

**The London School of Economics
and Political Science**

Indigenous Autonomy
Amid Counter-Insurgency:
Cultural Citizenship in a Philippine Frontier

Augusto Jose B. Gatmaytan

A thesis submitted to the
Department of Anthropology of
the London School of Economics
and Political Science,
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
London, September 2013

Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This thesis may not be reproduced without my prior written consent.

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

I declare that my thesis consists of 88,367 words.

Abstract

This thesis explores the complexities and processes involved in minority groups' negotiations with the state over the terms of their belonging in the national polity.

It is based on fieldwork among the Banwaon, a non-Muslim minority group in the southern Philippines, not previously described in the literature. In the context of on-going insurgency and counter-insurgency operations, the Banwaon are divided: One leader called the *katangkawan* has become a paramilitary organiser supporting the state's counter-insurgency program. Other Banwaon leaders of the Tagdumahan association assert political autonomy from the state. The thesis follows the latter, and their responses to the *katangkawan*.

Almost all Banwaon are implicated in illegal logging. Given timber's value as a commodity, Banwaon tenure rules have evolved so that landowners also own the timber standing thereon. However, the *katangkawan* proposed to have the entire Banwaon ancestral territory titled, invoking a state law recognizing ancestral land ownership. The Tagdumahan responded adversely to this project, because of its implication in counter-insurgency and the *katangkawan*'s role in it.

The impact of counter-insurgency on the Banwaon is explored. The response of a Banwaon community occupied by the military suggests a pattern of sedentarisation in response to the state's growing control of the surrounding forests. A second community suffered from threats from a death-squad allegedly controlled by the *katangkawan*. Village leaders had difficulty addressing this problem because of the way the *katangkawan* blurs the line between state and Banwaon society. Electoral politics as a response to threats is also examined.

The thesis uses Rosaldo's notion of 'cultural citizenship' (2003) in its analysis, to provide a platform for dialogue with Scott's characterisation of state-minority relations (2009). Finally, two particular factors are explored: The complexity of the dynamics governing the Tagdumahan's attempt to maintain autonomy, and state laws on ancestral land titling.

Table of Contents

Declaration	2
Abstract	3
Table of Contents	5
List of Maps and Figures	6
Acknowledgements	7
Abbreviations	9
Glossary of Terms	10
A Note on Language	12
Chapter 1	Introduction 12
Chapter 2	Dancers, Heroes, the Centre and Beyond 52
Chapter 3	Logging and Landownership 95
Chapter 4	A Banwaon Politics of Cosmology 125
Chapter 5	From the Forest to the Village 151
Chapter 6	Living with the Promise of Violence 176
Chapter 7	The Electoral Campaign of Aver Precioso 202
Chapter 8	Conclusion 232
Appendix: Photographs	264
References	275

List of Maps and Figures

Maps

- Map No. 1 Caraga Region (p. 28)
Map No. 2 Agusan del Sur province (p. 28)
Map No. 3 The Municipality of San Luis (p. 28)

Figures (All figures are in Annex: Photographs)

- Fig. 1 Offerings are laid out for the spirits of the earth. (p. 264)
Fig. 2 The elder of the two *baylans* prays as she sits before the offerings for Nene Boyante's *abyan*. (p. 265)
Fig. 3 A contestant in the Mrs. Valentines 2010 pageant waves the Philippine flag after successfully defending the 'child' she is cradling from a 'rapacious outsider'. (p. 266)
Fig. 4 This photograph shows the upriver side of the Laminga Bridge, with a mass of logs choking the river. (p. 267)
Fig. 5 A photograph showing the downriver side of Laminga Bridge, taken on a different day. (p. 268)
Fig. 6 The *katangkawan*, standing on the far left, addresses the assembly at Mahagsay village from behind a row of government officials. (p. 269)
Fig. 7 Leaders of the Tagdumahan map out the area they plan to exclude from the claim-area of the *katangkawan*'s titling project. (p. 270)
Fig. 8 Magal Manseliohan, seated on the left, argues with Sgt. Villaganas at the meeting after the arrival of troops at Tabon-tabon. (p. 271)
Fig. 9 A photograph showing details of Bagutot Badbaran's grave. (p. 272)
Fig. 10 Residents of Balit stand outside the public schoolhouse-turned-polling station, anxious to cast their votes on Election Day. (p. 273)
Fig. 11 An elderly voter, his finger stained to show he has voted, walks home in the rain under a banana-leaf. (p. 274)

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the following institutions, without whose generous support this thesis would not have been completed: The International Fellowships Program of the Ford Foundation; the Department of Anthropology of the London School of Economics and Political Science; and the Ateneo de Davao University.

I would like to thank the leaders of the Tagdumahan, especially the people of the communities of Balit and Tabon-tabon, for the opportunity to work with them, their generosity with their time and thoughts, and the security and support they lent me in the field. Thanks are also due to Sr. Daisy Superable and the San Luis community of the Religious of the Good Shepherd, and the staff of their Tribal Filipino Ministry, for their hospitality, openness and assistance.

I wish to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to my supervisors, Dr. Fenella Cannell and Dr. Catherine Allerton, for sharing their knowledge and wisdom, and providing guidance, warmth, and support. I would also like to thank the members of faculty and my fellow-students who, in one way or another, helped me in this project. Special thanks are due to Yanina Hinrichsen for her understanding and many kindnesses.

I also wish to thank Dr. Leah Vidal, Dr. Ago Tomas and Eizel Hilario-Patiño, as well as Sr. Diane Cabasagan, RGS and Japs Hatta for their patience and support.

Most of all, I would like to thank my wife, Memen Lauzon, for her strength and patience, advise and support; and my children, Bea and Carlos, for giving me the reason.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of Bagutot Badbaran, Rico Badbaran, and Yaki Ginumbay; and to Mateo Morales and Rita Cembrano.

Abbreviations

CADT	Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title
CAFGU	Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit
CO	Commanding Officer
COMELEC	Commission on Elections
COPD	Community Organizing for Peace and Development
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
DND	Department of National Defence
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ICHDF	Integrated Civilian Home Defence Forces
IPRA	Indigenous Peoples Rights Act
IT	Internet Technology
LRC	Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center
MABANTAG	Manobo Banwaon Tagbigola
MIB	Military Intelligence Bureau
MPOC	Municipal Peace and Order Council
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPA	New People's Army
OD	Over-drawn, to deliver logs valued less than the capital advanced
PPOC	Provincial Peace and Order Council
RGS	Religious of the Good Shepherd

Glossary of Terms

Abyan	Spirit familiar or helper
Amo	Term for a logging operator's financier or buyer
Ba-e	Female head-‘man’
Bahad	Threat or vow of vengeance
Balik-Baril	Government program paying cash for surrendered firearms
Bangkaso	Indoor altar for the <i>hakladan</i> ritual
Barog Balit	Name of village association in Balit village
Bata	A follower or supporter
Baylan	Shamanic healer
Burgis	Decadent, immoral
Buwaya	Crocodile, euphemism for a corrupt person
Datu	Headman
Detachment	Military camp or station
Financer	One who provides the capital for logging operations, a buyer
Hakladan	Ritual for acknowledging relations with an <i>abyan</i>
Himalakan	To be seduced
Kahilayan	Decadence, immorality
Katangkawan	Specialist in resolving feuds
Kaugalingon	Uncapitalized small-scale logging operations
Kiyala ha Batasan	Body of Banwaon customary laws
Komun	Open-access resources
Komunal	Communal property or tenure
Lido	Feud or vendetta
Listahan	Hit- or death-list
Log-mark	Markings cut into logs as a sign of ownership
Mado-olan	Someone you can go to
Makatabang	Someone who can help you
Nag-bonnet	Death-squad members
Olag	Principle of living in the manner of one's ancestors
Operator	One who organizes logging operations
Palagsulat	The One Who Writes
Palamgowan	The One Who Dreams
Pamuwalas	Pioneering swidden-clearing
Pangayaw	Armed attack
Relis	Release of logs

Sektor	Private landholding
Short-cut	Euphemism for corruption
Surit	Home-made shotgun
Taga-lasang	People of the forest
Tagdumahan	Name of Banwaon inter-village association
Taym	To receive payment from a logging company
Transaksyon	Capitalised small-scale logging operations
Tulumanon	Ritual Obligations

A Note on Language

All quotations not given in English are in the Agusan del Sur variant of Cebuano-Visayan, unless otherwise marked. The designation [B] marks Banwaon terms, [M] marks Manobo terms, and [B, M] marks terms shared by the Banwaon and Manobo. Terms common to both the Agusan del Sur variant of Cebuano-Visayan, and Banwaon and/or Manobo are unmarked.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

A Rumour of Snakes

Midway through my fieldwork, a rumour spread among the Banwaon villages I worked with: It was said that the military had a secret plan to kill all the Banwaon, but in a way that would allow the government to deny complicity in their deaths. The plan was for soldiers to load cages of *balanakon*—a viper notorious for aggressiveness—onto military helicopters, fly these over Banwaon territory, and seed the snakes across the forested landscape. The vipers would then kill the Banwaon as the latter went about in the forests. Any subsequent investigation would only reveal the cause of death in each case to be a venomous snake-bite. Fortunately, one of the helicopters prematurely and accidentally dropped one of the snakes over the gate of the Casilayan Softwood and Development Corporation's compound at Talacogon town, downriver from the hinterlands. Witnesses saw the viper land at their feet just as a military helicopter flew over. There was a commotion as they killed the snake. This drew the attention of a journalist from ABS-CBN, a national media corporation, who investigated and uncovered the entire plan.

Local reactions to this rumour varied. A few became quite worried about it, and I suppose the striking concreteness of the story's details—the reference to a well-known media outfit, and the citation of a local landmark as the setting for the discovery of the plot—had something to do with this. Most Banwaon however thought the plan was inept, and dismissed the danger from the snakes. As one elder adjudged the supposed military plan, '*(B)ulok ang ilang analysis*' (lit., 'Their analysis is rotten'; i.e., the reasoning behind the plan was flawed). Others pointed out that there had always been *balanakon* in the forests, and they knew how to deal with them. On one occasion, the discussion of the rumour led to the resurrection of an old joke

about Adam and Eve's ethnicity: The Bible itself proves that Adam and Eve were not Banwaon; if they were, they would have eaten the snake, and not the apple. Their point was that the Banwaon can deal with vipers, and the military was wrong to rely on them as a weapon.

I had found the whole story implausible from the start, and inquiries at ABS-CBN confirmed no such plan had been uncovered. I was struck however by how the rumour brought together earth and sky, ancient and modern icons of power, the indigenous and foreign to create a fantastic image of danger or death. On reflection, I also realised that the Banwaon I talked to had dismissed the threat posed by snakes, but not the underlying idea that the military—and by extension, the Philippine state—was intent on killing them all. Their critique was levelled on the mechanics of covert genocide; that their government wanted them dead was taken as a given and elicited no comment at all.

The relations between the Banwaon and the Philippine state are more complex than the rumour suggests, as I hope to demonstrate through the following chapters. It does however underscore the fact that relations between many Banwaon and the state are uneasy, and are mediated by militarisation to a significant degree. This thesis proposes to study the reality of militarisation conducted against Communist insurgents in San Luis, Agusan del Sur province. More specifically, it will examine the local forms counter-insurgency has taken, and how the Banwaon have been caught up in this aspect of the state-building project. The rumour also locates the Banwaon in the forested hinterlands, suggesting that they have a particular relationship with this landscape. The Banwaon do claim the hinterlands of San Luis as their ancestral territory, which I argue is articulated through an idea, or a set of practices, that I will refer to here as 'autonomy'. This relationship with the land will also be explored by this thesis. Finally, I will try to explore how counter-insurgency and this aspiration for autonomy shape the way the Banwaon negotiate the terms of their relationship with the Philippine state.

To be more explicit, this thesis will address the following general questions: What rights do the Banwaon assert as theirs, as a hinterland ethnic minority group or 'indigenous people'? How do they regard the Philippine state? How do they imagine their relationship with the state should be configured? What role does the state's counter-insurgency program have in shaping the negotiation of that relationship?

Cultural Citizenship and State Evasion

In addressing the questions I set for myself, I draw on Renato Rosaldo's notion of 'cultural citizenship' (2003). I understand his use of this term to refer to the claims that minority groups make on the state, as they negotiate the terms of their belonging in the national community (id.: 3). In developing this notion, Rosaldo alludes to Anderson's analysis (2006 [1983]) of the opening of Philippine national hero Jose Rizal's novel *Noli Me Tangere*, where news of a party spreads across Manila, creating among the characters and for the readers an imagined national community (id.: 6). He then rightly points out that by focusing on metropolitan elites whose nationality is not in question, Anderson ignores the dynamics of marginality, inequality, and exclusion (id.) that govern hinterland minority relations with the state. Rosaldo thus argues for scholarly attention to the expectations that states and hinterland ethnic minorities have of each other, and how these are negotiated between them (id.: 2) through what may be described—to borrow another scholar's felicitous phrase—as a 'politics of cosmology' (Corlin 2000). This lends due weight to the ways minorities may embrace, challenge or transform the definitions of citizenship states seek to impose upon them (Rosaldo 2003: 14), and so responds to the expressed need to understand relations of power from the perspective of those on its margins (Tsing 1993, Chua, et al. 2012) rather than the elite at the centre (Warren 1993).

Rosaldo's approach is here complemented by James C. Scott's insightful historical account of the relations between states and hinterland ethnic groups in mainland Southeast Asia, expounded at length in his *The Art of*

Not Being Governed (2009). He characterised their dynamics as one where states controlling the lowlands seek control of their hinterlands, to exploit its resources and labour; while hinterland groups struggled to maintain their autonomy from those states, even as they tried to maintain trade connections with the lowlands (Id.: 200-201, 329). Scott asserts that, as a result, hinterland groups have developed institutions and practices which enable them to 'evade' or 'escape' state control, such as egalitarian political relations, dispersed settlement patterns, swidden cultivation, and even non- or post-literacy (id., 8). 'Tribes' and 'chiefdoms', with cultures distinct from the lowlands, thus emerge in the course of negotiating over autonomy with an expansionist state. In this work, Scott consolidates previous scholarship on relations between the state and hinterland minorities (cf. Clastres 1987, Leach 1970 [1954], Gibson 1990, 1986, Scott W.H. 1985).

Scott adds the qualification however that this framework can fruitfully be applied only to the pre-colonial and colonial era of Southeast Asian history, before states acquired 'distance-demolishing technologies' which allowed them to transform once-inaccessible hinterlands into administrative units under their political and economic control (2009: 11). He claims that the dynamics of the post-colonial state-building project are so 'novel' and 'different' that his analysis makes no sense in the context of the late twentieth century, or more specifically after the year 1950 (id.: xii, 11). On the other hand, he seems to allow for the possibility that his framework can still be of some analytical use in the present, as when he says that modern states' pursuit of 'modernization' or 'development' are merely new guises for the same quest for control of the hinterlands he ascribes to pre-colonial and colonial states in his book (id.: 98).

I would argue that the general framework Scott describes can indeed be applied in the present, particularly to the case of the Banwaon. While I recognize the current dominance of the state as a political actor in the 'national order of things' (Malkki 1995), to posit a historical movement towards increasingly greater state control of their hinterlands, as Scott does when he speaks of the 'final enclosure' (2009: 11) of non-state spaces, is to

come dangerously close to a form of neo-evolutionism culminating in the modern Southeast Asian nation-state. Such a view would fail to account for historical periods when state power or sovereignty is rolled back, as when Communist insurgents controlled large sections of the Philippines during the 1980s (Van der Kroef 1988: 164, Hedman and Sidel 2000: 51). And then there are cases when state power contracts, as after the fall of Indonesia's Suharto in 1998, when questions over the limits of the state in West Papua (Rutherford 2003: 3, also 2012) and other places re-emerged. True, these two states eventually reasserted their authority, but I believe there was nothing inevitable about that outcome. Rather, the state is a perpetual political project (following Nagengast 1994), which could wax or wane over time.

Moreover, the processes of 'territorialisation' (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995) proceed very unevenly in time and across space, such that even after 1950, there could still be viable 'non-state spaces' at the frontiers of the state (Cummings 2006: 57). In theory, of course, everything within a state's national territory was under its control; in practice, there may be what Graeber calls 'provisional autonomous zones' (2007: 172) within that territory, where state authority is not fully realised. This notion of 'autonomous zones' is drawn from Graeber's reflections on the tenuous presence of the state in parts of Madagascar, where it is 'either uninterested in, or incapable of, carrying out many of what we consider to be a state's most elementary, definitional functions' (id.: 162). The 'state form' is there, but mainly as petty bureaucratic impositions people endure to forestall much closer attention from an alien, coercive state (id.: 169). Instead, the state is most real in the people's memory of its colonial violence (id.: 171). Graeber links the weakness of the state in areas of Madagascar to disastrous post-independence economic policies, which have forced the insolvent state to focus on areas with the potential to produce foreign exchange (id. 170-171); elsewhere, government fades to a 'ghost-state'. What Graeber does is to usefully highlight the limits on state power and their effects on its state-building project; and open up discussion of state neglect, as opposed to the usual attention to active state-building. I suggest that Banwaon territory is

just such a 'provisional autonomous zone' in the sense that it is a region where state authority has yet to become stable and routinised, and within which the Banwaon are trying to maintain the sense of political autonomy they had hitherto enjoyed. I shall try to explain what I mean by this further below; for now, my point simply is that even if the state has its distance-demolishing technologies, these are deployed unevenly, in some areas rather than others, in accordance with the interests of the state, as perceived by those who control government.

Thus, instead of 'chronologically' relegating Scott's framework to before Rosaldo's—in the sense that Scott looks back to pre-colonial and colonial history, while Rosaldo addresses the current post-colonial context, where minority groups have no longer have the option of escaping the state, but must negotiate the terms of their national belonging—I would argue that the fundamentals of Scott's argument are sound, and have relevance to the study of contemporary frontier dynamics. In particular, states continue to seek control of frontier resources and hinterland populations (cf. Vandergeest and Peluso 1995); and the latter still find that belonging in the national community often entails the loss of political and cultural autonomy (cf. Spyer 2000: 199). My emphasis then is on the processes of negotiation (following Rosaldo 2003) between state and hinterland people—or as Li puts it, the question of how exactly rule is accomplished (1999: 316)—rather than the viability of escape, which after all is only one option for hill populations (Scott 2009: 209). Rosaldo's call for due regard of minority groups' engagement with states over issues of political exclusion and inclusion allows us to fill in ethnographically the broad historical strokes of Scott's analysis. What follows then can be read as an exploration of the strengths and limits of Scott's thesis, not so much in the sense or spirit of critique, but an attempt to pin down just what is so 'novel' and 'different' about the post-colonial context, and thereby adapt Scott's engaging analysis and significant insights to the contemporary setting.

The spatial aspect of the hinterland, and the meaning given to the boundary between Banwaon territory and the wider world beyond, is an important theme in this thesis. In addressing this theme, I was initially drawn to Kopytoff's notion of the African 'internal frontier', where he directs attention not to the outer edges of the state, which is perhaps the usual understanding of the frontier (cf. Ishikawa 2010, Horstmann and Wadley, eds. 2006); but inward, to spaces 'unpoliced' by the metropole (Kopytoff 1987: 11). Unfortunately, his focus is on the historical reproduction of traditional African societies, where the state seems to play a less significant role than it does today (id.: 16-17). Thus, while retaining the analytical focus on internal frontiers, I look to the notion of 'territorialization' to account for the historical and contemporary role of the state in 'excluding or including people within particular geographic boundaries, and ... controlling what people do and their access to natural resources within those boundaries' (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995: 388). Two caveats however are in order: First, and as we have already seen Graeber (2003) suggest, processes of territorialization proceed unevenly across space and time, allowing for the existence of 'provisional autonomous zones'. Rather than the state's steady march across the landscape that Vandergeest and Peluso's text seems to suggest, the political incorporation of non-state spaces is subject to the constraints upon the state's political and economic resources, such that the process could surge forward and backward, as occurred in Madagascar (Graeber 2003), or ignore certain areas for significant lengths of time, as I will argue is the case for the Banwaon. Second, Vandergeest and Peluso's thesis—articulated through their study of the Thai state—also seriously underplays how territorialization relates to the production and reproduction of cultural and ethnic differences within a state's territorial boundaries, a task which has been left to later scholars (see for example, Jonsson 2004, 2005).

In this regard, I would draw on Ferguson and Whitehead's notion of the 'tribal zone', defined as '(t)hat area continuously affected by the proximity of a state, but not under state administration', where 'the wide consequence of

the presence of the state is the radical transformation of extant socio-political formations, often resulting in “tribalization”, the genesis of new tribes’ (1992: 3). As defined, the tribal zone may refer to either internal or external frontiers of a state polity, and in this it actually anticipates Scott’s historical analysis (2009). More importantly, Ferguson and Whitehead draw attention to the role of warfare in the dynamics of the tribal zone. They critique previous studies where warfare is usually ‘depicted and analysed as part of a stable and long-standing cultural system, and the major role of the state is ... pacification’ (1992: 2). The suggestion that the state is more properly seen as instigator rather than suppressor of warfare is appreciated, but they go on to argue that the effect of state presence on populations in the tribal zone is ‘an overall militarization; that is, an increase in armed collective violence whose conduct, purposes, and technologies rapidly adapt to the threats generated by state expansion’ (id.: 3). This conclusion is problematic, in light of the Southeast Asian literature. Dentan asserts that the Semai response to frontier violence in the form of slave-raiding was not militarisation but ‘surrender’ (2008: 8). Gibson surveys three different ethnic groups in Southeast Asia, and notes their differing responses to slave-raiding, which range from predatory warfare among the Iban (1990: 140), to a ‘categorical aversion to aggressive behaviour of any kind’ by the Buid (id.: 131). Atkinson offers the even more complex case of the Wana, who once had warlike chiefdoms (1989: 301), but later resorted to flight and stances meant to evoke pity (id.: 50). In short, the militarization of frontier societies is not necessarily the only response to the presence of the state, whether in its colonial or post-colonial form. The issue of how hinterland populations do respond must therefore be treated as an empirical question, one which Rosaldo’s cultural citizenship enables us to address.

We have noted that Ferguson and Whitehead would give military factors the analytic attention traditionally devoted to economics, politics, and ideology (1992: 3). I agree with this approach, but more specifically focus on counter-insurgency as a contemporary military and political project. Counter-insurgency however should not be treated in isolation; it should be considered in relation to the insurgency it opposes, and to the political and

other projects of the affected population. There seems to be limited interest in the ethnographic exploration of the intersection of these three movements in the wider regional literature. Tsing (1996, also 1993) takes note of Meratus Dayak attempts to navigate between Dutch authorities and nationalist insurgents, of whom they were equally wary. Yet, it is the capacity to deal with unpredictable, sometimes violent, outsiders that is a key element in the constitution of Meratus leadership (1996: 202-203). From further afield, Shah considers the actions of government and Naxalite insurgents in India, and concludes that they are at one level, competing with each other not for sovereignty, but for control of a market for protection (2010: 180), and at another, symbiotically justifying and strengthening each other (id.: 182). She thus finds the Munda Adivasis victimised by both insurgents and the counter-insurgent state. Both scholars highlight the three-part constitution of society in a militarised frontier; they recognise the analytical need to keep state, anti-state, and local populations apart, even as they examine the ways these sets of actors interact and perhaps blur the boundaries between themselves.

