to those places. When the said map was presented in a meeting with community members to secure the formal entry of that NGO into the park it was to their dismay, and fear, to find the names of their sacred spaces indicated in the said map. As they argue now, they were not informed that the activity’s purpose had been to create such map.

In that meeting everyone was confused: How was it possible for a *Siganon* from another country to survey their restricted places and verify the data taken from the workshop, much more put such information in a map. The communities complained that because of customary rules it should never have

been done.²⁸ But instead of appreciating their sentiments, the organizers defended the NGO as only doing what is necessary and ‘legal’ in order to track tamaraw presence in the secluded places. Filipinos must even be grateful to the “explorer” they said, without the “sketch” it would be difficult to create plans for protecting the species.

Then one *fufuama* objected. In his dismay at having no political power to “undo” the map with its ‘legality’, he forewarned that the explorer will be inflicted with *amurit* on the next time he passes the boundaries. But the elder’s statement was dismissed by the NGO expert as merely a visible sign of his disappointment, and an excuse against compliance – “Europeans are scientific” – the indigenous cosmology being outside the domain of ‘science’ was not considered a relevant reality. What was not realized however, is that the elder’s statement signified the long-term non-cooperation of other upland communities, especially those who refuse contact with the mainstream world. At the heart of this is the grievance that the government has betrayed their trust, and it has disrespected customary rules on entry into particular spaces.

The question is of what means can stakeholders (including anthropologists) use to facilitate a meaningful discussion which would eventually lead to consensual “respect”. What is respect? Albeit this term has been recurrently used in the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA 1997) and appears in the National Integrated Protected Areas Systems Act of 1992 (NIPAS 2018) and other conservation laws involving the IPs, it has not yet been reflected upon nor debated on in any significant way.

As a new way to approach these entangled problems, calling for a ‘cosmopolitics’ which would render illegitimate “the exclusion of indigenous practices from nation-state institutions” (De La Cadena 2010:336) is really necessary. Isn’t the ‘right to isolation’ inherent in the very legal recognition that the Tau-Buhid are autonomous and *Indigenous Peoples*? Aren’t conservationists obliged by that same recognition to respect the seclusion of residing indigenous communities? By the same logic, isn’t it unethical (if not illegal), to encroach upon the secluded places in Iglit-Baco just for ‘science’?

²⁸ For the same reason, I have not provided any maps in this article. I think that it would offend the sensitivity of the Tau-Buhid – except Tamisan and other lowlands – if they may happen to read/see this work with a Map. Especially for Tau-Buhid in the Upper regions whom I consulted regarding this work, the mere mention of “map” in my conversation with them evokes the various emotions from the said meeting.

Conclusion and recommendation: toward a ‘politics of the cosmos’

Reflecting now on all that transpired in the field during the course of my stay²⁹ there I am not wondering anymore why most Tau-Buhid are always vigilant and sometimes “militant” (but not violent) in their actions. For me, the decision of the upper Tau-Buhid to be reclusive is indeed in direct resistance not only to the State but also to imagined modernity. Such resistance is fully expressed in the practice of sorcery. In Iglit-Baco the indigenous people, using *amurit* as the platform to identify the concurrence or dissent of “forest beings” (cf. Kohn 2013), insist on their ‘rights’ founded on custom law, enforced by magic.

This article looked at the way magic has been treated in anthropological discourse, and, away from a pure scientific orientation, examined how sorcery creates meaning in the precarious and seemingly unintelligible Tau-Buhid world. Articulated in magic, the Tau-Buhid maintain “collective exclusivity” to protect their domain from outside exposure.³⁰

To be clear, using cosmopolitics to advocate a right to isolation is neither against science nor in the belief that these peoples are in pristine condition and must be preserved from cultural contamination. Through the practice of *amurit*, the idea of co-existence with all beings that exist in their land outlines the collective understanding about their relationship with each other, the lowlands, space, other beings, and the self, forming their own view of humanity. The trajectories of Tau-Buhid politics connect to how they insist on the right to a distinct identity when threatened by conservation activities.