The Philippines provides opportunities for the study of this intersection of state-building, insurgency, and indigenous political agency. Kwiatkowski (2008) studied Ifugao villagers' perceptions of Communist insurgents who ostensibly fought for their interests, noting how local approval shifted over time. Paredes examined historical patterns of Higaunon armed resistance, which elided with the Communist insurgency at one point, but later adopted an environmental discourse, as they sought ways to protect their ancestral lands in northern Mindanao (1997: 288). Wenk Bruehlmann looked at another Mindanao hinterland group, the Matigsalug, and found them taking up arms against the government at one point (2012: 181-182), only to surrender and become part of the state's counter-insurgency apparatus as paramilitaries (id.: 197-198). All three studies underscore the agency of the local minority population, which could shift its support for insurgents or the state over time, or adopt differing discourses in articulating their interests or aspirations. Wenk Bruehlmann, and to a lesser extent Paredes, also

emphasise the important role that local leaders play in shaping their peoples' responses to the state and the insurgents.

The role of leaders is even more important in Finin's historical study of the evolution of Igorot or pan-Cordilleran consciousness in the northern Luzon mountains (2005, 2008). He stresses the role of local leaders and intelligentsia in refining the idea of regional autonomy, and more importantly, in evaluating the Communist insurgency and their people's role within it; culminating in a dramatic schism between those who continued supporting the insurgency, and those who believed it no longer represented the interests of the mountain people, and went on to negotiate peace with the Philippine state (2005: 263-264). The role of local leaders vis-à-vis their neighbours or supporters suggests the possibility of differences in perspective within the ranks of indigenous groups. Leaders could simply reflect their people's interests and aspirations; or occupy a vanguard position in relation to the community, suggesting policies or raising questions ordinary people might not have the time, knowledges, or predisposition to consider; or even betray their people's interests. As we shall see, this point has particular relevance for this thesis, when I later explore the perspectives of particular leaders vis-à-vis their constituencies.

McKenna's examination of the history of the Muslim secession movement in the central Mindanao area uncovers such differences in perspective between the leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Magindanaon people. Whilst the leadership speak of Moro nationhood and Islamic renewal, their rank-and-file 'sing' of social aspirations, community, and jihad (1998: 186 et seq.). The two sets of perspectives are not incompatible with each other, but nonetheless underscore differences between leaders and followers within the insurgency. On the other hand, McKenna finds that ordinary Muslim civilians, though they supported the initial armed phase of the rebellion, had no clear grasp of the MNLF's ideology; their support stemmed from the perception that the insurgents protected them from the violence and hostility of the Philippine military (id.: 191-192). Muslim civilians also evaluated MNLF commanders and

defectors, speaking of them as receiving or being denied supernatural assistance or blessing, depending on whether they protected the people (id.: 192-194). Finally, MNLF fighters were similarly evaluated, depending on whether they were perceived as true to the spirit of jihad (id.: 194, also 2000: 197-198).

Finally, Horvatic (2003) describes Sinama-speakers who find themselves confronted by the Tausug, the Tausug-dominated MNLF, and the Philippine state. The Sama find themselves in a social context where the Tausug dominate to the point that they can appropriate the resources of, and discriminate against the Sama. Some of them joined the MNLF, but found that it reproduced the inequality between themselves and the Tausug. More importantly, joining the secession meant foreclosing opportunities for study and development. Education and the economic opportunities it offered was key to the emergence of Sama intellectuals who constructed a pan-Sama identity to counter Tausug dominance and the Filipinization of their culture; one that is Muslim but not Tausug or Moro; one different from, but not politically opposed to, their national identity (id.: 37). Horvatic beautifully illustrates the complexities that confront minority peoples as they negotiate their relationship not only with the Philippine state, but also with insurgents and their social milieu. This is not to detract from the Tausug's own efforts to 'negotiate the contradictions of forms of identity and identifications [as] much through the appropriation of otherness [as] refusal to be overwhelmed by others' (Johnson 1997: 63). Indeed, it may be more productive to consider the case of the Sama in relation to the Tausug, particularly as it is the latter who have more fully explored agentive action in its extreme form (id.: 61-62)—using organised armed force—and thus offer insights not available from other, less combative cases (see McKenna 1998).

Thesis Outline

This thesis seeks to contribute to this growing literature exploring the relations of hinterland minority groups and the state, particularly in a setting

where insurgency, counter-insurgency, and the minority group's own differential interests intersect. To that end, it will employ a framework that focuses on the minority group's engagements with the state, seen as interested in establishing control of the hinterlands, its resources and populations, particularly through its counter-insurgency program. At the same time, it is alerted to the particular role that leaders play in these dynamics; and to the very real possibility of differential perspectives within the community, particularly between leaders and non-leaders.

This framework guides my exploration of the case of the Banwaon, an un-Islamised, largely non-Christian hinterland minority group who have not previously been the subject of academic study. As the rumour I reported at the start of this thesis suggests, the Banwaon are confronted by militarisation by the state, even as they seek to maintain a degree of political autonomy. This sense of autonomy is further explored through the lens of a major ritual practised by the Banwaon; along with the ambiguous relationship of education to this sense of autonomy (Chapter 2). This Banwaon interest in education is linked to their contemporary engagement with the logging industry, the history and cultural impact of which I also consider (Chapter 3). With a clearer sense of the Banwaons' relations to their lands, I proceed to discuss a dispute over a proposal to have their ancestral territory titled (Chapter 4). I argue that the conflict reflects differing positions on Banwaon-state relations; and that the dispute itself must be seen in the context of on-going counter-insurgency operations to be properly understood. Part of the consequences of that dispute over titling was the intensification of militarisation in the area. I consider Banwaon responses to two forms of this militarisation. The first is the occupation of one village by soldiers (Chapter 5), and the second is the threat of murder at the hands of a death-squad (Chapter 6). I then consider how, in an attempt to address continuing militarisation, the Banwaon explored local electoral politics (Chapter 7). I argue that Banwaon responses to militarisation reflect attempts to reconcile their pursuit of autonomy with their membership in the national polity. I conclude with reflections on these, and related themes in the last chapter.

My conclusions speak to the experience of state power by a people on the political periphery, and underscore the singular importance of counter-insurgent violence in configuring the context of state-hinterland people relations in this case. My thesis illustrates a literal episode of the foundational violence of the state in a hinterland frontier. At the same time, I acknowledge the agency of the Banwaon, noting how they continue to seek to maintain their autonomy in the face of militarisation. Hopefully, my material will enrich understandings of how state authority is negotiated and achieved in the Philippine context. More, the focus on an un-Islamised hinterland minority group may help bring them and their experience of the state—into more involved dialogue with the wider literature on island Southeast Asia.

At this point, I present a brief overview of the area where the fieldwork was conducted, and of the local history. I also introduce two sets of actors, the Tagdumahan on one hand, and the *katangkawan* and his supporters on the other.

The Regional Setting

My fieldsite is on Mindanao Island, the largest island in the southern Philippines (see Map no. 1, below). Mindanao is where the ancestral territories of a number of Islamised and un-Islamised peoples are located, but beginning in the Spanish colonial period (16th-19th centuries) migrants from the more northerly islands have settled there, forming a complex ethnic and cultural mosaic (Rodil 1994, Eder and McKenna 2004). In the 1970s and 1980s, Mindanao witnessed considerable armed conflict between insurgent groups and the government's military and paramilitary forces (see essays in Turner, et al., eds. 1992). Even today, many hinterland areas—such as my fieldsite—remain militarised. I shall have more to add on Mindanao's political history below.

Within Mindanao, my fieldsite is in the Caraga Region, in the northeast of the island. This region is dominated by the Agusan river basin, a large, complex watershed formed by the Agusan River, the second largest river on the island. This river's source is in the mountains of the Davao region further south, from which it winds northwards, through the provinces of Agusan del Sur and Agusan del Norte, to Butuan Bay. The regional capital is Butuan City, straddling the river a few kilometres near its mouth. Administratively, the fieldsite lies within the jurisdiction of the Province of Agusan del Sur (Map no. 2, below), a large, landlocked province which mainly produces rice and corn in its low-lying flatlands, and timber in its hinterlands. Within the province, there is an informal distinction between 'highway towns' along the Maharlika highway running north-south through the province, and the 'river towns' which are each associated with one of the various tributary rivers of the Agusan.

My fieldsite is in one such river town, the remote Municipality of San Luis, which grew from a village founded by nineteenth-century Jesuit missionaries. As this suggests, this river-side area used to be part of the territory of the Manobo, another ethnic minority group. Today however, the town-centre and the nearby satellite communities are dominated by Bisaya, the local term for migrant lowlanders or people of non-indigenous descent. There are only a few, scattered Manobo villages today; most of them now co-exist with the Bisaya in the farm communities around the town-centre. This 'minoritization' (Rodil 1994), where indigenous populations become minorities in rural towns dominated by migrant lowlanders is broadly consistent with the reported experience of other Manobo groups in Agusan del Sur (see Buenconsejo 2002: 5 et seq., Trinidad 2012: 19 et seq.).

San Luis has an area of approximately 95,050 hectares, and a population of about 32,733.¹ It has a rough rectangular shape (Map no. 3), in the eastern end of which is the junction between the Agusan River and one of its

¹ See *2010 Census of Population and Housing*, at <http://www.census.gov.ph/sites/default/files/attachments/hsd/pressrelease/Caraga.pdf>, accessed 6 September 2013.

tributaries, the Ma-asam River. The town-centre sits near this confluence, forming a small but relatively densely-populated area surrounded by rice and corn fields and satellite communities. The town-centre is usually flooded during the *amihan* monsoon, in December and January. The populace then casually shifts to pump-boats and dugouts for transport to and from the town.

The two-storey concrete town-hall is located on the eastern bank of the Agusan River, at the foot of a hill crowned by a camp of government troops. Nearby are other government buildings and offices, including a state high-school. From here, there is a bridge crossing to the western bank, locally referred to as Pilpak, after a defunct logging firm, the Philippine Packing Corp. Pilpak is the commercial centre of the town, with houses and shops lining its few narrow streets and alleys. Outside of the small public market, local businesses consist mostly of dry-goods and grocery-stores, eateries, and repair shops for motor vehicles. There is no gasoline station; fuel is bought by stall-owners in neighbouring Talacogon town, and resold from plastic jugs or Coca-Cola bottles. Next to the small public market is the terminal for motorcycles-for-hire, the only mode of public transportation within the municipality. Police are rarely seen here; small groups of fully-armed troops are more likely to be patrolling the area. To note, the police generally enjoy more popular acceptance than soldiers, towards whom many people—Bisaya and Banwaon—are ambivalent, at best. The town is connected to the regional power-grid, but there are frequent outages. There are no telephone landlines; until the introduction of mobile telephone technology, people who could afford to relied on short-wave and hand-held radios. Mobile-phones however are reliable only at the town-centre; signal-coverage becomes increasingly spotty and intermittent as one goes further from this area.

There is a two-lane gravel road connecting San Luis to Talacogon town. Branching off at different points from this road are two smaller, very rough roads which both head westward and upward into the town's hinterlands. These two tracks are the decaying remains of logging roads laid down by timber companies in the 1960s or 1970s. Following logging industry usage,

the two roads and the areas they serve are referred to as 'Side One' and 'Side Two'. In both areas, the terrain becomes increasingly rugged as one proceeds along the roads, toward the Pantaron mountain range, which forms the western boundary of San Luis town; across this range is Bukidnon province. Although mountainous, the altitude is not high, as attested by the fact that malaria is endemic in the area. The Side Two road is longer, and leads to the watershed of the upper Adgawan River, another tributary of the Agusan River. The Side One road also winds upslope, running roughly parallel to the Ma-asam River. There are fortified military camps at Km. 11, 24, and 36 of the road, each occupied by a combination of government soldiers and paramilitaries. The terrain here is rough, carved by numerous tributary streams of the Ma-asam. There are some fifteen, mostly small Banwaon villages in Side One, and a number of even smaller settlements. Much of the area is forested, with swidden clearings around the villages. As my work is based entirely on research conducted in Side One, my remarks on the Banwaon should be understood as referring only to the people of this area. Side Two is also occupied by Banwaon, but I simply do not have sufficient data on them to allow me to include them in my analysis or conclusions.



Map no. 1. Caraga Region.²



Map no. 2. Agusan del Sur province.⁴



Map no. 3. The Municipality of San Luis.³

² Map source:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ph_locator_region_13.png. Accessed 3 September 2013.

³ Map source:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7f/Ph_locator_agusan_del_sur_san_luis.png. Accessed 3 September 2013.

⁴ Map source:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/77/Ph_locator_map_agusan_del_sur.png. Accessed 3 September 2013.

Balit Village

I had originally intended to work in only one village, but when I saw the local importance of logging, I decided to spend some time in a second village further up the Side One road, where logging operations were then on-going.

The first village is Balit, only seven kilometres from the town-centre, on the Side One road. It is a Barangay—the lowest local government unit in the Philippines, roughly equivalent to a borough or subdivision of a township or city—of San Luis, and thus has a Barangay Captain, supported by a Barangay Council. There are also three traditional leaders in the village, two male *datu* and a female *ba-e*, who work with Barangay officials in resolving local conflicts. With 123 houses, Balit is one of the largest Banwaon communities. Though the Banwaon form the largest ethnic group in the village, there are also many Manobo and Bisaya. Intermarriages between these groups are increasing. Cebuano-Visayan or Binisaya, the regional *lingua franca*, is very widely spoken here. Indeed, Balit may be the most cosmopolitan of the villages, tele-novelas and pop-music being very popular among residents. As this suggests, the village is connected to the power-grid, though supply is unreliable. No homes have running water; water for domestic use is drawn from the four wells in the village.

Most of the residents' homes are arranged with quasi-urban density along both sides of the Side One road, and in lines parallel to it, all interconnected by concrete foot-paths. The houses are set in small yards often given over to vegetable gardening. All have lowland-style architectural forms; most are wooden, single-storey structures divided into rooms, raised off the ground on low pilings, with a few fully- or partially-built of cement blocks. A few houses have store-fronts, from which groceries and/or refreshments are sold. As one follows the road into the village, a narrow track opens on the right, just past the mid-point of the community. This track runs downhill, to a bank of the Ma-asam River, where there are a few, more haphazardly arranged houses. The terrain surrounding the village is hilly; where it is not used as a

cornfield, vegetable garden or softwood tree-stand, it is covered by brush, light at the community's edges, getting heavier the further one walks.

In contrast to the general settlement-pattern in the lowlands, which centered on Churches during the Spanish colonial period, and schools in the American, Balit village has no clear focal point, except the road itself. The largest government building is the wooden, two-storey Barangay Hall, where village officials conduct business. It is not an imposing sight, and its visibility is further compromised by its location off the road, on one side of the track to the river, at the edge of the main residential area. Only the cemetery next to it is further from the residential area. Other government facilities are a day-care centre, a primary school offering first- and second-grade studies, and a high-school opened in 2008, which only offered first-year studies during my time in the field; all are very small structures. The largest private building is the two-storey grade-school of the nuns of the Religious of the Good Shepherd (RGS), offering studies for the third to sixth grades. It occupies a large fenced courtyard screened from the road by trees. Just outside this courtyard is a two-storey 'cottage' for the schoolteachers and other RGS staff; this was my home in Balit. Finally, there is a small Roman Catholic chapel along the road.

Balit was founded in 1977 by the Banwaon elders of the Otacan, Precioso, Saguitan, Andreca and Pedrosa families, who occupied the area around this section of what was then a busy logging road. When the nuns of the RGS set up a school in Balit in 1981, other families from surrounding areas gravitated towards it. The village grew further in the 1990s when the RGS expanded the school, and introduced livelihood projects for the residents. There are also a number of Banwaon families who resettled in Balit through the 1990s and 2000s, to escape militarisation further up in the hinterlands.

Tabon-tabon Village

The second site was Tabon-tabon, a small Banwaon community of twenty-four households, located about 29 kilometres up the Side One road. Administratively, it is a *sitio* or subdivision of Barangay Mahagsay at Km. 36, where there is a military camp. However, it conducts itself as an independent village. Having no Barangay officials, the residents are guided by three men who act as headmen, but are not yet *datu*. All residents are Banwaon, but *Binisaya* is understood and spoken by all but the more elderly residents. There is no electricity, and there are only three or four spots in the village where there is a mobile telephone signal. Water is drawn from two nearby springs.

There are no government or church buildings in the village. At its eastern end is a semi-concrete, two-storey grade-school building built by the RGS sisters. It dominates a rectangular, partially-fenced courtyard. On the northern side of this compound is the community's meeting hall. This is the only structure in the village built along indigenous architectural lines; a two-level platform of wooden planks and splints raised high on pilings, with a steeply-pitched thatch roof. Along the fence across from the schoolhouse is a wooden gate. The one 'street' in the village runs some thirty-five meters from the school-gate to a basketball court carved out of the red clay, which marks the western end of the village. About half-way along the village street, a trail branches off to the north, through the forest, to the Side One road. There are trails that go further westward to the residents' swidden rice-fields, arranged in three loose clusters amidst the uneven terrain and thick forests surrounding the village.

Most of the villagers' houses stand along both sides of the street; like Balit, all are built in lowlander style. The largest belongs to Datu Manbalanio, a community leader who has left the village, on one side of the school gate. In contrast to its neighbours, it is spacious, with a wide front porch, and set five feet off the ground on sturdy posts. Across the street from it is the humbler school-teachers' 'cottage'. This was often visited by villagers, young and old,

and informal meetings to discuss local problems were often held there. This—and the fact that the most reliable mobile-phone signal-spot happens to be inside it—is why I chose it as my base in Tabon-tabon. The school seems to be the focal point of the village. Not only is the building large and imposing, it also has that courtyard and rather grand gate. Moreover, the community's lone street leads up to, or from it. Finally, there is the proximity of the houses of Datu Manbalanio and of the respected school-teachers. In contrast, Datu Manbalanio's house looks lonely, especially after his departure; the meeting hall is not visible until one enters the school-yard, and even then it looks forlorn next to the school.

Until the 1960s, there was no Tabon-tabon village. This is not to say the area was unpopulated: A branch of the Manseliohan family of Mahagsay village is associated with nearby Kinayang creek; while the rest of the area is linked to the large Badbaran family. People then lived beside their respective swidden-fields, scattered across the landscape and moving every annual farming cycle, rather than in a village. In this, their settlement pattern is broadly similar to other swidden-farming groups in Mindanao (cf. Cole 1956, Frake 1980, Manuel 1973) and elsewhere in the Philippines (cf. Rosaldo R. 1980, Gibson 1986). This changed with the entry of the logging industry into the Ma-asam River area in the 1960s, when Banwaon began to settle near company camps and facilities. The current village-site was originally the *landinganan* or log-deck of a 'Dites' logging company,⁵ where logs were stockpiled. Later came Kalilid Wood Industries, which built a three-storey office building, a 'pilot-road' further into the forest, and other facilities, none of which have survived.

The Road into the Field

To travel from Butuan City, the regional capital, to San Luis, it is best to board a bus for Talacogon at the city's transport-terminal. The bus goes

⁵ I suspect 'Dites' is a corruption of 'D.T.S.'.

south on the Maharlika highway until it reaches Bah-bah, in Prosperidad town. Here it turns off the highway onto a smaller concrete road that passes a succession of farming communities until about two hours later, it reaches Talacogon. There, one disembarks to seek further transport. During the monsoon floods, this would mean taking a pump-boat. When roads are passable, one can either wait for one of the few, slow *jeepneys* plying the San Luis to Butuan route; or charter a motorcycle-for-hire. The *jeepney* travels a poorly-maintained gravel road, stopping to pick up every passenger it can, before reaching San Luis an hour or more later. A motorcycle-for-hire would go through cornfields, across a small bridge over the Agusan River, and along its riverbank, to where San Luis town-hall stands. This takes fifteen to twenty minutes. I prefer the motorcycles, not only for the convenience, but also for the conversations with the drivers, who are good sources of information on military movements.

To travel from San Luis town-centre to Balit village, one charts a motorcycle-for-hire at the terminal near the market. The ride to Balit follows the road to Talacogon partway, before turning right onto the Side One road. It passes through farm country, with villages and rice or corn-fields interspersed with residual forest stands and small softwood tree-plantations, arriving at Balit about twenty minutes later.

To travel to Tabon-tabon, one again charts a motorcycle-for-hire at the market terminal. The route follows that for Balit, but goes past it, to climb through increasingly hilly and forested terrain. The villages along the road are smaller and much more widely separated, and frequently no people are seen for long stretches. There are many points where the dirt road becomes difficult to navigate. Passengers are expected to help right the motorcycle should it fall over, or push or pull it free if buried in the mud. During rainy months, it can seem that passengers have been carrying the motorcycle more than the other way around. Sometimes one is flagged down at the military camps at Km. 11 and/or Km. 24, to be asked by paramilitaries or the occasional soldier where one was headed, and/or to sign one's name into a 'logbook' recording movement along the road. The atmosphere varies:

Sometimes the driver and paramilitary exchange jokes; at other times, the paramilitaries are bored or suspicious. Passengers have been known to be detained and their cargo searched or seized at Km. 24. When there are on-going military operations—signalled by circling pairs of helicopter gunships or troops tramping along the road—there may be more checkpoints along the road. Finally, one arrives at the Km. 29 point of the Side One road, where there is a small dirt track on the left. The motorcycle follows this for fifteen meters, to a ‘waiting shed’ where one dismounts at last. The state of the road can be gauged from the two to three hours it usually takes to travel 29 kilometres; some people like to point out that the flight-time from Manila in the north to Butuan City is shorter. And the trip to Tabon-tabon is not over yet; one still has to follow a trail that winds through the surrounding forest, to arrive at the village an hour later.

The Banwaon: The Literature

The Banwaon have not been the subject of any published academic study, outside of an illustrative reference to the Banwaon situation I made in an essay on the larger question of indigenous land rights in the Philippines (Gatmaytan 2007). Until now, there have only been passing, vague references to them. John M. Garvan, an American anthropologist who worked in the Agusan River area between 1907 and 1914 (Garvan 1927: 567, Cole 1935: 144), locates the Banuaon—as he styles them—on ‘the upper parts of the Rivers Laminga, Kandiisan, Hawilian, and Ohut, and the whole of the River Maasam, together with the mountainous regions beyond the headwaters of these rivers, and probably extend over to the Bukidnon’ (Garvan 1929: 5, also 3, 14). I have not been to the Hawilian or Ohut, but I can attest that the Banwaon are present along the Laminga and Kandiisan, and of course the Ma-asam, where I conducted my fieldwork.

Garvan believes the Banwaon are ‘an extension of the Bukidnons of the Bukidnon subprovince’ (id.: 5, also 3), to the west of present day Agusan del Sur province. The ‘Bukidnons’ are otherwise referred to in the literature as

the ‘Higaonan’ (Cole 1956: 5), ‘Higaunon’ (Paredes 1997b: 2, 1997a: 272), or ‘Higaonon’ (Edgerton 2008: 19). My experience indicates that the Banwaon and the Higaunon who occupy the adjacent Libang River area share many cultural traits. Indeed, some of my sources draw a linguistic distinction between the Banwaon and Higaunon on one hand, and the Manobo on the other. It is strange however that Garvan’s study of the Agusan region makes no mention at all of the Higaunon or their presence on the Libang River, when a 19th century Jesuit missionary mentions the ‘jigaonos of Liban’ (Arcilla trans. 2003: 601).