In the international sphere a United Nations “Draft Guidelines on the Protection of the Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact of the Amazon Basin and El Chaco” (UN 2009) makes mention of two relevant categories. “*Peoples in Isolation*” are,

“[7.] ...indigenous peoples or sub-groups thereof that do not maintain regular contact with the majority population and tend to shun any type of contact with the outsiders. Mostly isolated

²⁹ It is a continuing engagement I have with the Tau-Buhid and with MIBNP in general. Since fieldwork in 2016 I continue to visit these communities sometimes on my own initiative but often upon their request, especially when there are meetings to be held.

³⁰ See Gibson (2015), especially Appendix II, Maps II and III to understand the local boundary of the different Mangyan tribes in Mindoro. His ethnography also provides a glimpse of the Tau-Buhid and Buid social relations with each other and the lowlands in the 1980s (Gibson 2015:57-215).

peoples live in tropical forests and/or remote untraveled areas, which in many cases are rich in natural resources.” (UN 2009:5)

“*Initial Contact*” refers to “[11.]...peoples that have recently initiated contacts with the majority population” (UN 2009:6). The guidelines use these categories to underscore the fact that the right to isolation is a *human right*, stating that,

“[20.] in considering the human rights of peoples in isolation, one essential factor to bear in mind is that these are individuals who are entitled to enjoy the full range of internationally recognized human rights.” (UN 2009:9)

As “peoples” they are moreover entitled to “the right to self-determination”, and to “the right to territory”, as well as the universal human rights that should be accorded all human beings, including their “right to culture” (UN 2009:8). It is important to highlight that exercise of cultural rights,

“[24.] ... requires first of all that their cultural survival be guaranteed. These are ... vulnerable peoples whose cultures are at permanent risk of disappearing. Thus, the most important aspect of protecting culture is protecting the preservation of these cultures, thereby protecting the existence of indigenous peoples in isolation and initial contact.” (UN 2009:8)

For the Tau-Buhid, making use of “isolation” in political discourse as they engage with the government and other actors enables an external ‘new name’³¹ that would lead to “compromise”. As Chief Fausto Novelozo often said, indicating their lowland community settlement in Tamisan: “It will soon be like this”. With such compromise perhaps they would still own their lands.

Of course, his solution is not shared by all; the upland Tau-Buhid would consider annihilating the entire tamaraw population given it is the main reason for government’s presence in their region. This proposed alternative solution may have catastrophic effect but by it we are also challenged to act to prevent such drastic move, perhaps as mediators.

Government needs to realize the political complexity of *amurit*, and how it serves as a focal point for the ‘right to isolation’ if it wishes to secure long-

³¹ Evoking the case of the Tasaday (Castillo 2008:81). Rosa Castillo (2008) proposes that in the discourse on ethnicity the Tasaday as a people must be seen beyond the context of a historical “hoax” to how they conceive of their own ethnic identity.

term cooperation from the indigenous communities. Governments are supposed to be the “[14.] guarantors of the human rights of all people living within their territories” and “also have an obligation to guarantee the individual and collective rights of all indigenous peoples” (UN 2009:7). But in Iglit-Baco, exclusion has been effected through law enforcement and scientific conservation programs combined. This maneuvering, has created growing political tension in the park.

Albeit this is a reality now there, this essay does not foretell a looming apocalypse in the regions, but rather has proposed to confront how these indigenous communities [sharing the experience of those in other parts of the world (Blaser 2009, 2016)] invoke magic in political negotiations with the State. The solution espoused is to address the issue not by legal means alone nor extensive capitalistic activity, but rather to devise ways to reformulate relationships out of the present condition³². To begin an analysis of the possible political order that can be created, initiatives may assess the damaging impact of an overly “species-centered” approach to conservation.

Epilogue

On October 4, 2019 the DENR in partnership with different organizations has released the Tamaraw Conservation and Management Action Plan (TCMAP) 2019-2028 for immediate enforcement. It contains specific operational protocols, visions, and scientific predictions including legal regulations of cultural activities within MIBNP. The collective fate of the residing indigenous peoples within the park in the next 10 years rests on this document.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

Au-yan – a local tree species and its bark, used in making *gime*.

Badu - ‘squash’ (*Cucurbita máxima*).