I also note Garvan’s observation that at the time he worked in the Agusan region, the term ‘Manobo’ was a religious distinction between those who were baptised or converted, and those who were not (1929: 1), rather than an denotation of ethnicity or culture, as we understand it today. My reading of the letters of the Jesuit missionaries who preceded him in the area indicates they did use the term ‘Manobo’ as a generic label for unbaptised hinterland populations. For example, one missionary speaks of ‘a community mainly of Manobos called *banwaon*’ (Arcilla trans. 2003: 282, emphasis original). This implies that there are broad cultural similarities between the Banwaon, and the neighbouring Manobo to their east and south, and the Higaunon to their north. This allows me—with due care—to draw on ethnographic material on the Higaunon/Bukidnon and the Manobo for comparative material. I do not imply thereby an identity between these three broad groups, who make ethnic distinctions between themselves. On the other hand, they sometimes refer to themselves collectively as Lumad—a Cebuano-Visayan term meaning ‘native [to a place]’, which became current in the latter 1980s—in contra-distinction to the migrant Bisaya.

As Cole suggests (1935: 144), there are many broad similarities between the Banwaon and other hinterland ethnic groups on Mindanao (cf. Cole 1913, 1956; Garvan 1927, 1929; Schlegel 1970, 1979, 1994; Manuel 1973; Frake 1980; Paredes 1997a, 1997b; Alejo 2000; Buenconsejo 2002; Edgerton 2008; Wenk Bruehlmann 2012), and elsewhere in the Philippines (Rosaldo R. 1980, Rosaldo M. 1980, Gibson 1986). They traditionally relied on

swidden rice-farming, supplemented by hunting, fishing and trade; they are un-Islamised and largely non-Christian 'animists' with a shamanic tradition with suggestive similarities to other groups in the Philippines (cf. Cannell 1999) and Indonesia (cf. Atkinson 1989, Sillander 2012); and have a largely egalitarian social structure, guided rather than governed by headmen or *datu*. I will be adding to these broad characterisations my own ethnographic material in the course of this thesis.

The Militarisation of Banwaon-land

In the Banwaons' own accounts of their history, two things loom large: Logging and militarisation. I will address the logging in further depth in Chapter 3, and focus here on state militarisation in response to the presence of Communist insurgents in Banwaon territory. To begin, my sources indicate that until the 1980s, the state's presence in San Luis was minimal. They describe the 1960s and 1970s as the time of the logging boom. At its height, the area was subdivided into various timber-concessions; logging camps were scattered across the landscape; and dirt or gravel roads plied by fleets of trucks and tractors connected the hinterlands to the town-centre. This was a time my older sources described nostalgically, as a time of excitement, opportunity and prosperity. On the other hand, reminiscences of the 1950s to the 1970s by my older informants almost never mention the local or national government, giving the impression that governance of the town's hinterland was effectively delegated to the various logging firms operating in the hills. Indeed, road-construction and the arrival of tinned food, radio-communications, and modern medicine (through company clinics), for example, are credited to the companies, not to government.

In the rest of the Philippines, however, the 1960s and early 1970s was marked by growing criticism of then President Ferdinand Marcos, who was corrupt, and was implicated in a number of violent incidents (McCoy 2009a: 390 et seq.). At the same time, the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) was launched in 1968, seeking the secession of Muslim-held areas of

Mindanao from the Philippines (McKenna 1998: 144-145). 1969 was the year the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) established the New People's Army (NPA), as its armed instrument of Maoist-inspired revolution.⁶ After winning a second term as president in 1969 through a campaign notoriously 'rife with goons and gold' (McCoy 2009: 391), student demonstrations against Marcos' administration intensified, just as the capital was rocked by a series of bombings. After an alleged attempt to assassinate his Defense Secretary, Marcos imposed Martial Law on 21 September 1972, ostensibly to restore peace and order to the country (Hedman and Sidel 2000: 43). This was shortly followed by the onset of armed hostilities between the Philippine military and the secessionist Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in central and southern Mindanao (McKenna 1998: 156-157), drawing much of the state's military resources. In the meantime, the NPA was expanding throughout the rest of the country. In the Agusan region, NPA recruitment and operations began in the lowlands, and only shifted to the hinterlands in the 1980s. Most of their units are composed of Bisaya or lowlanders, with recruits from the local indigenous groups forming a minority.

The military responded with a series of operations, combining troop movements, the corralling of civilian populations to insulate them from insurgents, the use of artillery and strike aircraft, and the execution of suspected insurgents or NPA supporters (Sales 1992a: 217). It also began organising the Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces (ICHDF), paramilitary units which would support the military's counter-insurgency program (Lawyers Committee for Human Rights 1990: 56). The Philippines state has a long history of deploying paramilitary formations in support of counter-insurgency (Hedman 2000: 142-143). Paramilitary organizing in the 1970s and 1980s however was marked by the recruitment of members of hinterland ethnic groups (Edgerton 1983: 164-167; Anti-Slavery Society 1983: 127 et seq.; May 1992a: 132, 1992b: 16-17; Wenk Bruehlmann 2012: 198, 200-201), a development perhaps modeled after American counter-

⁶ See *The New People's Army*, dated 13 May 1969, posted by the Communist Party of the Philippines on its website, at <http://www.philippinerevolution.net/documents/the-new-people-s-army>. Accessed 2 September 2013.

insurgency practices in Vietnam. In Agusan del Sur province, a Col. Alexander Noble established an ICHDF unit drawn from members of the Higaunon ethnic group in the late 1970s or early 1980s (May 1992b: 16, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights 1990: 90). These Higaunon, particularly those from the Libang River area, were among those involved in military operations in San Luis during the 1980s. Many of my sources identified the ICHDF unit's leader as Lavi Manpatilan, a Higaunon *datu*. Lavi Manpatilan was the son of the old Datu Manpatilan, who took up arms against the government in the late 1960s over the murder of his brother (Paredes 1997: 280). He soon surrendered, and his son Lavi joined the government paramilitary.⁷ Lavi Manpatilan later parlayed his paramilitary leadership into electoral success, becoming the mayor of Esperanza, Agusan del Sur. He was 'executed' by the NPA in front of a Butuan City church in 1989, as an act of 'revolutionary justice' (Sales 1992: 225). In his turn, Lavi's son Deo also became mayor, even as he maintained control of the Higaunon paramilitary unit, now known as The Wild Dogs.

Many abuses attended the conduct of counter-insurgency in San Luis in the 1980s. Lavi Manpatilan's Higaunon paramilitaries, in particular, are remembered for their brutality. A few sources explain their behavior by reference to an old, unsettled feud or *lido* [B] between certain Libang River Higaunon and Ma-asam River Banwaon families. Most informants say that the military and the paramilitary simply considered all Banwaon as NPA fighters or supporters, when at that time, most Banwaon would have been neutral or ambivalent towards the NPA. After all, they had generally been happy with the logging-boom, and had not experienced any significant interference from the government up until the 1980s. In short, they had no grievance against the state up until then. At any rate, one man characterised this period as '*juez de cuchillo*' (roughly, 'judgment by the knife'), underscoring the violence of state military and paramilitary forces. In Tabon-tabon village, five men—a party of four 'treasure-hunters', and a lone

⁷ See 'Rebels Execute Tribal Leader, 4 Others in Agusan del Sur—Police', an article in the online news portal *Interaksyon*, at <http://www.interaksyon.com/article/64483/rebels-execute-tribal-leader-4-others-in-agusan-del-sur---police>. Accessed 7 September 2013.

traveller from the Adgawan River area—were arbitrarily and summarily executed by paramilitaries in separate incidents. Finally, sometime in the mid-1980s, Manpatilan's men hanged five logging workers from a tree at the Km. 24 point of the Side One road. This atrocity triggered an exodus from the hinterlands. Logging companies, which had been trying to continue operations despite the intensifying violence, gave up and abandoned their concession-areas. Fleeing Bisaya workers and Banwaon villagers were trucked to the lowlands. Most Banwaon evacuees ended up in shacks they built around the Catholic chapel at Pilpak. Many however chose instead to retreat into the surrounding forests, where they hid for many years.

We will take up these Banwaons' fugitive lives in—and eventual emergence from—the forest in Chapter 5. At this point, I want to focus on the broad effect of the militarisation of the 1980s on the Banwaon. From having only the sketchiest of ideas about the government, the state became very real to them in the grim figure of the soldier and the paramilitary. Many Banwaon were radicalized by their experience of abuse and loss at the hands of these agents of the state. It can be argued that it was the initial wave of counter-insurgency violence that actually forced many Banwaon into the forest, where the NPA were. A few of them did join the NPA or its Pulang Bagani [M] (Red Warrior) militia-unit as a result of the counter-insurgency program, and ended up participating in armed operations against government forces. Most Banwaon did not join the NPA. For its part, the CPP and NPA were understandably interested in recruiting from the ranks of hinterland peoples, as can be inferred from the CPP's avowed support for the right of 'national minorities' to self-determination and autonomy (see item no. eight of *A Ten Point Programme for a National Democratic Revolution*, cited in Anti-Slavery Society 1983: 163-164). In contrast, the state at this time had no clear policy or development agenda for ethnic minority groups.

The Tagdumahan and the Katangkawan

While most Banwaon did not join the NPA, there was strong interest among their leaders for the idea of community organising, for the protection of their ancestral territory and the realisation of their right to self-determination. The notion that community-organising is a necessary step towards development was picked up from interaction with the RGS, NGOs and activists they were in contact with, and perhaps the NPA as well. The late 1980s witnessed the establishment of village-level organizations such as Barog Balit (lit., 'Arise Balit', with connotations of 'standing for one's principles') in Balit village. There was also an attempt to form an inter-village alliance of Banwaon communities. Initially there was the BACAMA of the late 1980s, replaced in the mid-1990s by the Tagdumahan ('Unity' or 'Fellowship'). The Tagdumahan's political project has consistently been the organising of the Banwaon into a cohesive polity that can protect its territory and exercise the arts of self-determination. I shall hereafter refer to this broad vision by the shorthand term of 'autonomy', which to my mind captures the sense of control the Banwaon seek over their lives, vis-à-vis perceived outsiders, such as the Philippine state. The Banwaon themselves do not use the term 'autonomy', instead speaking in the more concrete terms of '*prublema sa seguridad*' (security problems) and '*prublema sa panginabuhì*' (livelihood problems), which they both link to militarisation. In as much as these problems are understood to be consequences of the state's interference in local affairs—as it pursues its counter-insurgency program— 'autonomy' captures the desire to be free of such interference.

Frequently, this sense of autonomy is expressed or explained through the allegorical tale of Palamgowan and Palagsulat. According to this story, there were two brothers who once lived on the coast of Mindanao. When the Spaniards arrived, the younger brother converted to Christianity, obeyed Spanish laws, and thereafter lived by what he read and wrote. The other preferred to stay true to what their parents had taught them, and left the coast for the hills, where he was free to continue living by dreams and visions. The younger brother became known as Palagsulat, 'The One Who

Writes', father of the Bisaya and other lowland peoples. The older became known as Palamgowan, 'The One Who Dreams', ancestor of all hinterland minority groups. Most interpretations of this story underscore the rift between the children of Palagsulat and Palamgowan; stress the latter's loyalty to tradition; and prescribe the separation of the cultural and political domain of the Bisaya from that of the Banwaon. Each group, in other words, has its own set ways, which the other must respect. Often, the Bisaya are conflated with the Philippine state—which the Banwaon refer to as *gobyerno* (from the Spanish for 'government')—because the state is seen as the government of the lowland Bisaya. Thus the Palamgowan : Palagsulat binary can be, and often is read as Banwaon : Philippine state/*gobyerno*. Interestingly, the logging industry seems to represent an anomaly. It is clearly linked to the lowlands, the Bisaya, and to the extent that it operates on the basis of a government-awarded timber-concession, the state. Yet, it was allowed into Banwaon territory, probably because of the benefits it offered; this contradiction may be the root of an underlying anxiety many Banwaon harbor towards their participation in logging, all of which will be explored in Chapter 3.

In practical terms, the tale can be read as prohibiting the introduction of things or practices associated with the lowlands, the Bisaya, or the state into Banwaon territory. In this it articulates the rule or principle of *olag* [B] which is that in living one's life, one must follow one's ancestors, doing as they did, and by implication not doing anything they did not. Among the neighboring Bukidnon/Higaunon, such things as buffaloes and plows, pencil and paper, metal roofing, and hats and shoes—'new' things their ancestors did not have—were taboo until the 1970s (Cullen 1973: 3). For their part, the Banwaon used to have designated wards called *dagpon* [B] whose role was to ensure that no foreign objects enter Banwaon territory. Failing to maintain this cultural boundary meant suffering some supernatural sanction from the spirits, who are prone to being alienated (*mala-in*) by foreign objects or literally outlandish practices. On one level, this has meant having to conduct rituals before using motor vehicles, school buildings, and GPS receivers, to forewarn the spirits and seek their understanding. At another level, the story

of the two brothers outlines an ideological basis for resistance to state control. This is because the state, whether in its colonial or postcolonial form, is not seen as a significant part of the Banwaon ancestors' lives, and the rule of *olag* requires them to maintain this condition. I am not suggesting that the Banwaon live lives of pristine alterity; the people of Balit, I have noted, are quite cosmopolitan, and many speak Binisaya and are proud of it; most of my data is, in fact, in Bisaya. I would stress however that where people in the cultural and technological mainstream take the increasing pace of change as a given in their lives, the new—dancing outside a ritual context, beauty pageants, and land titles—is something problematic, subject to challenge and negotiation, for the Banwaon. In a way, it forces them to think about what aspects of their lives they may or may not change, to discuss and decide what the core values or meanings of being Banwaon are. I argue that this sense of freedom from authority, of autonomy, is one such core value. It has to be said however that, beyond this broad idea of autonomy, Tagdumahan leaders have yet to present a clear charter or plan outlining how, in this imagined future they will manage their political, economic and cultural affairs. We shall have opportunity to discuss this notion of autonomy further below; at this point I wish only to signal its importance for the leaders of Tagdumahan.

The Tagdumahan has been able to document and report human rights abuses attending counter-insurgency operations. It has also been able to fend off a tree-plantation, an oil-palm project, and a mining company from their territory, among other successes. The role of the RGS—who have worked with the Banwaon since 1978—and of indigenous activists in such successes has to be acknowledged. They encouraged community-organising and provided venues for discussing a vision for indigenous peoples' future, linked to an understanding of the right to self-determination, which emerged from critiques of states' assimilationist policies in the late 1980s (de la Cadena and Starn 2007: 8). With their assistance, the Tagdumahan was able to pursue its objectives in the face of the state's counter-insurgency program which, like a lost ghost of the Cold War, has continued to be conducted in San Luis up to the present.

To note, counter-insurgency in the form of ‘vigilantism’ accelerated after the downfall of Marcos in 1986, and during the presidency of Corazon Aquino (Hedman and Sidel 2000: 51 et seq.). Her administration abolished the ICHDF—which was so notorious for human rights violations that the post-Marcos Philippine Constitution specifically outlawed it—only to replace it with the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Units or CAFGU (van der Kroef 1988), jokingly referred to as ‘Cory Aquino’s Free Guns and Uniforms’. While fanatic groups such as those described by Hedman and Sidel (id., also Kowalewski 1991) did not feature in the San Luis hinterland, military operations continued, to a point where troop movements at harvest time became an annual event the Banwaon came to expect. Human rights abuses continued as well (see Human Rights Watch/Asia 1992: 16-20). We have noted the presence of soldiers at San Luis town-centre, and the military camps in the hinterlands. The military is such a part of the local setting that, like the weather, their movements have become the stuff of casual conversations; and their jargon, words like ‘operation’, ‘deploy’ and ‘asset’, has filtered into everyday language.

In April 1999, Mario Napongahan, the *katangkawan* of the Ma-asam River Banwaon ‘surrendered’ to the military, along with his family. The position of *katangkawan* [B] is a specialist political-legal role, the holder of which has the task of resolving *lido* or feuds between Banwaon, or between Banwaon and members of other ethnic groups. Under specific circumstances, he is also entrusted with the prosecution of punitive expeditions. This role seems to be unique to the Banwaon, as it has no parallel among the Higaunon or Manobo. I emphasise that this role does not connote paramount leadership over all the Banwaon. Like the Agusan Manobo (Garvan 1929), Higaunon (Cole 1956, Paredes 1997b), and most other un-Islamised hinterland groups in Mindanao, the Banwaon are an uncentralised society; no one person commands, or can speak for, their people. Some scholars have suggested that the Higaunon—and by extension, the Banwaon—once had a leaders who had authority over their entire people, but Edgerton argues persuasively that this was never the case (2008: 32-33). In this light, I view the role of

katangkawan as a specialisation that comes to the fore only when there are feuds to be resolved; at any other time, a *katangkawan* is just another *datu*. Thus, this *katangkawan* had been the Barangay Captain of his home village of Mahagsay; and later, an indigenous rights activist. He was among those who had hidden in the forests following the violence of the 1980s, during which time he joined a militia-unit organised by the NPA. He was then an inspiration or symbol of hope for many Banwaon trying to cope with continued militarisation. When he ‘surrendered’, there was widespread disappointment, even a bitter sense of betrayal among some. I have sometimes wondered if the snakes in the rumour with which I opened this thesis—drawing on the same Biblical reference used in the hinterland joke about Adam and Eve’s ethnicity—were a reference to the *katangkawan* and his supporters.

By 2001, the *katangkawan*, his family and supporters had been organised by the government into a paramilitary CAFGU unit, and began operating in support of the counter-insurgency program. He established the Manobo-Banwaon Tagbigola (MABANTAG) to counter the Tagdumahan. A leader from Tabon-tabon village recalls how in 2002, the *katangkawan* declared himself the only leader in the area, and that he would ‘cancel’ Tabon-tabon. Shortly after, he herded the villagers into a hamlet on the Side One road, where they were so starved and harassed that they escaped en masse to Balit, where they stayed for five months. The *katangkawan* also forced the closure of the RGS-TFM schools in Mahagsay and Manlahing villages. He terrorised Minlinaw village until it disintegrated, its residents fleeing to other communities. Between November 2005 and January 2006, there was a series of threats by the CAFGU against Tagdumahan leaders and RGS staff, culminating in the murder of a colleague in his home in Pilpak.⁸ One of the last things I did for the Tagdumahan before leaving for London in 2007 was to prepare a criminal complaint against the *katangkawan*’s brother, who had

⁸ See ‘Activist Working for Indigenous Communities Killed’ posted on the website of the *Asian Human Rights Commission*, at <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/UA-057-2006>. Accessed 8 September 2013.

staged a grenade attack on the Barangay Captain of Balit village.⁹ In each case, it was understood that the victims were targeted because they were considered by the *katangkawan* as NPA supporters. As we shall see, his involvement in these counter-insurgency activities will have a crucial effect on the negotiation of relations between the Tagdumahan Banwaon and the Philippine state.

In any case, the Tagdumahan continued with its organising work through to the mid-2010s. While its leaders could not strip the *katangkawan* of his authority—as I understand it, his ritual installation into ‘office’ could not be undone—they have withdrawn allegiance from him. Thus, when the *katangkawan* announced a *dumalongdong* or assembly of *datus* in 2009, none of the Tagdumahan leaders attended. There were also occasional discussions of whether or not the Banwaon could have a second or alternative *katangkawan*, and if so, who among their ranks it should be. That these discussions were inconclusive underscores the novelty of this situation; as one observer put it, it was as if the Pope had converted to another religion. During my fieldwork however, the organization grew inactive; its leaders continued to speak out on the issues confronting their communities, but there were no meetings or other activities for more than a year after early 2009. This was due in part to problems securing funding, an increasingly difficult task for Philippine community organizations and NGOs. For the most part however, I believe that the cumulative effect of more than two decades of militarisation was taking its toll on the organization. When I left the field, the Banwaon were enjoying the respite brought by the May 2010 elections, which the Tagdumahan could use to consolidate its ranks.

⁹ See ‘Mindanao: Terror Continues in San Luis, Agusan del Sur’, posted on the online news portal, *Davao Today*, at <http://davaotoday.com/main/2007/04/17/mindanao-terror-continues-in-san-luis-agusan-del-sur/>. Accessed 9 September 2013.

Working with the Banwaon

I first came into contact with the Banwaon in 1989 or 1990, when I accompanied a colleague in the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC)—a Manila-based NGO I co-founded to provide legal services to indigenous communities and organisations—to the inauguration of the RGS ‘demonstration farm’ in Balit village. After that, I visited San Luis a few more times until around 1995, when I took on a consultancy with a Butuan City NGO. As the NGOs working with indigenous communities in the Caraga Region were connected through a network, I found opportunities to work with both the RGS and Banwaon leaders, including the *katangkawan*. When my work in Butuan City ended, the RGS offered me another consultancy. Strictly speaking, my contract was a legal retainer, advising and working on human rights, and on land and resource issues. In practice, I was involved in paralegal training, networking with other indigenous peoples’ organisations and NGOs, and community organising alongside Tagdumahan activists. It was during this time that I came to be addressed as ‘Attorney’, despite my insistence on being called by my name; the reader will see that people in my fieldsite continued referring to me this way. It was my twelve years working with the Banwaon and Manobo of Agusan del Sur province that inspired my interest in Anthropology. More importantly, many of the people I describe here as ‘informant’ or ‘source’ are actually friends. Some of course are closer than others, and such is the turbulence of life and work on a militarised frontier that I actually owe my life to a few of them; but all have helped me appreciate their struggles and quiet courage, pushing back at chaos with their sense of obligation to their families and their people.

Before I left the Philippines in 2007 to begin my studies in London, there already were rumours that the *katangkawan* was planning to apply for a title over the entire Side One area. I was interested in this issue because the idea of titling had consistently been resisted by the Tagdumahan as something contrary to their notion of Banwaon-state relations (Gatmaytan 2007: 7-8), and I was curious to see how the *katangkawan* reconciled his mapping project with Banwaon traditions, as I understood them. Studying

this issue could also help the Banwaon and the government agencies involved in the mapping project to better understand the problem, and the parties' differential positions with respect to it. I knew the lawyer the *katangkawan* was said to be approaching for this project, so I had a reasonable chance of establishing rapport with the lawyer, and through him gain access to the *katangkawan* and his perspectives on the issue. The titling project thus became central to my thesis proposal, where I imagined I would use the issue of titling as a lens for examining local actors' perspectives on land and how these reflected underlying notions or constructions of state-minority relations.

As I will detail in another chapter, the *katangkawan* surprised me by asking for my help with the titling project on my return to San Luis to conduct fieldwork. However, after I attended a Tagdumahan meeting where the project was rejected, I received word from various sources saying the *katangkawan* was angry with me, holding me responsible somehow for the derailment of his project. I made an attempt to meet with him, but could not manage it. Thus, even though I had originally intended to give equal weight to the views of the *katangkawan*, his hasty and harsh reaction denied me the intermediary position I was hoping for and forced me 'back' among the Banwaon I had worked with before. I continued with my research work nonetheless. Now however there was no hope of having the *katangkawan's* alternative take on land and logging, titling and the state. In the end, as the reader will see, I find myself 'taking sides' with the Tagdumahan Banwaon, seeking ways to translate 'local expressions of struggle and dissent' for a larger audience (Armbruster 2008: 18).

This brings me to a limitation on my study: My data presents only the perspectives of the Banwaon aligned with the Tagdumahan. Doubtless the *katangkawan* will have a different version of events reported here, and an alternative perspective on things, about which I can only offer occasional and careful conjectures. In this sense, my work truly is partial, in the sense both of incompleteness and limitation, as well as commitment and taking sides (id.: 11). I acknowledge this, but note that this does not in itself invalidate my

findings with respect to the Tagdumahan, or their views on the *katangkawan* at the time I conducted fieldwork. For clarity, I will use the term 'Tagdumahan' as shorthand to refer to the organization's leaders, members and supporters. I will also occasionally use the term 'Banwaon' interchangeably with the Tagdumahan. On the other hand, I will use the term *katangkawan* to refer not only to Mario Napongahan, but also his Banwaon kin and allies, unless it is clear from the context that I am referring to him as an individual. This is not to say that the *katangkawan* and his supporters are not Banwaon, but it does reflect the Tagdumahan's perception of the *katangkawan*'s position in local dynamics, as I will discuss in due time. It would also have been ideal to have secured the perspectives of the NPA in the area, but fortunately or unfortunately, I did not have the means to contact them and include them among my informants.

Even as I pursued my project however, there were further developments: Tabon-tabon village was occupied by soldiers, and this was seen in part as reprisal for the rejection of the *katangkawan*'s titling project. Then a Tagdumahan leader, who was a friend and informant, was killed just outside Balit. This forced me to look beyond the narrow question of whether or not to have Banwaon territory titled, to the larger political context, and how that context is structured by the state's state-building counter-insurgency program. My data, drawn from fieldwork conducted from November 2008 to June 2010, underscores how Banwaon-state relations are being negotiated in the idiom of counter-insurgency.

Ethical Considerations

Writing this thesis posed a major dilemma for me. On one hand, I had wanted to bear witness to the Tagdumahan Banwaons' endurance and persistence in the face of political insecurity and economic immiseration. To my mind, that meant recognizing the people who conversed with me, giving them their voice and acknowledging their contribution to their collective effort to understand and address their situation. Indeed, there were times when it

seemed that people spoke to me precisely because they wanted their words or views, or the events unfolding around them, to be documented. On the other hand, I am aware that some of the information I share here are of a sensitive nature, and could easily lead to reprisals from people or institutions who have demonstrated a willingness and ability to use force. It is also possible to read this thesis as a rather rambling impact-assessment of the Philippine military's current counter-insurgency tactics, dealing as it does with local reactions to this state project. I have no intention of contributing to the refinement of counter-insurgency methods. These two considerations militate against the idea of naming my sources. It has been pointed out to me that the probability of my material being accessed and read by an 'unintended audience' is low. However, that probability is still there; and with technologies of surveillance expanding and improving at the rate they are, it may even increase. My instinct is to play it safe and avoid any such risk. My compromise between acknowledgement and anonymity is to recognise peoples' names and contributions in this thesis, and should it be accepted by the University, I will request that public access to it be restricted. If fortune allows, I will be able to write other essays based on my thesis data, but now using pseudonyms and other means of concealing peoples' identities.

I secured permission to conduct fieldwork from the leaders of the Tagdumahan. They knew that it involved writing, but made no particular point of it; as I recall, they did not even require a copy of my thesis. Perhaps they saw my project as an extension of the work I had previously performed for them as lawyer and community-worker. I will, in any case, provide them with a copy of my thesis. My sense at that time was that approval of my project was given in exchange for my legal or other assistance throughout my time in the field, an expectation and obligation I tried to discharge as best I could. Towards the end of my fieldwork, I secured for the Tagdumahan—by way of showing my gratitude—a small grant to enable them to convene an assembly, after so many months of inactivity enforced by intense militarisation.

I have often wondered if my presence in the field somehow led to the killings of three of my informants; two while I was still in the field, and the third only a few months ago. And should I have done more, or been more aggressive in dealing with the military at Tabon-tabon village? Could I have tried harder to find media contacts for my friends? Should I have stopped being an anthropologist, observing the people about me, and started acting like a human being? These are disquieting thoughts, made worse by the fact that these questions are unanswerable, and therefore deny closure. At the risk of sounding defensive, I can only say that there was and is no way to predict the outcome of any other action I could have taken. I could have made things worse if I had acted otherwise, for all I know.

More, if my friends and contacts were to be believed, I myself was under threat. I do not know if this truly was the case, but prudence dictated that I take precautions, and so have come back from the field alive. Not entirely unscathed, however. For many months, I was paranoid about my security. There was one time when, seated on a bus, I heard the distinctive sound of a .45 cal. handgun being cocked behind me. I froze, believing that despite my efforts to ensure my safety, I had been caught out by a death-squad gunman, who was now pointing a weapon at the back of my head. I was desperately wondering what to do when I heard the sound again. Two handguns? But if the gunman was already holding a weapon in one hand, how could he cock a second one? Two gunmen, then? But why weren't the other passengers reacting as they should at the sight of an imminent shooting? Absurdly: Did no one care? Then the sound came again. Three gunmen? I whirled about in my seat, to find myself looking at a teenaged girl, head bowed over her mobile-phone, oblivious to everything around her. She was using a sound-clip of a handgun being cocked as her text-message alert. I immediately got off the bus though it was many kilometres yet to my destination, and stood by the side of the road, shivering in the sun. My point, I think, is that living and working with the Banwaon, I did not feel the power anthropologists are supposed to enjoy vis-à-vis their interlocutors, but felt as vulnerable as they did. Indeed, all throughout my fieldwork, my project could have come to an abrupt end if the Tagdumahan had said they could 'no

longer guarantee my safety'; their polite way of saying I should leave. I was made very conscious, in other words, of the limits of my agency, and rightly or wrongly, I did only what I felt could be done under the circumstances.

And among the things that could still be done is to write. The last words spoken to me by the last friend and informant I talked to in the field were, '*Ayaw mi kalimti.*' Do not forget us. This brings me back to why I wanted to be as truthful as I could, about names and conversations. I write to remember, and perhaps evoke for comrades, colleagues and other readers a place and time when being one's self could be such a dangerous act.

CHAPTER 2

Dancers, Heroes, the Centre and Beyond

Fiesta at Balit Village

The open-air basketball court had been transformed by the mobile-disco crew hired for the occasion. There were now two powerful lamps that flashed red light hung over the court; along its perimeter were multi-colored lamps, and a projector of green laser-light. There had been adults on the dance floor when the dance began, but they soon yielded it to more than 200 children and youths from Balit and neighboring communities. They danced for hours, displaying their talents, their joy, and their astounding stamina. Near midnight, I was exhausted from watching and decided to head home. Then I remembered that the usual curfew had been lifted because of the fiesta, and this was a rare opportunity to see the village at night. So I wandered among the houses, most of which had shut for the night. Towards one end of the village, there was a lone fluorescent tube that served as a streetlight. As I neared it, I was surprised to see Eddie Badbaran seemingly burst into the light, followed by a file of five other men. ‘*Maayong gabi-i, Attorney*’, Eddie greeted me as he strode past. I stopped and wished him good evening as well. None of the other men in the village patrol spoke. I watched them vanish into the darkness.

These two images, of children dancing, and of their parents patrolling the darkness surrounding them, underscore for me the centrality of the family for the Banwaon, and their guardedness towards the world surrounding them. This chapter explores these two themes, through the tales the Banwaon tell themselves about the world. In fine, it looks at a number of stories and other performances, and considers their ideological or cosmological content. It is hoped that this process will illuminate Banwaon political attitudes, and some of the tensions that they face.

This chapter has two parts. The first centres upon the *hakladan* ritual [B], the most important ritual practised by the Banwaon of Balit village. This requires first a brief introduction to Banwaon notions of the spirit world, before actually describing a documented case of one such ritual. Following Leach's dictum that ritual reflects social relations (1970 [1954]: 264-265), I examine the ritual as a window into Banwaon perspectives on power and its location, and its implications for political organization.

The second part examines the Banwaons' interest in education, and its place in their imagined futures. It begins with an account of modern-day trickster tale, followed by an examination of what it tells us about the Banwaon, and their attitude towards education. After a brief look into educational conditions in Banwaon territory, I will attempt to link it to the earlier discussion of Banwaon political perspectives through an account of a school project and its implications.

I close with an attempt to locate the situation of the Banwaon in relation to the wider insular Southeast Asian literature.

Spirits and Obligations

As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Banwaon believe that the world is populated not only by humans, but also by different types of spirits (Allerton 2009; for specific ethnographic examples, see Atkinson 1989, Howell 1984, McCoy 1982, Condominas 1977, Leach 1970 [1954]). One class of these spirits are associated with the local environment, and may be designated by the generic term *tagbanwa* ('[spirit] dweller/s of the place' [B]), or *engkanto* (from the Spanish for 'enchanted' or *encantado*). These spirits reside in local natural features, such as specific trees, forests, hills, in the earth and streams, etc. These spirits are said to be generally indifferent to humans, unless the latter unwittingly or otherwise disturb them; e.g., felling the tree where a spirit resides. They are however particular about the 'purity' of the land around them, and reputedly lash out when, for example, youth engage

in pre-marital sex, or someone is killed (compare Gibson 1986: 173). This reaction takes form as an illness inflicted on those responsible, or on their kin; necessitating a sacrifice in amends. Being indifferent to humans, the *tagbanwa* do not become *abyan* [B] or spirit-familiars. To the extent that activities such as swidden-farming and hunting involve the earth or forests, there is some overlap between the *tagbanwa* and the spirits of agriculture (gen., *ibabasok* [B]) and hunting (gen., *tumanod* [B]), and they are thus normally included in farming rituals. Like *tagbanwa*, farming and hunting spirits do not become spirit-familiars. Finally, the Banwaon and Manobo do not believe that the souls of the dead (*umagad* [B]) take possession of living people. Ancestors thus do not act as *abyan*, though the latter are treated like honoured kin.

The spirits that do become *abyan* or familiars are those who engage in spirit-possession (*yuna-an* [M]). A person with an *abyan* usually inherits the spirit from one of her/his parents or their respective ancestors. At that person's death, the spirit selects from among the deceased's descendants—or if none are suitable, from the deceased's siblings or their descendants—the one to whom they will pass to. The *abyan* are thus associated with specific families or lineages, passing from one of its members to another through the generations. Indeed, newly-weds were traditionally required to tender ritual offerings (*pagbinaylo-ay*) for the *abyan* of their partner's family, so as to be cognized and protected from the spirits' resentment at the spouse's 'intrusion' into their partner's family. In any case, it is the spirit which selects the person with whom it will relate; a person cannot initiate or choose to have such a relationship. As a result of the various spirits' choices or whims, some individuals have many *abyan*, while others have none at all.

The spirits that do enter into *abyan* relations with humans are of various types. Some are *talagbusaw* [B], fierce, usually male spirits associated with the warriors of old. These spirits used to spur their chosen ones to violence, as to feed on their victim's blood or liver (Garvan 1929: 193). Others are of the *agkadagow* or *agkuy* [B] type, described as a seductive female, who delights in sex and children. Still others are simply 'generic' spirits (*dili ingon*

nato, '[those] unlike us'; or simply, *abyan*), who have no special powers or associations. And then there are *abyan* who are *diwata* [B], powerful spirits who can heal people by retrieving (*gud-gud* [M]) souls displaced by fear, or captured or attacked by 'evil' spirits (*busaw* [B]); or by negotiating with spirits responsible for patients' illnesses. Some *diwata* also grant paranormal powers to their chosen ones, like invisibility (*tagulilong* [B, M]) or clairvoyance (*dalimata* [B, M]). Persons with one or more *abyan* who are *diwata* are known as *baylan* (healer) [B, M].¹⁰ The *baylan* approximate the 'shaman' in the ethnographic literature. Note however that while all *baylan* have *abyan*, not all people with *abyan* are *baylan*; the distinction hinges on whether a *diwata* is among a person's *abyan*. Although people turn to them in their need, the *baylan* do not receive any particular consideration or regard from the community. In Balit, for example, one of the two resident *baylan* was among the poorest people in the village. Yet, *baylan* dispense free advice or assistance, in the spirit of public service.

When a person has been selected by an *abyan*, she/he or someone in their family falls ill or suffers spells of madness. A *baylan* may be consulted, to determine if this is a sign that that person has been chosen. If so, the chosen one must stage a *hakladan* ritual once a year for seven consecutive years, during which the *abyan* possesses the chosen one—signalled principally by the shivering of the body—but does not speak. Only during the seventh ritual will the *abyan* address those present; only then do people discover or confirm the identity of the possessing spirit. Thereafter, the person is expected to periodically stage *hakladan* rituals, ideally once a year, but usually every few years.¹¹ The person is thus said to have a *tulumanon*

¹⁰ There is disagreement about the term *baylan* in the literature. Garvan (1929: 200) uses the word to refer to shamanic healers with *diwata* spirits. Cullen (1973: 8) applies the term to charismatic leaders or prophets, rather than to shamanic healers. For Cole (1956: 89-90), the *baylan* is more of a priest and augur; he says being *baylan* does not involve possession. I follow my informants' usage, and understand *baylan* to be people with *abyan* who have healing powers. There is no specific term for people with *abyan* which are not *diwata*; they are simply referred to as '[those] with *abyan*' (*amin abyan*).

¹¹ Compare with the annual '*birthdayhan*' for spirit familiars in Bicol (Cannell 1999: 129).

or ritual obligation, in this case, to celebrate a *hakladan*.¹² The act of discharging a ritual obligation by staging a ritual is *pagtuman* [B, M]. A person with more than one *abyan* may combine their *pagtuman*, so that her/his various *abyan* are all recognized and invited to partake of offerings in a single ritual. In these *pagtuman*, the family and kindred of the celebrant are expected to help secure the necessary offerings, provide labour (e.g., butchering or cooking the sacrificed animals), and otherwise assist in the ritual. While people from outside the celebrant's family may attend a *hakladan*, or even consult the spirits who make an appearance, their presence or participation is not necessary for the fulfilment of the obligation. However, some celebrants do invite other people to their *pagtuman*, to make a grand occasion of the ritual. In other words, the *hakladan* is essentially a family, rather than a community or inter-family affair.

Ideally, a person performs his or her *hakladan* him/herself. There are many cases, however, when the celebrant relies on one or more *baylan* to lead the ritual; for example, during the first seven celebrations, when he/she has yet to master the procedure of the ritual; or when too ill or old for its physical rigours. On the other hand, a person with a *tulumanon* may invite *baylan* to the ritual just to add to the excitement or glamour of the affair. If the *baylan* called upon is not construed as kin, the celebrant must give the *baylan* a chicken as *pangdingding* (lit., 'for walling') [B, M]. This is to protect the healer from her/his own *abyan*, who dislike being involved in the rituals of families other than that of their chosen one, and thus have to be appeased with the offering of the chicken.

The term *tulumanon* also refers to other ritual obligations which are inherited from one's ancestors, but do not involve spirit possession by an *abyan*. For example, a person may have inherited the obligation to stage the periodic

¹² Garvan describes the '*hakyadan*', as a female agricultural spirit and her ritual (1929: 76-77, 191). I think this is an error stemming from how the ritual is usually staged during the rice-harvest season, to ensure that rice is available as offering. Buenconsejo seems to refer to this ritual as *hihinang* (2002: 122), which differs from my own data from Manobo communities (Gatmaytan 2004).

rituals for the *inayaw* [B, M],¹³ *dagingon* [B],¹⁴ *kaligaon* [B, M],¹⁵ and hunting spirits, none of which take possession of humans. In all these cases, there is a *tulumanon*, but the ritual staged is not described as a *hakladan*. This is to say: while all *hakladan* are *tulumanon*, not all *tulumanon* are *hakladan*. The rituals for these spirits each follow a distinct procedure. The ritual for the *inayaw*, for example, requires the offering of white pigs and chickens, and the use of white cloths. It also involves the observance of a large number of taboos or *pamalihi* [B, M] during the ritual; e.g., no one outside the celebrant's family may come near the place where the ritual is being staged. On the other hand, the ritual for the *kaligaon* centres on a consecrated heirloom porcelain jar, to which a palm leaf is lashed upright, and around which people dance in a circle to the sound of chanting for three days (compare Cole 1956: 107 et seq., Unabia 2000: 285 et seq.). Unlike the ritual for the *inayaw*, people from other families and villages are invited to this festive occasion. As the rituals for these spirits have their own special requirements and procedures, they cannot be combined with the *pagtuman* for *abyan* spirits, but must be performed as a separate occasion.

The 'ritual calendar' of a village therefore depends partly on the range of *tulumanon* its resident families have. No one in Balit village, for example, 'has *kaligaon*', so this ritual is not performed there at all. Many Balit residents, however, practice the *hakladan*. This is somewhat ironic, because the *kaligaon* is regarded as the quintessentially Banwaon ritual, while the *hakladan* is deemed a characteristically Manobo ritual. This reflects the location of Balit at the border of Banwaon territory, abutting the lowlands which were held by Manobo until overrun by migrant Bisaya in the 1960s. In

¹³ The *inayaw* is a spirit associated with the heavens, described as the protector of the cosmic order, who punishes violations of taboos or such as incestuous unions, people from feuding families who eat together, etc. (see Garvan 1929: 191).

¹⁴ The *dagingon* are a class of agricultural spirits, for whom the *daging* ritual is performed every few years, at harvest time. Those I witnessed were staged at a meeting hall, with each family bringing a small log from the forest, hanging it from the rafters so it was suspended horizontally, and after the prayers, playing music on the logs for community dancing. In the past, when there were no villages, each family probably performed the ritual on its own.

¹⁵ The *kaligaon* are a special class of agricultural spirits associated not with rice, the most highly-valued crop, but with millet (*aglay*). The ritual for these spirits is the longest, most complex and expensive practiced by the Banwaon.

Tabon-tabon village are two families 'with *kaligaon*' and take turns staging this ritual; I know only of one person here with a *hakladan*. Alongside all these *tulumanon* for *abyan* and non-*abyan* spirits are the agricultural rituals and the occasional rituals, such as those for house-building, life-cycle events, etc.

Many people neglect their ritual obligations, as it entails heavy expenses they try to avoid (compare Paredes 2006: 544). This angers the neglected *abyan*, who inflicts an illness (*pilit* [B, M]), usually on one or more of the delinquent celebrant's children or grandchildren, to call attention to their failure. If the *tulumanon* continues to be neglected however, the spirit may 'kill' the afflicted. The consequences of neglect can be held off by ritually pleading for time for preparation, but the only sure recourse is to stage the ritual, when the ritual relationship between the spirit and the chosen one and her/his family re-established.

The Hakladan of Nene Boyante

With that introduction to Banwaon ritual practice, I now describe a performance of the *hakladan* ritual in Balit village, which I witnessed on the night of 17 December 2009. It should be noted that details of this performance differed from the many others I have seen, but it was still regarded as properly performed. The celebrant was Nene Boyante, a Manobo widow in her 60s, whose three year old granddaughter ran a high fever. Boyante learned she had an *abyan* only in 2006; this ritual is the fourth of her first seven rituals, so while her *abyan* will take possession of her body, it will not speak. To help her perform the ritual, Boyante called on two Manobo *baylan*, who were sisters. The ritual was performed at Boyante's home.

One of Boyante's sons-in-law built the necessary ritual furniture: In the backyard, a wooden offering pole (*ladawan* [B]) with a shelf-like board for offerings attached horizontally to it was set upright. Before this, a bench-like

altar (*binangko* [B]) made from a plank supported at both ends by a wooden pole was built. These were decorated by *malunhow* [B] or split coconut palm-fronds,¹⁶ and by carvings. Adjacent was a *bagubayan*, a rude platform on which a sacrificial pig was tied down. At one end of the veranda of Boyante's house, was another *bagubayan* [B, M] for a second pig. In the front room of the house, a *bangkaso* [B] altar was fixed to the inside of the external wall, adjacent to the *bagubayan* on the veranda. This too was decorated with *malunhow* fronds.

The *hakladan* began at around 15.00. This was signaled (*sapat*) by a sacrificial pig being carried up onto the veranda, and tied down on the *bagubayan* there. On the floor of the front room, the two *baylan*, Boyante, her daughter Tata Samsio, and her ill granddaughter sat near a lighted candle and a bowl holding betel-chew makings and a coin. The two *baylan* prayed aloud to the Creator (*Magbabaya* [B, M] or *Gino-o*), seeking help in summoning their *abyan*. Then the younger *baylan* waved a chicken seven times before the *bangkaso* to consecrate it. The chicken's throat was cut, and its blood collected the blood in another bowl. The *baylan* smeared some blood on the altar, to complete its consecration. Seven plates or bowls, bottles of wine, and several unlit candlesticks were laid on the altar.

We descended from the house, to the offering pole and altar in the backyard (Figure 1, p. 264). Offerings in five bowls were set on the *ladawan* and *bangkaso*: Four held uncooked rice, coins, betel-chew makings, and eggs for Banwaon earth-spirits. One held store-bought biscuits, candies and cigarettes for Bisaya ones. Beside the bowls were lighted candles, and bottles of store-bought wine and soft-drinks. The two *baylan* addressed the earth-spirits, tendering the offerings and asking that they not interfere with the ritual up in the house. Then music was played on a drum and a gong. The elder *baylan* danced in the growing darkness until she was possessed by her *abyan*, at which the music ceased. Her *abyan* addressed the earth-spirits, reiterating the request that they not interfere with the ritual in the

¹⁶ The *malunhaw*, which have a vibrant yellow-green colour, are visual cues signalling to spirits that a ritual is in progress.

house. The *abyan* called on Boyante to dance, and music was played again. She danced until possessed by her *abyan*. The *baylan's abyan* presented Boyante and her *abyan* to the earth-spirits. Afterwards, the other *baylan* formally presented (*pagbayow* [B, M]) the offerings to the *tagbanwa*, pouring out some wine and then some water onto the ground as she did so. The pig on the *bagubayan* was speared through the heart. Some of its blood was allowed to spill to the ground to feed earth-spirits who ate uncooked food. Some blood was collected in a bowl, to be smeared onto the feet of the growing number of people present, to mark them out to the earth-spirits who were asked not to harm them.

While others took the pig to be cooked, the main players went back into the house. On a sleeping mat laid before the altar, the seven plates and bowls from the *bangkaso* altar were set, holding offerings of uncooked rice, betel-chew fixings, eggs, and coins (Figure 2, p. 265). Near these were lit candles, a glass of wine, and the drum and gong. A *baylan* prayed, presenting the offerings to Boyante's *abyan*. This done, the bowls and plates were returned to the altar. The drum and gong were played, and the elder *baylan* danced on the mat until she again came under possession of one of her *abyan*. Someone explained to the spirit the circumstances of the ritual: Boyante's granddaughter was sick; the family realised this was a sign for them to stage a ritual; and here they were performing it. The spirit acknowledged this, and discoursed in Manobo on the importance of fulfilling one's ritual obligations. Then the spirit called on Boyante to dance again; she did, until possessed by her own *abyan*. The *baylan's abyan* addressed Boyante's, relaying how the latter and her family were now discharging their ritual obligation. After a while, Boyante's *abyan* released her, and she sat down across from the altar.

Music was played again, and the elder *baylan* danced until possessed again, this time by a Bisaya *abyan*, who introduced himself as Don Juan Kalipayan. Tata Samsio, the sick girl's mother, asked this *abyan* about her daughter. The spirit scolded her for delaying the performance of the ritual, thus endangering the child. Tata said this was a time of economic hardship, so it was difficult to find the offerings for a *hakladan*. The *abyan* countered by

asking how much her daughter's life was worth, in comparison to the costs of a ritual; then it asked how much was spent on medications for the child, which could have been avoided by simply performing the ritual. Tata conceded the argument, and asked for consideration. The spirit assured her that if they performed their obligations, all will be well. At this point, Datu Batoy, who was among the audience, asked the spirit what they should do about the threat posed by a government death squad. The spirit replied:

What is important is that we do not forget the old ways (kinaraan). [It is] necessary that we not be with the Bible. [It is] necessary that we not allow ourselves to be swept [away] (magpadala) by the Bible, because ours is the keeping of the old ways. (He turns to Datu Batoy.) Are you satisfied [with my answer], amigo?