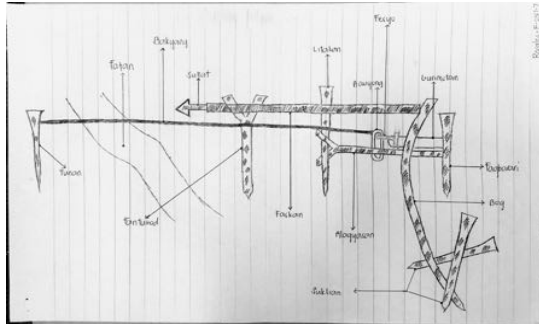
Baga - ‘heart’.

Bagtu - ‘smoke pipe’.

Balatik - ‘trap for large mammals such as tamaraw, deer, and wild boar’, ‘spear trap’; field illustration (below) by the author. [See Ambrosio (2010) for a

³² See also Li 2014a, 2014b, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2010, 2011, 2017.

discussion of the cosmological meaning of “*balatik*” among early Filipinos.]



Field illustration of the balatik

Bale - ‘house’.

Balefamoy - ‘temporary shelter in a swidden’.

Balugbugan - ‘medicine’. [Please see discussion for complex meaning.]

Bukay - ‘cassava’, or any of its variants.

Dakwap - ‘hands’.

Daol - ‘huge’ or ‘big’ in size.

Darafa - ‘foot’ or ‘feet’.

Efakasaytan - ‘to cause sickness’.

Emfagtainan - ‘the first Tau-Buhid’, spirit elder before all past and current Elders |also consultative body to the chief|.

Faduksay - ‘friend’ or ‘sibling’, brother among men. [See *Fagwes*.]

Fagbalabag - ‘morning’ [see *Fagbukngamenit*].

Fagbukngamenit - ‘daylight’.

Fagfafon - ‘mid-afternoon’ until before sunset.

Fagtainan - ‘member of the council of elders’.

Fagtanghale - ‘noon’ until mid-afternoon.

Fagwes - ‘friend’ or ‘sibling’ |brother among men|.

Fagyabi - ‘sunset’ or ‘dusk’ until the rest of the evening.

Falad - ‘soul’, ‘spirit’. [See similar term among the Buid in Gibson 2015.]

Fanabuhid - words translated to Tau-Buhid from Filipino or other languages.

Fiso - ‘bolo’, or any similar cutting instrument made from bamboo or metal.

Fufuama - ‘grandfather’, or any aged man with white hair.

Gamason - ‘swidden’ or ‘garden’.

Gime - ‘g-string’. [For men and women. Can be made from the bark of a specific tree, or from cloth.]

Hubad- ‘naked people’. [Derogatory term, from Tagalog.]

Kabagungan - ‘lunar phase’; roughly equivalent to ‘fullmoon’. [See *Lati*.]

Kultura - ‘culture’, ‘collective identity’. [See discussion.]

Labuyo - ‘wild chicken’.

Lati - ‘half-moon’, roughly equivalent to ‘crescent moon’. [See discussion for context.]

Lo’lo - ‘penis’.

Magdanon - ‘moon’, or the moon phase.

Mama - ‘father’.

Mangena - ‘woman’.

Menit - ‘daytime’, ‘daylight’.

Ngayan - ‘name’.

Ngenge - 'children'.

Pugakang – 'improvised gun'. [From Tagalog.]

Punong Tribo- 'tribal leader' or 'chief'. [From Tagalog.]

Purit - 'female genitals'.

Saba - 'banana'.

Sandugo - 'malevolent beings'.

Siganon - 'outsider', non-indigenous person.

Subat – 'Spear' made of bamboo (local species called *bagto* and *kiling*).

Sulpa - 'bamboo canister', used for storing tobacco and other small possessions.

Sulud - 'tobacco' for smoking.

Sumyo - 'fingers'.

Tabobo - 'banana heart.'

Tagmara - 'wind', or direction of the wind.

Togtogan / Togtog - 'to engage in sex'.

Tugtogan- 'playing music'. [From the Tagalog term; a euphemism for engaging in sex.]

Undokundok - an amulet or spell with various purposes.