Datu Batoy said it was, though he looked unsatisfied. The spirit turned to address a pregnant woman, to offer her guidance about her unborn child. After this, music was played again, and the younger *baylan* danced until possessed, while her sister danced out of possession. This latest *abyan* spoke at length, exhorting everyone to remember their ritual obligations, and called on family members to support each other in fulfilling them. After the *baylan* danced out of possession, there was a break in the ritual. People in the audience took turns dancing 'in play' (*inusiba* [M]) one by one, each holding a strip of cloth in each hand.¹⁷ As each dancer finished, he or she chose the next from among those present, and passed the cloths on. In contrast with the more solemn, sometimes intense dancing of the *baylan*, the dancing here is marked by merriment, as dancers displayed their artistry or clowned around.

By this time, the pork from the first pig was cooked, and we reassembled in the backyard. Cuts of pork and cooked rice, arranged on the bowls, were again formally offered (*das-ag* [B]) to the earth-spirits, this time for earth-spirits who eat cooked food. Some wine and water was poured onto the ground. After that, the food offered was ritually consumed (*panampulot* [B,

¹⁷ More often, segments of palm fronds (*banuy* [B, M]) are held by the dancers, instead of cloth. Like the *malunhow*, they are cues to the spirits that a ritual is being performed.

M]) by those present. We went back into the house, to a lively communal meal (*butad* [B]), of rice and pork from the sacrificed pig, supplemented by other viands.

After everyone present had eaten, the front room was swept clean, and the ritual resumed. The elder *baylan* danced before the altar until possessed by her *abyan*, who after announcing itself, called on Boyante to dance. She danced again until possessed by her *abyan*. The *baylan's abyan* addressed Boyante's, then led her out onto the veranda, to stand before the second *bagubayan* there. Boyante's fourteen year old grandson was chosen by the *abyan* to kill the pig, using a *sundang* (bush knife). Some blood was collected in a bowl and they moved back into the house, while the pig was taken away to be cooked. The blood in the bowl was offered to Boyante, to eat. She seemed unready for this. The *baylan* held the bowl over Boyante's head instead. The bowl was then passed on to the younger *baylan*, who smeared it on people needing healing or protection, including the pregnant woman. Another break followed, featuring more *inusiba* or dancing 'in play' by members of the audience.

When the meat from the second pig was cooked, cuts of pork and cooked rice were arranged on the seven plates and bowls on the *bangkaso* altar. At the resumption of the ritual shortly after, the younger *baylan* stood before the altar to present the cooked food to Boyante's *abyan*. Then she began handing down the plates of food from the altar to Boyante, who set them on the floor. I was surprised, as in almost all other cases I have seen, someone would hand down the plates one by one to the celebrant/*baylan*, who would dance with each, making gestures of invitation to the *abyan* the while, before passing it on to someone in the audience. The latter received each plate from the celebrant/*baylan*, and laid it on the floor. This 'danced' offering of food is called the *hakyad*; its climactic character is signaled by the fact that it gives the ritual its name. In the event, the cooked food on the bowls and plates was formally presented (*das-ag*), and after wine and water were poured onto the floor, ritually consumed (*panampulot*). Then there was another break in the ritual.

After about an hour, another *butad* or communal meal of rice and pork from the second pig was laid out. This was somewhat less festive than the first, as most people were tired or asleep, or had already left. The meal ended the ritual. It was then around 02.00 of 18 December 2009. Usually, a *hakladan* is spread out over a longer period, beginning in the evening of the first day, all through the next day and night, and the morning of the third day. Boyante later explained to me that they had rushed the performance to save her granddaughter.

Relating to Spirits

The *hakladan* ritual, in the example provided, actually consisted only of the ritual activities performed in the house. Those performed on the ground in the backyard were addressed to earth-spirits, and are not part of the *hakladan*. In many cases, the ritual addressing the earth-spirits does not feature spirit possession, or is omitted altogether.

That the earth-spirits were addressed here, however, allows us to view the differing relations between humans, on one hand, and different classes of spirits, on the other. We noted that the earth-spirits were specifically asked not to go up into the house and attend the ritual there. A distinction is thus made between spirits of the earth below (*sa ubos*), and those in the house (*sa balay*) above (*sa ibabaw*). This distinction recalls the three-part cosmological scheme encoded into the basic indigenous architectural form found across Southeast Asia, where people occupy a middle level (the house floor); raised above the earth associated with animals and nature in general; and below the sky (the roof), associated with higher spirits (Dell 1982: 51-52, Waterson 1990: 93, Errington 1989: 72-73, Gibson 1986: 174; see also Tambiah 1969). In the traditional Banwaon house, the underside of the ridgepole featured anthropomorphic carvings arranged so they look down on the occupants, on the floor beneath them. Moreover, in the traditional house—which has only rudimentary walls (Cole 1956: 34, Garvan 1929: 39;

note also Waterson 1990: 74)—the *bangkaso* altar in the house would not be attached to a wall, but to an inside slope of the roof, so the altar would project from the metaphorical sky over the heads of the occupants. In Bisaya-style houses like Boyante's, the link between altar and sky is indicated by placing the altar as high as practicable on the wall to which it is attached. To note, the altar is affixed to the inside of an external wall to underscore its liminal character, as a platform that seems to project from the outside, bringing spirits from beyond the house into its interior.¹⁸

The traditional house form points to the ambivalent relationship between humans and earth-spirits. This ambivalence is structurally expressed by the pilings or posts of the house. On one hand, the posts anchor the house in the earth, without which human survival is impossible. In the ritual, a pig is carried up from the ground into the house, where it is transformed into food. On the other, the pilings lift the house away from the earth, towards the sky. In the ritual, we noted the efforts to keep the earth-spirits away from the house, as its occupants focused on an altar symbolically projecting into the house from the sky. I believe that the resolution of this ambivalence towards nature is one of the key issues that Banwaon and Manobo religion and ritual contends with. Clearly, human life is not possible without nature, represented not just by the spirits of earth and water, forest and farm, but also by the *talagbusaw* warrior-spirits and the *agkadagow* fertility-spirits. However, there is also a clear call to transcend nature, to rise above the predatory violence and incestuous couplings of animals, and so become more truly human. Thus there are a number of traditional folk-tales like that of the man Kawali, and his encounter with the *ikogan* ('the tailed ones'), anthropomorphic creatures with tails, who prey on humans (see Garvan 1929: 226). Kawali exploits the *ikogans*' ignorance of human culture—farming, music, tool-making—to turn their own appetite against themselves, emphasising the importance of being better than animals. Likewise, Buenconsejo presents two Manobo 'myths' I read as similarly underlining the

¹⁸ For a similar 'Turner-esque' (1967: 21-25) analysis of the symbolic function of walls in ritual, see Bottignolo's study of the Badao (1995: 67 et seq.).

need to act like humans who respect and care for each other, and unlike selfish animals (2002: 34 et seq.).

What of the spirits of the sky? At this point, attention is drawn to how the *hakladan* ritual is bound up with food: The struggle to find sacrificial foodstuffs; the repeated offerings of raw and cooked food; the ‘danced’ invitation to dine; and communal feasting. The Southeast Asian literature has already noted the link between commensality and kinship, pointing out how indigenous constructions of kinship are partly built on notions of shared substance, such as food (see Carsten 1997, Janowski 1995, 2007). Among the Banwaon, each family will have two or three rice-varieties it always plants in its swidden fields. At harvest-time, it will not share the rice from these fields with anyone outside the family until after the performance of a ritual that allows them to do so. Moreover, each household of one or more related families normally eats together, in a circle around the food. Anyone happening upon a family at a meal will be invited to eat, but those who do not feel ‘close’ to the family will refuse on some pretext. In communal settings where people from various families eat together, as at harvest-work or during a ritual, food is served on lines of banana-leaf ‘plates’ laid across the floor; each ‘plate’ has a portion of rice and viand/s, to be shared by two people sitting or squatting across from each other. People arrange themselves so that spouses or relatives eat from the same ‘plate’; total strangers and anthropologists thus end up eating together. There is also a taboo against eating with an enemy, or with someone from a family with whom one’s own family has an unsettled conflict, no matter how long ago in the past. In short, a family is a group of people who produce and eat food together.

In the ritual described, the proceedings culminated in (what should have been a ‘danced’) offering of cooked food to the *abyan*. In almost all other performances I have seen, the dancer by her/his gestures, invites the *abyan* to partake of the meal. In the formal offering that follows, wine is poured out for the spirits to drink; and water is poured after, so they can wash their hands. The food the spirits thus consume is the same food that people eat in the ritual consumption of offered food or *panampulot* immediately following;

which is to say, the spirits and the people ate together. The healing of the rift between Boyante's family and her *abyan*—caused by her neglect of her *tulumanon*, and resulting in the illness of the girl—is thus dramatised by this shared meal. They can now eat together, as if they were one family; or at least, as non-enemies may.

We also note that in the ritual, cooked food comes down to the family from the altar through the mediation of the *baylan*/celebrant, as if to say that graces will come to the family from the spirits through the medium of fulfilled ritual obligations. Members of a family are thus called on to work together to fulfil the *tulumanon* of the celebrant. This was the explicit call of two spirits present in the ritual. Failure would mean illness or even death for the family. Indeed, the marked tendency of *abyan* offended by the neglect of their *hakladan* to 'punish' not the delinquent celebrant, but her/his descendants, reflects the idea that the future of the family—embodied by a granddaughter in this case—depends on its members' ability to cooperatively maintain appropriate relations with their *abyan*. We saw how the girl's mother Tata was scolded by an *abyan* for neglecting the ritual, when in fact it was Tata's mother Nene Boyante who held the *tulumanon*. It is as if the obligation pertained to the family and not just to Boyante. The point is that the members of the family are directed away from their individual concerns, towards their family's collective survival or growth (Buenconsejo 2002: 116-117); if Boyante had forgotten her obligation, Tata should have reminded her. Perhaps it is in harnessing family solidarity for collective continuity that people find the occasion to transcend their worldly or animal natures. This theme of continuity is underlined in the ritual by the *inusiba* dancing, where each dancer chooses from among those present her/his successor in the dance, and hands on to the latter the cloths standing in for the *banuy* or symbols of ritual performance. This mimics the movement of the *abyan* and the *tulumanon* across time: Just as each dancer—employing a sort of bodily pun where spirit and human elide each other—chooses the next, so does the *abyan* select one person in each generation of the family to perform the ritual. And just as the cloths or *banuy* are passed from one performer to another, so is the *tulumanon* transmitted from dancer to dancer through time.

Most importantly, perhaps, the whole is performed in an atmosphere of warmth and cheer, dramatising the link between happiness and the continued performance of the ritual obligation.

The Banwaon Centre and Beyond

The focus on family solidarity may be an attempt to counterbalance the Banwaon valorisation of individual autonomy. Like the other swidden societies in the Philippines (cf. Rosaldo, R. 1980, Rosaldo, M. 1980, Gibson 1986, 1990), there is a strong cultural emphasis on individual autonomy and egalitarianism. Like the Manobo, there are no titles or other indications of local leaders' influence or authority among the Banwaon (Garvan 1929: 140). Village leaders or *datu* are 'headmen', who have no power to coerce or compel compliance, but must rely on consensus and suasion, not so much to govern as to guide the community. Even in cases of killings, a *datu* cannot intervene in the conflict unless one of the parties first submits (*magpagunit*; 'allows [him/herself] to be held' by the *datu*) to him. There are, of course, attempts to forge higher levels of unity or solidarity. The Tagdumahan, the inter-village association, represents an attempt to unify the Banwaon people and protect their collective interests. Maintaining organizational cohesion or discipline however is problematic in a setting where people's first loyalty is to their family, rather than to the people as a nation or polity. Thus, when Tagdumahan officials were confronted about the organization's stance on illegal logging—which I discuss in further detail in another chapter—they explained that if they implement a logging ban, members will simply leave the organization, depriving it of its constituency and legitimacy. Community organizers and activists, working for Banwaon self-determination and respect for indigenous culture, must thus contend with this strong sense of autonomy. The preference for working on one's own at one's own pace, with no one telling them what to do, is so strong that people are reluctant to set up cooperatives, even if it could mean cutting out middle-men and raising the selling price for their products. Within families, once a son or daughter is considered an adult—traditionally, on marrying, but increasingly, upon

attaining high-school education—their parents' control over them weakens. And while the initial post-marriage residence pattern was traditionally uxorilocal, married couples are free to live wherever they choose after one or two years.

It is interesting that the effort to counterbalance these centrifugal tendencies was culturally located in the family, rather than the village or the larger ethnic polity. This is probably because the Banwaon began forming villages only in the 1970s, as described in another chapter, and this process is still on-going. Prior to that, they lived in scattered hamlets or settlements, consisting of extended or related families (Garvan 1929: 139, Cole 1956: 16-18, 34-36; see also Frake 1980: 85-87). This may explain various practices which seem to counter-pose the family against the rest of the world: The preference for residing in separate households; the practices of food consumption, especially in communal contexts; the rule against sharing the family's rice harvest, unless sanctioned by a ritual; the need for a newly-wed to give a token so as to be cognized by the spirits of her/his spouse's family; the opposition of *baylans'* *abyan* in participating in other families' rituals thus necessitating the *pandingding*; and as I demonstrated, the very way the *hakladan* and other rituals are socially framed. This strongly suggests that until fairly recently, a Banwaon's family—defined as a set of siblings, and their respective spouses and descendants (following Errington 1987)—was her/his social world. Those outside the circle of safety it represented were considered 'untrustworthy others' (Errington 1987: 408, 415-418 and 1989: 56, 71) who were potential if not actual enemies. In other words, the Banwaon 'centre' in Errington's terms (1987: 405), is located in the family. The *hakladan* can be construed as expressive of this same point: Like Wana shamans who 'in their performances establish their own centers' (Atkinson 1989: 314), each celebrant presents her- or himself during the ritual as the family's link to the source of health, happiness and growth. The difference here is that where the Wana imagine the power as being drawn from exogenous sources such as expatriate spirits and royal courts, the Banwaon and Manobo draw it from within themselves, as it were, in their hereditary link to spirits with the power to withhold health or vitality (Sillander 2012: 164,

also Tooker 1996: 325, 350-351). This suggests a need to qualify Errington's assertion that among uncentralised hinterland societies of what she calls the centrist archipelago, 'the source of potency is outside it, not within it' (1989: 294).

Significantly, the Banwaon do not view the world beyond their boundaries as a source of spiritual power to be brought or called back, and translated into local political or other power. In this, they seem to differ from groups described in the Indonesian literature (cf. Rutherford 2012 and 2003, Atkinson 1989, Tsing 1993, Spyer 2000, and Errington 1989), as well as other parts of the Philippines (Johnson 1997: 55 et seq., Rafael 1988: 166; see also Rafael 2005: 2-4). While people with experience of the outside world are respected for it, they are not seen as having acquired some form of power thereby. Indeed, there is no point in seeking out mystical or shamanic power—in contrast to the case of the Wana (Atkinson 1989: 54-58), Meratus Dayak (Tsing 1993: 74-76) or the Bicolano (Cannell 1999: 122-124)—because such power is understood as linked to genealogy and thus comes to you only by way of inheritance from your ancestors (Magos 1992, cited in Cannell 1999: 125). You cannot acquire shamanic power unless your ancestors had at least one shamanic spirit-familiar *and* the latter chooses you. The fact that people are reluctant to accept being chosen by an *abyan* (see Buenconsejo 2002: 115), even though one might gain supernatural powers thereby, only underscores how shamanic power is not actively pursued by the Banwaon. Unlike the Wana (Atkinson 1989: 261 et seq.), among whom shamanism is both art and politics, being a Banwaon *baylan* is not a path to social power or authority. Instead, being a healer is seen as a burdensome obligation that compels one to assist those troubled by spirits (compare Cannell 1999: 96-97, Garvan 1929: 201-202).

Neither do the Banwaon look beyond their everyday world to some external centre or source of political power, in contrast to the case of Indic or quasi-Indic states (cf. Tambiah 1985) and *Negara* (cf. Geertz 1980), or their contemporary counterparts (cf. Errington 1989). In particular, they did not traditionally look to the Philippine state, or its previous colonial incarnations,

as a source of political power or authority. Instead of looking beyond Banwaon territory to the state, there seems to have been a 'rejection' of outsiders and their ways (Gibson 1990: 140-141, also Cullen 1973: 8), and an insistence on the Banwaons' own ways. Indeed Banwaon sometimes say that their very culture is '*against the government*' (*supak sa gobyerno*) in that it enjoins the Banwaon to live outside the state and its laws. Here we note the notion of *olag* [B], reflected in the story of Palamgowan and Palagsulat. We can also cite 19th century Manobo explanations of their resistance to conversion, which deployed an analogy with animals: Just as there are deer and wild pigs, there are Manobo and Christian Bisaya (Arcilla, trans. 2003: 161). The reasoning suggests that there are things and ways appropriate to the Manobo, and others to the Bisaya; and that like these animals, there can be no intercourse between them. In his description of Bukidnon/Higaunon religion, Cullen states that until the 1970s, articles such as buffaloes and plows, pencil and paper, hats and shoes, were taboo (1973: 3); which items are all markers of lowlander-culture. In the Ulaging epic shared by the Banwaon, Higaunon, and the northern and eastern Manobo, the song's entire narrative is framed by the protagonists' escape from the authority of an outside power, represented as Moro traders, Spanish colonial officials, or American schoolteachers in the various versions of the epic (Maquiso 1977: 55-57, Paredes 2006: 536, also Unabia 2000). The heroes of the epic—Agyu, his siblings, and their spouses—retreat into the hinterland, and with guidance from the spirits, establish a utopian community called Nalandangan, or ascend to the heavens aboard the sky-vessel *salimbal*, or both (cf. Maquiso 1977, Melendrez-Cruz 1983, Unabia 2000, Coben 2009). Finally, we recall how, in the ritual, the *abyan* Don Juan Kalipayan advised Datu Batoy to reject the Christian Bible (and by extension, all other outside sources of power), and stay true to the teachings of the elders as a solution to the threats seen as emanating from the armed agents of the state.

Opening an Account

From one tale to another: In the morning of 23 May 2010, I arrived in Balit to find Ruel Badbaran sitting on his veranda in the company of his relatives—my friends and informants—from Tabon-Tabon, who had only just arrived themselves. When I joined them, Badbaran told the story of how he and two companions opened a savings account for the Tagdumahan¹⁹ in Butuan City:

We had a hard time! All the banks along Montilla [Avenue, in Butuan City] ... we went to them all. But they all required [an initial deposit of] between five and ten thousand Pesos to open an account. And we only had three thousand Pesos. When all the banks along Montilla Avenue had refused us, I thought to myself: 'Let us go to Gaisano [Mall]; I think there's a newly-opened bank near there'. But it was the same thing; [they required] five thousand Pesos [to open an account]. Then we saw, just across the street, [a sign saying] 'D.B.P.'²⁰ We went there. We asked, 'How much is the minimum [deposit] to open an account?'. They said, 'One to two thousand [Pesos]'. There! It was the last bank [left to us] in Butuan, and it was there we found our luck!

[Then it turned out], my companions did not have I.D. cards. They thought [all they needed were photos], not actual I.D. cards. But the banks were asking for cards, like that for health insurance, social security, or your Driver's License. Well. I asserted myself; I talked to the bank manager. She asked me, 'Why don't your companions have I.D. cards?'. So I put on an act!

Badbaran blinks his eyes, his version of a wink. The audience leans forward in anticipation.

I said, 'Ma'm, I have all the necessary identification ... I even have a passport. But these companions of mine ... they are 'indigent' people from a remote part of Butuan City!

He and the audience laugh together.

¹⁹ Towards the end of my fieldwork, I negotiated a grant for the Tagdumahan, to fund its general assembly, by way of thanking them for allowing me to conduct my research. The funding agency required that the Tagdumahan open a savings account into which it would deposit the moneys. Since the only bank in San Luis does not handle international transactions, the account had to be opened in Butuan City.

²⁰ DBP is the Development Bank of the Philippines.

'Ah, is that so?', she said. She then agreed that if my companions can show a certificate from their Barangay in Butuan City, [she will allow us to] open an account. We went to someone I know ... [who is now] a Barangay Councilor [there]. I asked him for help in making up certificates [for us]. [After some negotiation], he agreed.

(W)e returned to the bank. There were many bank-clients ... by then. [There was a large group of newly-hired schoolteachers, opening ATM accounts for their salaries.] It was taking too long; [if we had to stay another night in Butuan and come back tomorrow, we would not have enough for the initial deposit]. I went to the manager again, and told her I needed to get home to San Luis that same day. Well! She ordered [her staff to attend to] us first! Too bad for the other clients!

This is greeted with more laughter.

..... [And finally], there it is. (He presents the account passbook.) I think that if only those two had gone to Butuan to open an account, [they would not have succeeded]. You need to [know how to diskarte].²¹

Badbaran's closing reflection elicits appreciative nods from his audience.

I was struck by how Ruel Badbaran presented what most people would consider an unpromising story about opening a bank-account as a tale of adventure, where he overcomes a series of obstacles to achieve his goal. The problem of not finding a suitable bank is solved by his perseverance, knowledge of the city, and luck; his companions' lack of identification cards is remedied by a combination of quick thinking, access to contacts, and falsification. Indeed, Badbaran's story is reminiscent of traditional indigenous folk tales, where the protagonist uses knowledge and cunning to outwit a more powerful opponent (cf. Tiu 2005, Coben 2009).

The antagonist here however is not a person, but an institution: A bank, depicted as an alien setting, where his less-educated companions are helpless. The bank could stand for the city, which itself epitomizes the world beyond Banwaon territory. Perhaps because it is so other, the bank is seen as something against which one is justified in deploying any means

²¹ 'Diskarte' will be discussed further below.

necessary to secure an account, including manipulating emotions, and fabricating official certificates. This helps explain the laughter that followed Badbaran's lie about his companions being from Butuan City. In part, it comes from the magnitude of the lie; but there is also the thrilling notion that an educated, city-based bank official could be outwitted by a Banwaon. The sense that the bank—and the lowland world it represents—is something to be bested is underscored as well by the laughter over how Badbaran jumped the queue ahead of the bank's other clients. He was almost gloating over how he had literally finished ahead of a whole group of schoolteachers in their own urban home-ground.

The Value of Education

Ruel Badbaran is seen by many as representing something of an exemplar of the educated Banwaon. He is the son of a respected *datu*, fluent in Banwaon and deeply appreciative of his own culture and history, married (to a *bisaya* schoolteacher, no less), and not least, a graceful ritual dancer. He is also one of the few Banwaon with a college degree, having a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Badbaran was also a former activist-organizer for the Tagdumahan; who had trekked to distant villages, braved military operations, and represented the Banwaon in various forums in the Philippines and beyond. Finally, he became the confidential secretary of the then Vice-Mayor of San Luis. Badbaran combines in himself Banwaon culture; and an education that enhances his own and his family's status, and allows him to help his people through the Tagdumahan. He thus exemplifies the value and proper use of education. It is true that some of the methods he resorted to were not learned in school, but there is a general sense that a good education also enables one to acquire the knowledge of the city, the grasp of Bisaya psychology, the contacts, and the very assertiveness he displayed. Moreover, education is seen as broadening a person's scope and skill in *diskarte*. '*Diskarte*' (etymology unknown) is a term borrowed from the Bisaya, which refers to a capacity for making quick tactical decisions informed by worldly experience, cleverness or cunning, and marked by

resourcefulness. It is a quality much respected by the Banwaon. Education then is valued not so much for learning per se, but for the way it enhances one's capacity to cope with the problems posed by the world.

This valorization of education is relatively new: Some versions of the Ulaging have the epic heroes escaping compulsory elementary education imposed by the American colonial state. In one version of the epic, one of the heroes even beats a succession of schoolteachers to death with a wooden rice-pestle, in retaliation for their harsh treatment of their pupils (Maquiso 1977: 86). Today however, many indigenous groups in the Philippines value education highly (Trinidad 2012), and the Banwaon are no exception. As Emil Tugay, one of my informants in Balit, put it:

Once, there were parents who would say, 'it does not matter that there is no school in our village, we will survive still'. This can no longer be today. The world goes spinning on.

This appreciation of the value of education in a world that is changing and growing more complex comes in part from knowing of tales of dispossession, where uneducated Manobo in and around the town-centre of San Luis lost all or part of their lands to Bisaya migrants, seen as cleverly manipulating the system as to win property disputes with the hapless Manobo. Such disputes and displacements began in the 1960s, when the logging boom brought an influx of settlers from the lowlands.²² In Balit, there was a series of land disputes in the 1990s, relating to sales of planted softwood trees. These cases were all resolved, but they emphasised the importance of documentation and thus of writing and education. There was also the time, again in the 1990s, when the Municipal tax assessor threatened to auction off lands in Balit, the proceeds to be applied to the residents' unpaid real estate taxes. This problem was also successfully resolved with the assistance of the sisters of the RGS, and again, the incident increased people's appreciation of the value of education. This is not to say that the Banwaon expect a general education to provide them legal expertise, but

²² A similar process of displacement in the 1960s is described by Yumo (1971, cited in Trinidad 2012: 210).

there is a clear sense that at a pragmatic level, someone with some education will be in a better position in a legal dispute than one who is uneducated.

Through their links with other indigenous peoples' organizations, NGOs and church groups, the Banwaon have also become aware of even greater threats to their ancestral territory, such as large-scale plantations, and transnational mining corporations. Such projects would pose complex political, economic and legal difficulties for communities with limited resources. Industrial softwood and palm-oil corporations did make exploratory inquiries in the San Luis area in the 1990s and early 2000s, but the Tagdumahan managed to block them through petition-signing, networking, and large public demonstrations of opposition. During the early part of my fieldwork, there was a rumor that Indophil Resources NL, a multinational mining corporation, was interested in ore-exploration in Banwaon territory. Fortunately, nothing came of this rumor, but such external threats could only impress the Banwaon with the importance of education in protecting their lands and resources. The Tagdumahan leaders champion this approach to education, where it is placed at the service of the Banwaon people.

Finally, there is also the Banwaons' long-term perspective on their economic situation. As I point out in Chapter 3, small-scale logging was the principal source of cash for many Banwaon. Unfortunately, the rate at which they were felling their forests was unsustainable, and they knew it. Loggers from Balit, in particular, had to negotiate access to timber in other villages because they have already stripped Balit of harvestable wood. One can also read Balit residents' increasing reliance on woodcutting and charcoal-making as the final phases of deforestation, consuming the remaining trees the loggers had rejected. Once the forests are gone, there will be no equally reliable source of cash, given the distance and rough terrain, woeful infrastructure, and poor soils of the area. The Banwaon see education as a means out of this economic cul-de-sac. As Tata Cinco, a Banwaon schoolteacher in Balit, repeatedly told local youths, *'If we are suffering*

[economically] now, when there are still forests that can be felled, how will you cope, when you are on your own and there are no more trees to fell? She would then urge them to study hard, so they would not have to rely on logging for a living, as their parents do. As I point out in the next chapter, most Banwaon loggers justify their engagement in this trade by saying they had students to put through high-school and/or college. This then is the Banwaon gamble: They log the forests, using the proceeds to finance their children's education, in the hope that by the time the timber runs out, the children will be able to secure jobs and help support the family. Ideally, the children would end up like Ruel Badbaran, occupying a position in town-hall, where he can improve his skills, expand his contacts, and monitor developments that could affect his family and his people. Most children aspire to similar success—two of them cited Badbaran to me as their role model—but the difficulties of finding employment, even for students who graduated with honors from good schools or universities, will set limits to what they can actually achieve. Youths and parents suggested they would settle for the children landing low-paying but stable jobs, to help the family financially. In contrast to the Tagdumahan, education here is oriented towards the economic needs of families, rather than the Banwaon people as a polity.

Trends

The extremely limited state investment in public education in San Luis can be seen in the fact that no Banwaon older than fifty has anything more than grade-school education, if that; many in the hinterlands have had no schooling at all. As the joke goes, elders learned 'only enough to sign' (*igo lang makapirma*); i.e., sign their lands away, on documents they could not read. In Balit, there was a group of men and women between 30 and 45 years in age, who joined an experimental adult-literacy program of the municipal local government. This suggests interest in education, even among adults.

Through the grade-schools opened by the RGS sisters, and scholarships they offered to high-school students, the number of Banwaon who have had some education has increased. Ruel Badbaran, now in his late 30s or early 40s, belongs to the first generation of Banwaon youths who received college education. Of these, four actually finished their courses. Between them and the current cohort of Banwaon college students, there are a few who did go to college but could not finish their courses, or failed the licensure examinations for their chosen profession. Of the current cohort of college students, eight out of ten were pursuing two- to four-year 'Internet Technology' (IT) courses in Butuan City; one is taking a secretarial course in Cagayan de Oro City; and the last in Manila. According to their parents, the eight IT students chose their courses themselves. Some parents did not even know what the internet is; it was simply '*[something to do] with computers*'. When I asked why they did not choose a course in agriculture or similar field, the two college students I interviewed separately said they already knew how to farm. One added it would be good to 'taste' a new job. A number of parents similarly asked their children why they did not take courses like education. They reported their children as replying that the four-year degrees in education, engineering, and law are expensive, and entailed further studies and costs for licensure examinations after graduation. They also noted how difficult it was to compete for employment in those fields should they fail the examinations. At any rate, their course-choice sets them on a career-path away from their home-villages—where there are no computers, no internet infrastructure, nor even a stable power supply—to Butuan City or beyond. The parents did not seem overly concerned about this; what was important was that their children could find work after their studies and thus contribute to the support of their families. None objected to their children's choice of IT courses, especially as internet-related work is widely seen as a growth-industry. A number of parents added they did not want their children to end up like one Banwaon college graduate, who has a 'fancy' degree in Sociology, but ekes out an uncertain living teaching the experimental adult-literacy course in Balit. A few people hinted that they would respect this graduate more if he turned to farm-labor or logging, which would earn him more money for his family, rather than go on clinging to a

threadbare pretense at professional employment. This again reflects a widespread pragmatic expectation that education is for employment and helping one's family. The children's choice of IT courses makes it difficult for the Tagdumahan to encourage them to use their education for the improvement of their people, as there are no immediate and pragmatic uses for such technology in the hinterlands of San Luis. At best, they could ask the students to help in organising work, assuming they are willing to stay and forego employment opportunities outside San Luis.

The expectation that college students will help their parents is consistent with the pattern already set by Banwaon students who finished their high-school studies but did not go to college, or who did not finish high-school. Most of them find work in San Luis or the nearby towns, mostly in low-skilled jobs, or return to farming. A number were recruited by the RGS nuns as school-teachers and program staff, or became Barangay officials. A few ended up working in Manila. Almost all of them however, provide economic support, no matter how limited, to their parents (compare Trinidad 2012: 162, 168-169).

A public or state high-school recently opened in Balit. It was only on its second year when I conducted my fieldwork. All the high-school students I talked to expressed interest in pursuing college education in Butuan City. Their preferred choice of courses was more varied than the cohort preceding them: Two wanted to be lawyers, another two engineers, then one student each choosing nursing, accountancy, criminology (in preparation for police training), and other courses. Most of them expressed a desire to help their families or communities after schooling. Almost all of them did not want to live or work in Manila or in other countries, saying they did not want to be too far from their parents and siblings. On the other hand, all of them expressed a desire to travel to other countries, especially Dubai and 'America'. Most of them described such travel in terms of a sightseeing tour; only one spoke of studying (in Japan), and only one considered living and working abroad (in Canada).

During my fieldwork, majority of the grade-school age Banwaon children were receiving, or had received, at least some education. Again, the universal hope is that they will continue their studies, ideally through college. Parents often remarked on how lucky children are today, with schools in their own communities or close by, in contrast to their own childhood, when they had to hike or boat to school each Monday, in sun or rain, carrying their week's supply of sweet potatoes, and return home on the weekends, to help in the farm. Conversely, they are very critical of children who dropped out of school but do not help their families by finding work, and choose instead to stay idle (*tambay*, from the English 'stand by'). When I asked why parents could not tell these children to work, one activist commented that some parents feel they have no more authority over a child who is better-educated than they (Trinidad 2012: 164, 166). Parents were especially anxious about a small group of these out-of-school youths who were suspected of addiction to glue-sniffing, and of perpetrating a number of petty crimes in the village. Indeed, these youths were the focus of an incipient moral panic during the last weeks of my fieldwork. The origin of their vice is usually explained in terms of the '*impluwensya*' (influence) of Bisaya peers back when they were still in school.

In sum, the Banwaon educational profile is markedly pyramidal, with a relatively large number who finished elementary studies, a smaller number who finished high-school, and an even smaller group who have college degrees. There is widespread interest in education among adults and children. Parents are willing to make great sacrifices to ensure their children get as good an education as they can manage, with the expectation that the children will help support the family once they find employment. At the same time, the Tagdumahan looks to a future where educated youth work for their peoples' welfare, contributing to its efforts to strengthen and unify it as a polity. The specific course-choices of college students, however make the realisation of this ideal problematic.

Mrs. Valentines 2010

On Valentine's Day 2010, a beauty contest was staged in Balit's Social Hall, proceeds from which were for the benefit of the local high-school. Ten women were chosen as contestants by the organizers from among the mothers and grand-mothers of the students in the public schools in Balit. After the opening prayer and the National Anthem, the candidates repeatedly paraded on stage, to cheers and the blare of pop-music. They appeared, first in jeans and white t-shirts; next in 'casual' dress; and then in a bizarre collection of 'sports' attire, which substituted for a swimsuit competition. Interspersed with these parades were speeches by mainly Bisaya local government officials, and intermission numbers. The speeches all expressed surprise or delight over the novelty of the pageant. The intermission numbers consisted of three pop-dance presentations and a 'serenade' for the candidates. Then followed a talent contest, where three contestants danced to pop-music, two others sang standards, and five performed dramatic monologues. Interestingly, four of the five monologues depicted the hardships of life in the city. They spoke of being alone and without support from family, significant in a cultural setting where people often speak in idioms of companionship (Cannell 1999:99). Other common themes were the unkindness and disdain of city-people; hunger, and having to scrounge for food from the city's garbage; and in two instances, being forced into prostitution. The fifth actress came out in indigenous attire, dancing to traditional music, with a doll in her arms. A male extra tried to grab the 'child' from her, and there was a struggle, ending with the contestant victorious, dancing and waving the Philippine flag (Figure 3, p. 266). All performances drew appreciative applause, though the three candidates who 'only' danced to pop-music received the least cheers. After a rather long wait, the contestants again paraded onstage, this time in evening gowns made from drapery-material. The judges added up the scores, and announced the winner of the 'Mrs. Valentines 2010' title: Tata Samsio, Nene Boyante's daughter. There was lively applause. Immediately after the show, some of the contestants asked me to take pictures of them in their gowns.

I describe this event at some length because of the insights it offers into Banwaon views of education, and of the world beyond their territory. I was sitting at my hangout in front of 'Nay Melania's store the day after the pageant, when the schoolteacher Tata Cinco joined me, and asked what I (AG) thought of the pageant.

AG: Everyone seemed to enjoy it ...

Tata: (She interrupts me.) For myself, I am not in favor of these things; but it was a public school affair, we cannot do anything about it. All public schools have programs like these, [which students and parents] have to go through.

AG: Don't the school authorities watch against [disturbing cultural sensitivities]?

Tata: They don't take that into consideration. In a public school, you will just have to comply with their requirements. (She pauses.) It was unsettling, I could not watch the whole thing through. We say that women, mothers, and elders should be respected. Then, we laugh at them in these pageants. What message are we giving the children who see them treated like that?

I asked how the pageant came about. Tata Cinco said Perfecto Tugay had come up with the idea, as a way to generate funds for Balit's high-school. As she speaks, we are joined by Dakdak Tahudan, one of last night's contestants. Tata addresses her.

Tata: What do you think of last night's event?

Dakdak: I was happy, because I could see the people watching were enjoying [the pageant]. I think it is good to give happiness to others.

Tata: Did you not think that it was shameful? I asked some children how they felt about their mothers being laughed at. They said, 'we feel sort of embarrassed' ... but that it was a [required] school activity [so they could not object to it]. But objectively speaking, if it's a matter of raising funds for the school, there are many other ways.

Dakdak: Well, how could I refuse [to participate] when I have a child in day-care [school]?

Melania: You listen, Dakdak. Those kinds of activities are not good! I will not allow bourgeois influences to enter [our community]!²³ What will become of us if we ourselves do not guard [against such influences]?

Dakdak: Ah! For us [contestants], we were laughing all throughout! It was fun! It's only now that there is this talk of [the pageant] being shameful.

There was heated exchange between Tata Cinco and Dakdak Tahudan; the former was getting personal. I tried to shift the conversation by suggesting that education needs to be more culture-sensitive.

Tata: These schools, they have powerful influence [over students], especially the high-school. That's the problem: You need education, but [education] can also weaken [your] culture.

For Tata Cinco, the public educational system is an inflexible institution that demands that parents conform to its curricular and extra-curricular requirements, or else risk their children's futures. Indeed, to hear Tahudan's explanation for joining the pageant, one would think the school was holding her daughter hostage. In this case, the local public school system was seen as demanding participation of parents and students in an event that, for some Banwaon at least, placed women, mothers and elders in a position where they may be laughed at by people, including children. This is felt to be incompatible with local notions of sociality and hierarchy, and the worry seems to be that children, in particular, will lose respect for these persons through such culturally-insensitive activities. Thus some Banwaon are aware of the dangers that the way education is implemented, particularly in public or government schools, poses for cultural continuity. This is due in part to the fact that public schools are an important component of the state-building project (Geertz 2000 [1973]: 274, also Wilson 2000, Jonsson 2005), and are thus designed to inculcate in students the values of the state, rather than those of minority groups.

Julito Otacan refers to other ways schooling can erode Banwaon students' respect for their indigenous identity and culture:

²³ 'Bourgeois' here is understood as 'decadent' or 'immoral'.

First is prejudice. There is a word that oppresses the Banwaon. And that is 'usi'.²⁴ When you say 'usi', [you speak of] filthiness, ignorance and vagrancy. I myself, when I studied in [the public] high-school [in San Luis town-center], I heard this word used: 'Ah, they are people from the mountains; let them sit beneath [the house], they are only usi, they are used to that'. Ah, it was so hurtful, so hurtful. (He taps his open palm against his chest each time he says 'hurtful'.) Second, is the 'use' of culture. For example, in my high-school, we had competitions. There we would be made to dance our [ritual dances], just so [our section] could win. That should not be. The effect is that respect for culture is lost. And so the Banwaon [student] becomes ashamed of her/his culture. Especially now, when the Banwaon can be misled by what he/she sees on TV, or by her/his classmates.

Otacan however is not opposed to education; he believes that if schools could adopt more culturally-sensitive curricula, education can help deepen students' appreciation for their own culture, especially in communities like Balit where they cannot see or experience rituals like the *kaligaon* or *daging*. In this connection, we should also take note of a local *pamalihi* or taboo against playing traditional instruments such as the drum or gong, or against dancing outside a ritual context. The prohibitions stem from the belief that the music will attract spirits, who arrive only to be disappointed that there is no ritual for them; the taboo against dancing outside a ritual context follows from that against playing instruments. Unless their families have ritual obligations that involve the performance of traditional music and dance, students in Balit might not learn or appreciate these arts. This was one reason the RGS schools pioneered a seminar-type educational module on Banwaon culture for its 6th graders, the first performance of which I was able to observe. Unfortunately, the content consisted of little more than lists; e.g., types of leaders, kinds of hunting rituals, names of musical instruments. These could have served as starting points for deeper discussion, field trips, or even cultural enrichment, but the module was assigned to a young Banwaon man without teaching experience, known more for activism than cultural knowledge and understanding. Still, efforts such as these are viewed positively by many Banwaon.

²⁴ 'Usi' is a Manobo word, equivalent to the English 'mate'. It was used by Bisaya logging workers to address Manobo co-workers, and acquired racist overtones as use of the word spread from Manobo areas across the province.

One other aspect of public schooling that many Banwaon appreciate is the way it occasions the song or dance-numbers performed by children at local graduation or end-of-school-year ceremonies (Johnson 1997: 50). At such presentations, one can see the pride of family and neighbors in their gleaming eyes, their smiles, and the way they draw together and lean forward, towards the children, as they display their mastery of Bisaya music or dance. It is as if the school-children were rehearsing otherness, to the delight of the audience. I feel this has to do with popular interest in personal transformation that Cannell (1999: 222) has remarked on, though here there is a cross-ethnic rather than cross-class dynamic. What such transformations mean for the Banwaon—whether it reflects aspirations for a more modern or sophisticated lifestyle; or a demonstration that they are as good as Bisaya at such arts; or pure pleasure in artistic performance—is a matter that merits further investigation in the future. Here I merely wish to register a general Banwaon appreciation of their children's capacity to perform Bisaya songs and dance. This is not to say that there are no critics of such performances. One leader, for example, expressed distaste over how some schoolgirls have learned to do splits, a posture he found immodest. But again, others will point out that such performances are part of public education, and as such, no one feels anything can be done about it.

For the critics, what is at stake here is cultural continuity. I asked Julito Otacan what would happen if they do lose their culture. He replied:

We will survive, I suppose, but we will lose the strong unity we used to have. The people will be divided. The clearest illustration of this is the katangkawan. He allowed himself to be swayed by outsiders, and the Banwaon people became divided. He lost his independence of mind.²⁵ Now his aspirations are [limited to] his personal ambitions, and he harasses those who oppose those ambitions. Secondly, peoples' livelihoods will be affected. There will be no more sharing. Money will be all that people see, no longer the community. See how the land has become divided because of logging. There is no more concern for others; there is concern only for one's own survival. I am especially

²⁵ *Nawala na ang kaugalingong pagbo-ot.* This sentence could also be read as, 'He lost his self-determination'.

worried for our students. I fear they may no longer understand the importance of being a people, whom they who are educated should serve. We hope that those who have studied will help the people, but it seems they are concerned only with personal employment.

Nuances and Ambivalences

Education, then, is not seen as an unqualified good. While most parents are committed to providing their children the best education they could afford, there are those who articulate anxieties about schooling's perceived potential for alienating Banwaon youth from their cultural heritage. It stems, in part, from the cultural insensitivity of school activities like the pageant, as argued by Tata Cinco, or the high-school competitions recalled by Julito Otacan. The latter suggested that even attempts to showcase indigenous culture in such competitions were counterproductive, as they dissociated indigenous dance from the ritual contexts where they were exclusively performed. Schools also expose Banwaon students to lowland prejudice against highland culture, and to the seeming glamour of Bisaya lifestyles. The effect, according to Otacan, is that the student learns to be ashamed of her/his culture, and begins aping her/his Bisaya peers.

Julito Otacan also pointed out that the emphasis most Banwaon parents place on getting their students to find jobs after graduation and help support the family could work against the Banwaon, as a people. Like the leaders of Tagdumahan, his vision is of a people united, its members helping each other to develop. Youth, in particular, have an important role to play by putting their education or learning at the service of their people, as teachers, engineers, police personnel, or community organisers. In this way, the Banwaon can better confront any external threats to their ancestral territory. The parental drive to produce employable graduates shifts students' orientation away from this larger political project, to their own respective families, if not their own selves. This shift is aptly symbolized in this case by the preference for IT courses, which have no practical application in the hinterlands of San Luis; and which will mean graduates will be physically

absent from the area, unable to support organising and other inter-village projects, unless they forego employment out of a sense of duty or obligation to their people. What, in other words, are the ethics—in the sense of appropriate or moral use—of education in the context of a minority people like the Banwaon? This is a question that is only now beginning to be articulated among the Banwaon, one which deserves further exploration, beginning perhaps with the examination of the careers of today's high-school and college students. There is some irony in how Banwaon culture's traditional valorisation of the family and family-obligations—which we saw in our examination of the ritual—could make the Tagdumahan's political project of organising their people into a unified, cohesive polity more difficult. The Tagdumahan is not unique in this wise; Trinidad describes a Manobo community still learning to articulate an indigenous identity and engage in discourses of indigenous rights, underscoring the relative novelty of solidarity beyond the family-level (2012: 111 et seq.).

Thus far however, we have not considered the viewpoint of people like Dakdak Tahudan, who here speaks for many Banwaon in Balit. It will be recalled that the Mrs. Valentines pageant was well received by the community. The contestants reportedly enjoyed the experience; that many of them asked to have their pictures taken afterwards also suggested a sense of pride in being part of the event. Most people in Balit, it is fair to say, found nothing offensive about the pageant. In part, it seems to do with most people's attitude towards pop-culture in general; i.e., that it is harmless fun, as can be inferred from Tahudan's responses to Tata Cinco's interrogation the day after the pageant. I readily acknowledge the point made by scholars who explain the appeal of 'modern' culture in terms of social aspirations in the context of the power relations between a majority and a minority (cf. Johnson 1997, Buenconsejo 2002). What I would stress, in addition, are the pleasures of lowland culture, especially when compared with Banwaon culture. With taboos against performances of traditional music or dance outside a ritual context, there is limited opportunity for youth, in particular, to find enjoyment in these arts and thus appreciate them. The traditional lifestyle, I venture to say, can be boring even for some Banwaon. I recall one

day in remote Tabon-tabon village, when I joined a group of men, women and children who together visited their farms. People looked out for each other during the hike to and from the fields; labor and advice, jokes and food were shared; and there was a contained joy to the way everyone took to their work. At the end of that day, an elder remarked to me, 'This was a beautiful day'. It was, I realized. I will always be grateful for that experience of a local sense of beauty woven of work and community, but I cannot but think that some people would find this limiting and monotonous over time. Young people, in particular, very often describe life in the further villages as '*mingaw*', a Bisaya term that describes a state of isolation, boredom, and lack of energy. By comparison, the lowland lifestyle seems full of vibrancy, and of opportunities for fun or novel experiences. There was one morning when I stood on the upper-story balcony of my home in Balit, watching third- and fourth-grade pupils cleaning the schoolyard before the day's classes. A neighbor's radio suddenly blared out the opening bars of a Korean dance-tune, and all the children, scattered across the schoolyard, froze in anticipation. When the song came on, they all began dancing or swaying, alone or in little groups, as they continued working. When the tune was over, they whooped and laughed in delight. They had their own 'beautiful day', even as they got their work done. Nothing remotely like that happens in villages like Tabon-tabon. I would posit that—issues of personal transformation aside—many Banwaon are attracted to aspects of Bisaya culture because it offers more aesthetic pleasures and expressive opportunities than their own. We should not underestimate the role that such pleasure plays in understanding the appeal of pop-culture for groups like the Banwaon. If one pushes them on this, they will excuse this enchantment with pop-music and modern dance, in particular, as 'just a bit of fun'; which is precisely what they seek in lowland popular culture. Push them harder, and they will then admit that these are alien arts incompatible with indigenous culture. In this sense, pop-culture truly is a guilty pleasure.