Ungdan - 'stomach', or area of the abdomen where food is stored.

Unon - a mixture of *yabuk* [dried powdery wood] wrapped tightly in fresh tree bark or a large leaf. As an ember it can last for the entire day. They use this to light tobacco and to determine time.

Unwang - *Bubalus mindorensis*, 'Mindoro dwarf buffalo', 'tamaraw'. [Note: The animal is called differently depending on maturity and sex by the Tau-Buhid. The term "tamaraw" was introduced by outsiders.]

Yabuk- 'rotten wood,' or dried powdery wood. [Also used as a cursing word among the younger generation in Tamisan— compares the other to lifeless dried wood.]

APPENDIX B: CATEGORIES AND METHODS OF TAU-BUHID MAGIC

Tau-Buhid magic includes benign forms. To better understand this I have categorized them as follows: defensive, curative, and offensive. Both curative and defensive magics may be considered benign in that they are not intended to cause death or harm. But this is not to say that their powers cannot be maneuvered toward selfish [malign] intentions, or may still have harmful consequences. 'Courtship charisma' for example, when overused may have an adverse effect on the object of one's love, who may turn jealous of those who are in proximity to the suitor, such that it becomes problematic to the one who owns such magic as his actions are restricted by the charmed woman. Benign magics also have a moral context; their misuse and/or abuse are considered abominable.

DEFENSIVE MAGICS are exclusively for combatting (supernatural or natural) attacks. In the remote regions some elders possess an amulet or a spell, called *undokundok*, for protection from being accidentally wounded by a *fiso* [large blade tool] or from offensive magic entering the body through an open wound.

CURATIVE MAGICS, are spells for healing. These may also require herbs, roots, stones, and soil mixed together during the ritual. Sometimes, it may consist of a long chant addressing specific community needs, such as: luring game into one's *balatik* trap, or making rain in time of drought. Other spells are used to augment or enhance lacking or insufficient characteristics of an individual, such as: charisma (for courtship), sharpness of memory, speech defects, or inability to bear a child, among other concerns.

OFFENSIVE MAGICS, which includes *amurit*, are distinct from these forms. This sorcery type feeds on the guilt of an enemy. Its ritual is sensitive in its timing requirement: a particular incantation should be muttered when the sun (*menit*) 'begins to break in the horizon' (*fagbukngamenit*), or when the moon (*magdanon*) is in its right phase as determined by the sorcerer, or when the direction of the wind (*tagmara*) is favorable to the sorcerer, or when important stars (*galime*) have reached a desired position marking the onset of significant seasonal activities in the community such as planting and hunting.

The Tau-Buhid terms "*kabagungan*" and "*lati*" roughly denote 'lunar phase'. However, unlike in the West (and other places) where lunar phases are determined from the spherical shape of the moon (waning, waxing), for Tau-Buhid, brightness/luster and the location of the moon in the sky are the bases for the 'right phase.' ["Full moon" may not be 'full moon' (*kabagungan*) for them if it does not conform to their understanding of its 'right phase'.] There are more specific Tau-Buhid terms for these distinctions. The most difficult is to determine *lati* which is like the "half-moon" (or the crescent moon). This is because, *lati* requires a unique luster and position in the sky to call it "half-moon." *Lati* is crucial, since it marks the start of the *kabagungan* that completes the 'fullness' of the moon. In the case of *amurit*, there is no universal phasing for the 'right' moon phase; each spell has its own requisite "lunar phase", determined by the sorcerer.

Location – the distance between the enemy's house and the sorcerer's, or the presence of rivers and streams that divide lands where the spell is sent out to fulfill its bidding – is also important. Correct gestures of the hand, tone of the voice, and breathing are imperative to effect the deepest wrath one carries against the enemy. Through anger one becomes powerful, while guilt makes an enemy weak. One must be able to touch the heart (*baga*), the location of anger, to 'shoot' the spell into the heart of the enemy. The curse remains active and potent until it is lifted when a sorcerer desires to. But as a sorcerer needs to be purposeful in his decision to bring harm to his enemy, the curse is difficult to lift in case he changes his mind, moreover it may sometimes boomerang.

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