The point is that most people in Balit saw the pageant in a positive light because—like the music and dance, melodrama and spectacle it occasioned—it offered escape from their hard lives, if only for a couple of

hours. In Tahudan's words, it gave people happiness. There is thus a difference in perspective between them, on one hand, and those who have a more critical or reflective outlook, represented by Tata Sinco and Julito Otacan. This is another point where the outlook of leaders and non-leaders differ. Pop-culture and education are both from outside Banwaon territory and tradition, but while 'modern' music and dance are a guilty pleasure, education is seen as a necessity. Push them on this, and they will only insist that education has become a necessity in a world in flux, if not for the development of the Banwaon as a polity then for the survival or prosperity of separate families.

But Dakdak Tahudan is not the whole of non-leaders' perspectives. After all, while five contestants in the pageant—including Tahudan—sang or danced to pop-tunes, five others offered dramatised critiques of life beyond Banwaon territory, epitomized by the city, where people were imagined living lives of loneliness and want, in implicit contrast to the embrace and support of family life in their hinterland homes. The last dramatic monologue, where a Banwaon mother struggled for possession of her child against a stranger, argues the same point, but from the opposite direction. Where the other contestants imagined life abroad, she dramatized the need to stay and defend what was theirs against covetous outsiders. In a sense, the pageant articulated—in both senses of the word—the Banwaon wariness towards the world beyond their borders, as well as their fascination with its pop-culture. Outside of harmless 'bits of fun' that allow aesthetic opportunities and artistry, it seems there is a wider wariness towards an alien, potentially hostile outside world. It is one thing to belt out Bon Jovi's *Bed of Roses* in Tabon-tabon, or watch children dance to a K-pop tune in Balit; it is quite another to leave for life in the city. Better, perhaps, to protect their ancestral territory and autonomy from the forces of the outside world. People thus need to be prepared for any confrontation with the subversive, covetous outside world. I argue that as a result of their awareness of land-grabbing settlers and lurking corporations, education is seen as a key weapon in any such confrontation. To gain and use education is to mimic the trickster-heroes of Banwaon folklore. Such was the feat of Ruel Badbaran, who used

his education-enhanced capacity for *diskarte* to dupe a bank, and win his people a savings-account.

Conclusion

One could look at education received from the public school system as a ‘power’ derived from sources exogenous to Banwaon society, which one could use to improve one’s economic or social standing. I should say however that education here is never seen in mystical or spiritual terms, but as a practical, very secular, set of knowledges or skills. Indeed, the state itself, though mysterious, powerful and violent, and possessed of its own rituals and arcane knowledges, is not seen in magical or mystical terms. It is seen, rather, as an un-enchanted and un-enchanting political actor.

I have argued that the Banwaon ‘centre’ is located in the family, and that they view with wariness actors or forces from beyond that safe circle of kinship. We saw a Bisaya spirit-familiar warn Datu Batoy and the rest of the people to reject the Bible.²⁶ We also heard Julito Otacan explain the disunity of the Banwaon as a result of the *katangkawan* allowing himself to fall under the influence of the Philippine state. These instances reflect a perspective that views forces from the outside Banwaon territory as potentially subversive of their culture and political autonomy. The Philippine state is seen as one such actor from beyond Banwaon borders. Perhaps because it is alien to them, the state was not traditionally seen as a source of validating or legitimating power or authority for local leaders. Instead, there is a turning away from the state and other external forces, manifest in various cultural and ritual practices which valorise the family, suspicion towards a *katangkawan* seen as prostituted to the state, and anxiety about the urban life that epitomizes life outside their territory. This centripetal stance is now

²⁶ I originally intended to include a chapter on how the Banwaon continue to resist conversion to the Roman Catholic Religion—in more than twenty-five years of work in San Luis, the RGS have not produced a single youth interested in entering the Holy Orders—even as they allowed their children to be baptised to secure baptismal certificates needed for enrolling their children in school. Space constraints prevent me from doing so, and that material will have to be published elsewhere.

contested by those Banwaon who have accepted the authority of the state, and perhaps those fascinated by popular culture. Education should logically be something that the Banwaon would be wary of, as well. Instead, there is clearly great interest in ensuring that children receive the best education their families can afford. My sense is that an exception is made in the case of education because, on the one hand, it is seen by some Banwaon as something they need to protect their territory and culture from the state, to assert in other words Banwaon autonomy. Others see it as a means by which families can continue to support or sustain themselves economically, reproducing the traditional focus on the family. This view of the family as the 'centre' thus provides the basis for a critique of the state and its projects, yet may also become an obstacle to the evolution of a unified Banwaon polity.

One might ask why the Banwaon do not have a 'rhetoric of centers' (Tsing 1987) linking people to a source of power exogenous in space and/or time. To even outline a response requires due consideration of the wider regional context of Mindanao (following Gibson 1986). We have noted that the Banwaon of San Luis occupy a remote area, roughly 110 kilometers from the coastal city of Butuan. Yet it is not isolated. The Ma-asam is a tributary of the great Agusan River, the principal means of travel within the region until the 1970s. Moreover, there appear to have been old trading routes from this area of the Agusan basin which cross the Pantaron range, to reach the old trading town of Tagoloan in coastal Misamis. From his vantage in the early 20th century, Garvan mentions hemp fiber, rice, rattan, beeswax and tobacco among the products sold downstream by hinterland communities (1929: 176 et seq.). Through the 19th century however the Banwaon according to some of my sources, dealt in slaves as well, whom they captured from neighbouring settlements and brought to Tagoloan, where they were probably sold to Maranaw buyers from the Lake Lanao region (see Arcilla, ed. 2003: 225), or perhaps to Tausug buyers. The point is that the Banwaon were linked to a regional and international economic system, which however, made it dangerous to reside on the coasts, at least until the late 19th century. The Banwaon location in the interior minimized the risk of capture for them,

yet allowed them to participate by selling slaves and other products, when the need for goods such as salt, tools and weapons arose.

To some extent, they resemble the Buid of Mindoro, as described by Gibson (cf. 1986), in their location in the hinterland, their wariness towards outsiders, and the cultural emphasis on autonomy and egalitarianism. Like the Buid, the Banwaon stress on family autonomy could very well be a rejection of the hierarchical political models that outsiders sought to impose (Gibson 1986: 193, 203). We recall the Ulaging epic, where a family of heroes (Maquiso 1977: 49-52) escape the reach of would-be centres of power; variously represented as Moro sultans, Spanish soldiers, or American schoolteachers. The ethos of autonomy evinced by the epic heroes' rejection of would-be political centres clearly resonates with the Banwaon perspective of the world beyond their borders.

In sum, the Banwaon seem to have rejected integration into political or ritual centre-periphery relations, without foregoing participation in economic exchanges. In this, they are similar to other swidden-farming minority groups in Mindanao, such as the Bagobo (Cole 1913, Alejo 2000), the Manobo (Garvan 1929, Manuel 1973, Buenconsejo 2002), the Mandaya (Cole 1913), the Tiruray or Teduray (Schlegel 1970, 1979, 1994), the Bukidnon or Higaonon (Cole 1956, Cullen 1973, Paredes 1997, Edgerton 2008), and the Subanon (Frake 1980). Nothing in this literature suggests that these groups were integrated into political or ritual relations with Indic states, Negara or sultanates, as is the case with many Indonesian groups. Unlike many Philippine lowland-peoples, they have no history of becoming politically orientated towards the Catholic Church, as the embodiment of the Spanish colonial state (Rafael 1988: 166). And unlike Islamised ethnic groups, their leaders did not legitimise their authority through genealogical descent from the Prophet (McKenna 1998: 49-50). An interesting case is presented by the Tausug, whose sultanate was a political 'centre' for weaker groups on their periphery (Horvatic 2003: 18, also Kiefer 1968, Warren 1985). Johnson (1997: 55) however describes how the Tausug themselves look elsewhere for the source of *ilmu*' or power, from Mecca (*ilmu*' *Islam*) or America (*ilmu*'

Milikan), indicating the importance of considering centres and peripheries in their regional and global interrelations. To note, there were accounts of symbols of authority—a staff, and a jacket (Arcilla, ed. 2003: 89, compare Paredes 2000: 86-87)—which Jesuit missionaries gave to leaders collaborating with the Spanish colonial and Church projects. It is unclear what these items meant to 19th-century hinterland leaders and populations, however. In any case, none of my sources spoke of such items.

This suggests a need to distinguish, within the ‘centrist archipelago’ (Errington 1987: 405) and within Mindanao island, between groups who have resisted and those who have accepted linkage to a political or religious centre. The cases of the un-Islamised minority groups in Mindanao—who like the Banwaon are not bound to political centres, but turn inward into themselves—all question Errington’s broad view that the political geography of hill-tribes of the centrist archipelago is ‘out-ward looking’ (1989: 292). My material also raises the question of change or transition, which Errington’s classificatory, ‘ahistorical’ project (following Johnson 1997: 29) has underemphasised. How does the two-part typology of Southeast Asian societies she proposes interact with the reality of the post-colonial state? Indeed, her book *Meaning and Power in a Southeast Asian Realm* (1989) all but brackets out the Indonesian state and the inflection it lends to historical interpretation. It is hoped this thesis, by examining a case of a people confronting military pressure to shift their political centre from family to the Philippine state, even as they themselves are trying to constitute their own centre, will contribute to addressing this question.

Epilogue: Lost Altars

During the many years I worked in San Luis and neighbouring La Paz, I have witnessed numerous performances of the *hakladan* ritual, not only in Balit, but in other villages as well. Datu Luay-luay sometimes joked that if I had a Peso for every ritual I had attended, I could buy myself a fine pig. This is an exaggeration of course, but over the years, I have had numerous

opportunities to discuss the details of the ritual and its performance with informants, both shaman and non-shaman. My understanding is that in the *hakladan* ritual, the *bangkaso* altar mediates between the celebrant and her/his kin-group, defined by the walls of the house, and the spirits of the world outside it. To underscore its mediating function, the altar is fixed to an external wall of the house where the ritual is performed. This means that during the ritual, the wall to which it is attached literally becomes the liminal barrier between a human family on one hand, and the spirits and souls of their ancestors on the other. The altar, for its part, can be seen as something that pierces this barrier—the knife-form projections that decorate the altar are suggestive in this regard—from the realm of the spirits, and carries them into that of the human, allowing direct communication between them.

I was quite puzzled therefore, when I found in Balit two examples of the *bangkaso* altar that did not follow this traditional symbolic arrangement. The first example belonged to a Banwaon woman in her late 40s or early 50s. Her altar was not actually in the house, but in the covered porch or veranda that ran across the whole front of the house. It was nailed by its side to the exterior of the front wall of the house, at the corner between that wall and the line of the left-hand edge of the porch. She also had a miniature version of the altar nailed to the wall above the first *bangkaso*; it belonged, the owner said, to the spirit's son or daughter, I cannot recall which.

The second example belongs to Tata Cinco, a local schoolteacher. Her *bangkaso* is inside her house, in a corner of the kitchen. It is not nailed to one of its exterior walls however, but sits on the top edge of one of its interior walls, which do not run all the way up to meet the roof. Positioned this way, its back end is not orientated towards the outside of the house, but into one of the bedrooms, on the other side of the kitchen wall.

Of these two cases, the first is, to my mind, less unusual. If one were to imagine that the entire porch area of the owner's house was walled-in to form another room, then the altar and its miniature version would be 'correctly'

positioned. The fact remains, however, that there is no wall, as if there was no barrier between the owner and her family, and the world beyond. Tata Cinco's altar is more problematic. It is positioned on top of an interior wall, so that it projects from a bedroom. It suggests that Tata Cinco and her family no longer know of, or care about the full range of semiotic functions traditionally attached to the *bangkaso*. One could of course dismiss these two cases as variations in praxis that prove the rule, or renegotiations of the more prevalent arrangements of the altars. I see them however as indexing the confusion of their owners; and by extension, of the Banwaon. In the first case described, the altars are actually outside the house, where they have no walls to attach to. It is as if the owner finds it impossible or pointless to try to define the location of the wall or boundary between the inside and the outside, the family and the world beyond. In the second case, the position of the altar suggests that the outside is somehow in the next room. It is as if the Banwaon house here has become internally divided, that the outside has occupied part of the inside, and the boundaries are no longer where they should be. The two altars' loss of orientation can thus be read as mirrors of the Banwaons' own disorientation, brought about by the anxiety inherent in the struggles to define their relations with the world beyond house and family, village and ethnic group. This is a world which no longer consists of the spirits alone, for as this thesis tries to show, the world about them has been marked by the state, and made susceptible to its violence.

CHAPTER 3

Logging and Landownership

Introduction

On 3 June 2012, the mayor of Butuan City confiscated 2,000 illegally-cut *lawaan* logs floating on the Agusan River, just an hour from the city-centre. He 'expressed disbelief' at the volume of the timber, valued at PhP 2.4 million.²⁷ It was later discovered that there was a second layer of logs underneath those visible on the surface; there were actually 4,236 logs, raising their value to PhP 4 million.²⁸ The case drew the attention of the Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government, who ordered the investigation of regional Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) personnel, as well as the mayors and police chiefs of the towns implicated in the case.²⁹ A few days after the seizure, Manobo and Higaunon *datus* came forward to claim the logs, one of them saying, 'we need the logs to send our children to school since it is the opening of classes'. They requested the logs be released; saying 2,000 hinterland families would otherwise be affected.³⁰ Their pleas were futile; the national government was determined to enforce its 2011 logging ban.³¹

This case occurred well after my fieldwork, but attests to the persistence of a trading network dealing in illegally-cut logs operating across the Agusan region. Indeed, the trade seems to have weathered this incident, as the

²⁷ See <http://www.mindanews.com/environment/2012/06/07/2000-logs-floating-in-agusan-river-confiscated/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

²⁸ <http://www.mindanews.com/environment/2012/06/15/groups-laud-robredo-amante-for-seizure-of-illegal-logs-in-butuan/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

²⁹ See <http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2012/06/13/sec-robredo-wants-denr-personnel-in-caraga-probed-relieved/>, <http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2012/06/22/secretary-robredo-wants-denr-caraga-chief-out/>, <http://www.mindanews.com/environment/2012/07/01/7-police-chiefs-sacked-for-failure-to-stop-illegal-logging-in-agusan-sur/>. All accessed 20 September 2013.

³⁰ See <http://www.mindanews.com/human-rights/indigenous-peoples/2012/06/10/lumads-appeal-for-release-of-logs-greens-cry-foul/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

³¹ Executive Order No. 23, dated 1 February 2011.

DENR announced last August 2013 that surveillance-drones will be used to combat illegal logging in the region.³² The case moreover did not involve the Banwaon of San Luis—the logs were traced to La Paz, Agusan del Sur—but like the hapless highlanders caught up in this case, the Banwaon are also implicated in illegal logging, which they similarly pursue for the sake of their children's education. This chapter explores their involvement in illegal logging. It will be heavily ethnographic in content, and will consist of two parts. The first outlines how Banwaon notions of land- and resource-ownership developed in relation to commercial logging, particularly between the 1960s and 1980s. I will draw on Arce and Long's notion of 'mutational processes of change' (2000a) in the analysis of my material in this section. The second will describe the contemporary practice of small-scale logging in the Ma-asam River area. Here, I will rely principally on Tsing's concept of 'friction' (2005) in my analysis.

Together, these two sections provide a historical overview of the changing relations between the Banwaon, their lands and forests, and the logging industry. In the process, they describe the people's interests in their lands and forests, which I argue is as much about the compulsion of circumstance invoked by the *datu* quoted above, as about a desire for development through education, discussed in Chapter 2. The tragedy of their situation is that the only viable path to progress they see open to them is not only prohibited by the national government, but also threatens their own self-conception as a people true to their traditions. Finally, the material presented here describes the material values at stake in the dispute described in the next chapter.

Logging and Landownership

In 1883, a Jesuit missionary working in the Agusan region gave his superior this report on hinterland notions of landownership:

³² See <http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2013/08/12/denr-caraga-to-use-drones-in-campaign-vs-illegal-logging/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

I repeat that according to the ideas they learned from common sense and I have explained, each family and rancheria believes that the terrain they occupy, in which they live, hunt and fish belongs to them. No unshod friar can dissuade them of this belief. They mark as their property mountains and rivers, and vast lands for themselves and for the common use of the rancheria. No living being then meddles with them under pain of provoking a conflict that frequently leads to the use of arms. (Arcilla, trans. 2003: 222)

A similar association between certain locales—often, a stream and its surrounding catchment—and certain Banwaon families continues to this day. To give one example out of many, the Manseliohan family is linked to the Kinayang creek, near Tabon-tabon village. These associations are uniformly based on the pioneering swidden clearings (*pamuwalas* [B]) of each family's ancestors. Succeeding generations of these pioneering farmers then expanded to adjacent areas. In this, the Banwaon follow a pattern widespread in Southeast Asia, where rights or claims to land are based on the expenditure of labor, particularly in clearing a tract in the forest and utilizing it for cultivating rice or other crops (Li 1996: 511). Where Banwaon understandings of tenure differ from the Jesuit report is in the latter's assertion that a family or *rancheria's* relationship to the land was exclusive, perhaps because the unsettled conditions of late 19th century Agusan (Garvan 1929: 176-177, also Schreurs 1989, Arcilla, trans. 2003) required defensive vigilance against anyone outside the family. In contrast, my informants are near-unanimous in claiming that landownership in the Masam River area used to be '*komunal*', meaning no individual or family could claim any part of the area as exclusively theirs, and people were free to settle or farm wherever they wished. My sense is that in the past, even as certain locations or areas came to be associated with particular Banwaon families, people could still settle and farm wherever they wished. This is more in keeping with an economic context where the limiting factor on agricultural productivity is labour rather than land (Reid 1988). This *komunal* tenure, however, began to change with the arrival of logging companies in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

My informants all stated that the first logging firm to enter the Ma-asam area sought out the most respected elders and leaders of the Banwaon, and asked them for permission to conduct operations. The three men consulted were Datu Sabuluwan, Datu Mansulsugan and Datu Napongahan, the *katangkawan's* father. They not only gave their consent, but also became spokesmen for the company, urging their fellow Banwaon to welcome the logging operations, and settling any disputes or conflicts its operations occasioned. When I asked why these elders allowed logging into the area, most of my sources cited these elders' alleged need or desire for money. This view is compatible with information from my older informants, who all assert that Banwaon life in the past was materially impoverished. Datu Sayasaya, for example, said that most Banwaon wore no clothes until after the end of World War 2, when they scavenged the uniforms of slain Japanese soldiers. Datu Manbalanio described how there were so few *sundang* (machetes) and spears among them in the past, that people were forced to live together, so they could borrow these tools. In short, no group is self-sufficient, and they needed or wanted goods from the lowlands. Comparative ethnographic data from other hinterland groups in Mindanao, such as the pre-war Subanun (Christie 1909: 42) and Higaunon (Cole 1956: 84), and the post-war Subanun (Frake 1955: 62) and Tiruray (Schlegel 1979: 106, 108, 110) report a similar need or want for lowland goods, which meant a need for the money for purchasing them as well. At the same time, one of my informants surmised that the three elders 'saw only their ritual obligations' (*ila lang tulumanon ang nakita*). This raises the intriguing possibility that part of the reason they allowed logging was to get help from the company in securing pigs and other offerings for their respective ritual obligations, which could be burdensome, especially for those with multiple and/or complex rituals. Unfortunately, none of the three elders remain alive today, so I am unable to offer their recollections of this moment in Banwaon history.

Through the support of the three elders, the logging companies that operated in the Ma-asam area met absolutely no opposition from the Banwaon. True, there were occasional road-barricades and attacks on company employees, but these were intended to enforce claims upon the company, rather than

opposition to logging as such. In any case, the company put the three elders 'on time' (*gitayman sila*), meaning they received regular payments from the firm, for negotiating on its behalf in any disputes with fellow Banwaon. The origins of the term 'time' or '*taym*' are unclear. I think it originally meant these three elders were on company-time, on call to negotiate for the firm or otherwise facilitate its operations, meaning that the payments they received were in the concept of a retainer. If so, it is compensation for collaborating in company operations.

As more logging firms came and expanded through the area, other local leaders or heads of families began demanding *taym* payments from the companies as well, asserting that they could best mediate for the company with the members of their families. Since each head of family spoke for his/her family, and each family was associated with a given locale, the area came to be seen as subdivided among these families, each represented by its head. These subdivisions were referred to by the companies as sectors, a term adopted by the Banwaon as '*sektor*', pronounced Spanish-style (compare with 'area' in Van den Top 2003: 96). The 'owners' of *sektors*—initially, the heads of families with whom the logging companies dealt—came to be known as the *sektor*- or *sektoral*-owner, or simply 'the *sektoral*'. Over time then, the notion of *taym* shifted from being a retainer for negotiating-services, to payment for entering or working in a *sektor* of a family, represented by its head. These were the years—the 1960s and 1970s—of the logging boom; a time my older informants recalled as one of excitement, opportunity, and prosperity brought by the logging companies (compare Hilario 2004: 141-144). The Banwaon not only received *taym* payments, but were allowed free transportation aboard logging-trucks, provided pigs and other supplies for their rituals, and given employment. Most Banwaon men worked as guides, sawyers, guards or road-workers, even as women maintained their swidden-farms.

When the first *sektor*-owners passed away, their relationship with the land passed on to their descendants. If one asks a *sektor*-owner today what the basis of her/his ownership is, the answer will almost inevitably be that he/she

inherited the land from some ascendant. Today, a landowner has considerable leeway in terms of how to divide a *sektor* among her/his children, but the general trend today is towards dividing it equally among all children, male or female. Individuals can thus become *sektor*-owners. Banwaon landholdings now vary considerably in size, from below a hectare in area, to a few hundred hectares, depending on the industry of the current owner's ancestors, and the extent the original *sektor* has been subdivided over time. For my informants, the term *sektor* connotes a large tract of land.

Banwaon land-tenure has thus shifted from *komunal*—where families are associated with specific sites, but cannot say they own it—to *sektoral*. The *sektor* is understood as the private property of a family or individual; the owner has complete discretion on its use or disposal. The Banwaon however have their own notion of 'private' property: Unlike mainstream notions of landownership, there is less emphasis on exclusive use. People may freely travel through another's *sektor*. Moreover, they may hunt or forage for food or other resources; or even make a swidden-clearing there. In the latter case, it is customary to seek permission from the owner, but unless the owner intends to use the very same site for farming, permission is almost always granted. Banwaon landownership, in short, does not negate communal use of local resources. This is because it developed to enable claims to be made on logging companies, rather than to fence land or resources off from fellow-Banwaon. Today, financiers and logging operators recognise and respect *sektoral* ownership; and in the following chapter, we will see the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)—the state agency tasked with ensuring indigenous peoples' welfare—acknowledging it.

Sektor-ownership however is not simply a cynical way of milking logging companies for benefits. There are profound emotional links between families and their *sektor*. This land after all, is where their ancestors were born, lived, and were buried, and thus has genuine emotional meaning, over and above its economic value. Thus, after Rico Badbaran was murdered by the death-squad in Tabon-tabon village, some residents decided to flee for fear of further violence. A member of the Badbaran family declared however, 'We

cannot evacuate [from this place], because [this land] here is ours' (Dili mi pwede mamakwet, kay diri man ang amo). The man who reported this incident to me was visibly moved by his recall of these words, reflecting an appreciation of the profound sense of belonging the Badbaran family felt towards Tabon-tabon village, something stronger even than the fear of violent death.

Finally, even as land had become privatized as the property of *sektor*-owners, it has not *ipso facto* become commoditised. By this, I mean that land is still not generally considered as a thing open to sale or purchase. Many informants seemed offended by the idea when I asked them about buying or selling land, saying this would anger the spirits. Datu Manbalanio, citing a taboo against selling captured game—seen as gifts of the forest spirit—remarked: *'If selling a (wild) pig is forbidden, how much more the land [on which all life depends]?'* I pointed out that in Balit village, which has been subdivided into lots as a result of a cadastral survey, parcels of land are bought and sold. Datu Manbalanio replied: *'Well, look at their situation'*, drawing attention to the economic difficulties of Balit's residents, and insinuating that the spirits are punishing them for this practice. In Policarpo, the next village up the road from Balit, where lands have not been titled, I have been offered land for sale, by no less than the elderly wife of a venerable *datu* and ritualist. When I remarked that it seems a pity to sell land, she said dismissively, *'Ah, there is so much land!'* The pattern seems to be that where lands have been titled, as they are from San Luis town-centre to Balit, they are seen as commodities amenable to sale or purchase; and this commoditization is slowly creeping up into the hinterland. In the many years I have worked in San Luis, and all through my fieldwork, I never heard of talk of buying or selling land beyond Policarpo.

Banwaon Territory

Alongside the *sektor*, however, is the notion of the territory (*teritoryo*) of the Banwaon. This territory can be described as including the watershed area

of the Ma-asam River, running from the west to east; a stretch of the Agusan River, from the its junction with the Ma-asam River to its junction with the Casilayan River, which runs more or less north to south; along the line of the Casilayan River, from its junction with the Agusan River, upstream through one or more other tributaries, until one reaches the Adgawan River and its watershed, going east to west; and from the source of the Adgawan River, following the line of the Pantaron Mountain Range to the source of the Maasam River, heading south to north. As it is defined by watersheds and a mountain range, the area described forms an extremely irregular oval shape, narrowing towards the eastern end. While not all Banwaon can claim to know where precisely the territory's boundaries should be set in geographic space, especially along the complicated south-eastern edge of the territory, all share a general knowledge of its scope; i.e., the land between the Ma-asam and Adgawan Rivers.

This territory has been subject to indigenous 'marking' processes, particularly the setting up of *kuluba ha asidu* [B] or border-posts at strategic junctions between the territory of the Banwaon and those of other hinterland groups; for example, between the Banwaon and the Agusan Manobo at the eastern extreme of the territory. There were also *dagpon* [B] or wards posted along sections of the territory's boundaries, charged with preventing the entry of foreign objects into the territory. The *dagpon* today have become non-functional, though the notion that the things and ways of the lowlanders ought not to intrude into Banwaon territory survives in the form of the rituals by which such things as typewriters and motorcycles are 'registered' with the spirits, who might be offended by these alien objects. Today, the term *dagpon* is sometimes loosely applied to a village at the border of Banwaon territory. The village of Balit, for example, is occasionally spoken of as a *dagpon*, marking the junction between Banwaon and non-Banwaon areas. If so, it suggests that Banwaon territory has contracted over time, as Balit village is some seven kilometers from the 'original' boundary of Banwaon territory, at the junction of the Ma-asam and Agusan Rivers, now the town-centre of San Luis.

The territory itself is considered as belonging to the entire Banwaon people as a group; no one person or family can claim, or be allowed to claim, the territory. To note, this notion is being challenged by the *katangkawan*, as will be discussed in the next chapter. The majority of Banwaon however still regard their relationship with the territory as a form of collective claim or ownership, similar to the way that citizens of a given country might say, 'this is our land'. Thus, the territory is sometimes described as *komunal*, in that all Banwaon have a claim to it. And in the same way that a country's territory may be subdivided into titled properties, so is Banwaon territory subdivided into *sektor*. A distinction is thus made between a 'public' or 'communal' territory and 'private', or more precisely, 'individual-' and 'family-owned' *sektors*.

The Problem of Timber

We saw how the privatization of land as *sektor* does not prevent others from utilising forest or other resources there. Such resources are described by the Banwaon as *komun*. This term is misleading not only because of its resemblance to the term *komunal*, but also because of its meaning for the Banwaon. Whereas *komunal* is understood as something akin to co-ownership—for example, in the sense that all Banwaon are said to be collective owners of their territory—*komun* refers 'open access goods' (following Bromley and Cernea 1989). That is to say, these resources are no one's property, hence open to appropriation by anyone. Among the Banwaon, game and fish are the archetypal *komun* resources. There are no restrictions on when or what to hunt, trap or fish; landowners cannot prohibit anyone from entering their *sektor* to hunt or fish; and until relatively recently, there were no restrictions on hunting or fishing techniques. Once one has captured a pig or fish however, it becomes one's personal property; a variation of the principle that the expenditure of labour is the foundation of ownership. Similarly, *komun* resources such as wild fruits and edibles, pandanus-leaves for mat-weaving and basketry, and bamboo, among other

things, are thought of as the property of the person who appropriated them from nature.

The line between *komun* and private property however is shifting. This exemplified by the case of timber. I believe that *lawaan* and other commercially valuable timber were once *komun*, but have become privatised. This process, as with land, is bound up with the entry of the logging industry into the Banwaon area. We recall how Banwaon landownership evolved in conjunction with the entry and expansion of logging operations and the benefit streams—particularly the *taym* payments—they provided. Datu Batoy Manlapinding told me that during the years of the logging boom, a person negotiating for *taym* with a logging firm would say, ‘*my land extends to that creek*’ (*diha taman sa sapa ang akoang yuta*), rather than, ‘*these are my trees*’. In other words, the claim to benefits was based on ownership of land, not of timber. If a logging company wanted to work in a certain locale, they had to secure the landowner’s permission to enter and stay, for which the latter demanded *taym*. The trees themselves were, in a sense, incidental to the negotiation. They were *komun* and loggers could freely fell them if they wished, but to do so they first needed the landowner’s permission to enter the area. Through the 1960s and 1970s therefore timber became commoditised without becoming privatised.

In the 1980s however the logging companies abandoned the area in the wake of the violent counter-insurgency operations of the military and the ICHDF paramilitaries. With them went all the benefits they brought with them. One man commented, ‘*If the companies could roll up their roads [like a sleeping mat], they would have carried those away as well*’. Demand for timber remained constant however, and the Banwaon slowly began to fill in the void left by the companies, supplying timber through small-scale logging. In the 1990s, capital from distant Butuan City began to be channelled through intermediaries into the hinterland to finance small-scale logging, which I describe below. The problem for *sektor*-owners was how to benefit from the opportunity presented by the resulting intensification of logging. These loggers were not the wealthy companies of the logging-boom, but

small crews of Banwaon workers headed by mostly-Banwaon operators, who would work a *sektor* for a few months at most, rather than years.

Their solution was to finally claim ownership of timber. The practice at present is that whoever owns the land or *sektor* also owns the commercially valuable timber standing thereon; as with the land, the owner has full discretion on the disposition of the timber. She/he may sell off the timber at whatever terms, to whomever, as he/she wills. The appropriation of timber as property is reflected in the change in the terms of the payment a landowner receives from operators: Whereas a *sektor* owner used to receive *taym*—a payment for entering or occupying land—now she/he receives payment based on timber production, as I detail below. There was also an interesting linguistic shift. The term *sektor* increasingly referred not to the land, but to the timber standing there. I recall how an RGS nun had become agitated to hear that a certain *datu* had sold a logger his *sektor*, which she understood in its original meaning of ‘land’, and was calmed down only after it was explained that ‘only’ his timber was actually sold. Today, individual landowners can be heard speaking of ‘my’ *lawaan* trees in negotiating with loggers. Timber, in other words, has finally become privatised. Loggers and landowners no longer euphemised their agreement as a retainer for negotiating-services, or permission to enter the land, but openly negotiated over rights to timber. The land itself is in a sense incidental. It is in fact marginal in value: The soil is poor and farm-productivity low; and the rough terrain and primitive infrastructure discourage investment. Which is not to say landownership is unimportant; as we have just seen, it is the basis for establishing ownership of standing timber.

The Mutation of Banwaon Tenure

Arce and Long’s notion of ‘mutational processes of change’ (2000a) is useful in characterizing the development of Banwaon land and resource tenure. It steers discussion away from sterile dichotomies between, in this case, the Philippine state and Banwaon society, yet goes beyond the notion of

hybridity, to focus on how dynamically-generated changes involve, often rapidly and unpredictably, the re-assembling of the recursive properties of entities and the redrawing of boundaries in such a way that new social forms emerge out of existing ones (Arce and Long 2000b: 17). While these processes may, in certain circumstances, be propelled by outside interventions, the internal rearrangements take precedence, as it is these that give the form its identity, qualities, organizational shape, capacities and meanings (id.).

I have demonstrated how Banwaon land and resource tenure concepts and practices have evolved, as a result of their attempts to capture incomes from logging operations in their territory. Land tenure has shifted from being *komunal* to *sektoral*; while timber tenure shifted from being *komun* to *sektoral*-property. These changes drew on the antecedent indigenous notion that labour establishes right, so that *sektor*-ownership is ultimately derived from pioneering clearings of ancestors, and timber-ownership in turn is rooted in *sektor*-ownership. While the impetus for the changes is linked to the expansion of the timber industry into Banwaon territory—first in the form of corporate logging in the 1960s, then as capitalised small-scale logging in the late 1990s—the ‘rearrangements’ of tenure concepts were driven internally. Rather than a tension between state and indigenous notions of tenure, my material suggests a locally-driven, agentive ‘mutation’ of local tenure practices to privatise land and timber, and enable the Banwaon to earn money or profit. Privatisation and commoditisation thus need not be compelled by the state, as the literature seems to overstate (e.g., Vandergeest and Peluso 1995). This highlights the role of desire—for money, to purchase ‘salt’ and for the education of students, as we shall discuss shortly—as a driver of legal and tenurial change.

This alerts us to a distinctively Banwaon practice of individualized land and resource ownership, and indeed a distinctively Banwaon engagement with global capitalism, in the form of the timber industry. The tenure systems I have tried to describe here are thus indicative of political and legal autonomy from the state, to the extent that local tenure rules prevail in the area; as well

as of the Banwaons' subordination to global, national and regional patterns of resource exploitation.

Transaksyon-Logging

I now turn to a discussion of the Banwaon practice of small-scale logging. In part, the existence of the practice stems from the inability of the state to enforce its laws in the area. During my fieldwork, the DENR official assigned to San Luis had only five personnel in his unit, to protect the municipality's 95,050 hectares. Banwaon engagement with logging is more than a matter of 'freedom' found at the limits of state authority, however. There is an element of desire at play here. In the past, the three elders permitted logging operations in the area allegedly in consideration for moneys; we now consider the motivations behind contemporary Banwaon involvement in logging. This is not a mere matter of cupidity. Here I differ from Wallace, who attributed hinterland involvement in illegal logging to 'simple greed' (2006: 83-84, also Tsing 2005). The practice of small-scale logging is bound up with family aspirations and the imagined futures that inspire Banwaon activist-leaders, discussed in the previous chapter. At the same time, logging also gives rise to moral anxieties about its implications for cultural continuity. Illegal small-scale logging, at the risk of sounding banal, is a complex phenomenon.

I mentioned that after the departure of logging companies in the 1980s, the Banwaon began supplying the continuing demand for timber through small-scale logging. These operations were conducted only whenever the need for some commodity or service arose. They typically involved from one to six men, who felled trees with axes and floated the logs downriver to be sold to local buyers or dealers. This differs from 'carabao-logging' in the Sierra Madres, where loggers generally cut only when they have a confirmed buyer (Van den Top 2003: 97-98). Output was generally low, ranging from as few as five logs to an upper limit of around 60 logs. The proceeds were then used to purchase the needed goods or service. Usually, these operations

were not sustained beyond a single cutting cycle, after which the men would return to their villages, and work in their farms until the need for some commodity or service again makes it necessary to earn money. From the 1980s to the early 2000s, this was how logging was practiced by the Banwaon. At the time of my fieldwork, such operations continued to be practiced, though there was a trend towards contracting chainsaw-operators, increasing output to more than three hundred in some cases.

Through the 1990s, financiers in Butuan City began supplying capital through a network of middle-men to bankroll logging operations in the hinterlands of San Luis and other 'river towns' (compare van der Ploeg et al. 2011: 206-207, van den Top 2003: 99). I was unable to follow the logs up the commodity-chain beyond a certain point, so cannot categorically state where the demand for timber originates. I suspect, however, that the flow of capital into logging is driven by the booming China market (see Barney 2008: 91). In any case, by the mid-2000s, this capitalized form of small-scale logging was becoming the dominant mode in San Luis. In contrast to previous practice, these operations have larger outputs—from a hundred to a thousand logs—depending on the financing; and are sustained over as many cutting cycles as funds and timber-stocks allow. It is safe to say that the majority of Banwaon men were, during my fieldwork, directly or indirectly engaged in these operations. Thus, in Nakadayas village, all sixteen of the resident operators were Banwaon with financed operations. In Tabontabon, the village with the least number of loggers, two of the three men engaged in logging were backed by a financier.

These capitalized operations are locally referred to as *transaksyon* ('transaction'), a term that underlines the contractual relations between the financier or buyer who advances an amount of operating capital; and the logging operator who manages the capital, supervises operations, and delivers the logs. The relationship is not seen as one between equals or partners. The operator is referred to as the *ta-o* (wo/man) or *bata* (child) of the financier, while the latter is referred to with the rather feudal term *amo*

(master). The terms reflect how, through a system of advances and debts, the financier tends to dominate operators.

All financiers in San Luis are male, Bisaya, and from around the town-centre. Some of them may actually be sub-financiers, tasked by city-based capitalists to find and fund local operators, or middle-men buyers. Most operators are Banwaon, a few of them female. Most Banwaon however participate in *transaksyon*-logging as workers in an operator's crew. Most workers are men, but women and minors of either sex are known to join crews. Workers are paid PhP 150.00 to 200.00 for each day of work;³³ *libre* or free meals supplied by the operator; and, at the end of the operation, fare-money for the trip home. Although wages are described as daily (*inadlaw*), workers often do not get paid until the end of the operation. However they do receive an advance on part of their wages, which they leave with their families for their support. Sometimes, a worker arranges to be paid in logs. Thus, in addition to working on the operator's logs, s/he also cuts his/her own *personal* logs, which she/he usually sells to the logging operator's *amo*.

A logging operation begins by sending out teams into the forest to locate harvestable stands of *lawaan* trees. By 'harvestable' is meant trees with a diameter (*kara*) of at least *thirty-up* or *treinta-hon* (i.e., 30 cm.) or more. When suitable stands are located, negotiations for access are begun with the Banwaon *sektor*-owner in whose land the timber is found. The negotiations are public affairs, attended by the landowner's kin and neighbors, who may wish to get in on the deal, or ensure their own timber are not poached. Negotiation-costs are borne by the operator. An agreement between operator and *sektor*-owner will specify the compensation due to the latter, the area covered by the agreement, and the size of the trees that may be cut. Landowners are compensated in one of two ways: They may be paid on a *kinubiko* basis; i.e., on the basis of how many cubic meters of wood are cut, at PhP 20.00 per cubic meter. Most landowners find this bothersome, and prefer the simpler second mode, the *pakyaw* system. Here, a negotiated

³³ The exchange rate during my fieldwork was 70.00 Philippine Pesos (PhP) to 1.00 GBP. Figures quoted are as of December 2008.

lump-sum payment based on the estimated number of harvestable trees in the target-area is made. The largest payment for a timber-stand was for PhP 100,000, in Kihinggay village; an extremely atypical case. At the lower end of the range, I know of timber-stands that went for as little as PhP 5,000. Later, there emerged a trend towards exchange (*baylo*), where timber-stands were traded for a motorcycle, chainsaw, or buffalo, alone or in combination with a cash-payment. All my informants described the agreement between operator and landowner as a sale. With an agreement, an operator has a right to work in the area for as long as there are trees he bought left standing.

After an agreement is reached, a 'logging ritual' was conducted, the cost of which the operator shouldered. It is addressed to the *tumanod* or spirit-owner of the area where the logging will be conducted (Garvan 1929: 197-198), usually thought to be residing in a local tree. The spirit is asked to vacate the target-area and relinquish ownership of the *lawaan* trees there, in consideration of which a pig is offered. There is—as in the case of the landowner—a negotiation, and a form of exchange between loggers and landowners on one hand, and the spirit on the other. Whereas the exchange in the first case is seen as a purchase, the offering of a pig to the spirit is not. This exchange is closer to a gift, reiterating established relations between spirits and people, where the latter show respect to a spirit, who gives them what they need. When I noted the disparity between the value of a timber stand (which could approach PhP 1 million), and the price of a suitable pig (PhP 800 to 1,500) my informants said spirits do not see things in terms of market-value, but of appropriate action and respect. The pig is a sign of that respect, and it is not just offered, but is slaughtered, cooked and ritually shared with the spirit, just as one prepares a feast to honor someone. Once the spirit's consent is ascertained from 'reading' the pig's liver and gall-bladder, its claim to the trees is deemed relinquished, 'de-sacralizing' them.

Actual operations begin. Most operators rely on hired chainsaw-operators, who are set to work as soon as possible to minimize their number of days of work, as they are paid a higher rate than ordinary workers; PhP 700 a day,

libre, and fare to and from the camp. Costs of fuel and oil for the chainsaw, repairs, and the services of the sawyer's assistant are borne by the operator. After felling each tree, the sawyer usually cuts it into three-meter long segments called *putol* or *tampod* [B], a length dictated by the size of the machinery for cutting logs into veneer or plywood. Meanwhile, the workers search for other trees and mark them, clear the area around each tree, and build a timber scaffold against its base to serve as a platform for the sawyer. They also strip the bark from each *putol*, to delay the onset of rot, and clear a path between the logs and the *landinganan*.

The *landinganan* is where logs are stockpiled. Usually, the *landinganan* is on the banks or in the waters of streams. Ideally, the felled trees are on the slopes above the stream, allowing the *putol* to be rolled down into the water by pairs of workers using wooden poles to shift and roll the logs. If the felled trees are too far from the *landinganan*, buffalo-drivers are hired to haul the logs there. Drivers were paid PhP 500 or 600 per buffalo per day, plus the wages of the driver and her/his crew, and *libre*. At the *landinganan*, the logs receive a 'log-mark'. This consists of pairs of letters, usually a person's initials. The practice is to mark each log first with the log-mark of the financier, followed by an 'x', then the log-mark of the operator. On the logs of workers allowed to cut *personal* logs, there will be another 'x' after operator's log-mark, followed by the worker's log-mark. Log-marks thus annotate the various claims on each log, marking their commodity status, in a way that literally inscribes the hierarchical relations of production onto the body of the logs.

At the end of the operation, or of a cutting-cycle, the logs will be ready for *relis* (from 'release'), the movement of logs from the *landinganan* to Laminga River Bridge, where they are handed over to a sub/financer or buyer. For this, most operators relied on rainstorms and resulting flashfloods to fill the stream where the logs were stockpiled, and carry them from one tributary stream to another, down the mountain until they reach the bridge. A few operators have sufficiently large capital to allow them an alternative method of *relis*, called 'damming'. This involves building a series of collapsible

wooden dams along the length of the creek serving as *landinganan*. The logs are floated in the reservoirs of each dam. Upon *relis*, the dams are collapsed one by one, beginning with the one furthest upstream. The energy of the water built up with each collapsed dam will carry the logs all the way to the bridge. In either case, the logs are carried by the rushing waters downriver in such a rough manner that some of them are broken or split, stranded on a bank, or entangled in brush or vines. On the approach to Laminga Bridge, where the terrain flattens out, there are also people who would seize other people's logs for their own. This means a diminution of the operator's stock of logs, posing a risk to her/his profits. To compensate for this, most operators produce as many logs as they can, to provide a safety-margin against loss.

Sometimes, before the logs are marked or otherwise ready for transport downriver, they are swept away by sudden flash-floods, resulting in a 'wash-out'. This is another risk for the operator, who now has to comb the logs' downriver route in the hope of recovering his/her logs. Occasionally, good-hearted people living along the route would salvage washed-out logs and hold them in exchange for a small gratuity. More often, a wash-out means a free-for-all grab for unmarked logs. In one such case a few weeks before the start of fieldwork, many logs had washed up in the Agusan River, near the San Luis town-centre. On sighting the logs, motorcycle-drivers, students, market vendors and housewives had jumped into the water and seized what logs they could, which—especially if they had no log-marks—they could sell to local buyers.

While the released logs rush downstream, the operator arranges for motorcycles-for-hire to pick up the crew and race down the mountain to Laminga, where with operators and crews from other areas, they await the arrival of their logs.

The Bridge

Laminga Bridge is a steel structure, set on concrete embankments twenty feet over the river. Underneath it is the boom, a cable with wooden floaters stretched from bank to bank across the surface of the river, to prevent logs from floating past. Beside the steel bridge, on its upriver side, is the old wooden bridge it replaced. About twenty-five feet from the bridge on the upriver side is the junction of the Laminga River and Tagbulakan Creek. The banks of these streams form five- to eight-foot high slopes.

On 29 August 2009, those banks were covered with logs, piled haphazardly over each other (Figure 4, p. 267). The waters of the Laminga and the Tagbulakan were choked with more logs and detritus backing upriver from the closed boom. Men, women and children wandered over the logs and muck, looking for their own or their *amo*'s log-marks. Workers went about, carrying tools or coils of cable from which swung steel spikes which jingled merrily against each other. In the black-brown, waist-deep water, some forty men and boys pushed and poled their logs together, or towards the boom. The smell of mud and bruised timber hung over the scene. On the remains of the wooden bridge—looking down on the men and boys in the water—seven financiers and operators shouted or gestured to their crew, supervising the location and regrouping of their logs. On the downriver side of the bridge, men and boys placed their *amo*'s logs side-by-side to form floating trains of logs, like belts of ammunition in the war for profit (Figure 5, p. 268). Each train grew longer with every log set in place with spikes and cables. Further off were pump-boats moored to one side of the river. Each buyer or financier will have one or more log-trains, and will have hired enough pump-boats to tow them away after all her/his logs have been gathered.

After surveying the scene, I began taking photographs. I had barely started when Datu Batoy of Balit appeared at my side. He was in full regalia, with beaded head-cloth, shades, embroidered jacket, his bag of betel-chew paraphernalia, and government I.D. card. I (AG) was surprised.

AG: *[I did not know] you're here, Datu!*

Batoy: *I did not go logging in the past, but now I have a college [student]. Farming is no help. I have stands of falcata trees ... but they are not ready for harvest yet. I have hemp, but it is not ready to be worked yet.*³⁴ (Pause.) *There are some very nervous people over there* (He points to the opposite bank.), *saying [about you], 'Maybe he's [from the] DENR!' But I explained things to them. I said, 'Ah, he's no problem, he's one of ours. He's studying the life of the [Banwaon]. So naturally, he takes pictures, especially since they do not see logs in the cities'.*

I thanked him, understanding this was a warning against taking pictures. We chatted about the logging trade, and the conversation quickly turned to the current prices for timber. He voiced a common complaint about the low prices for the logs, which depend on the diameter of each log. Here at Laminga Bridge, a log that is *30-up* in diameter sells for PhP 1,400 per cubic meter; a *40-up* log, PhP 1,800; a *50-up* log, PhP 2,500, and so on.

To determine how many cubic meters of timber an operator has brought in, they are 'scaled' or measured at the bridge by a tax-assessor from the San Luis local government. As each operator regroups her/his logs on the upriver side of the bridge, the assessor scales them and levies a 'tax'—representing the local government's 'share' in the operations (compare van der Ploeg, et al. 2011: 208)—at PhP 50.00 per cubic meter.³⁵ This is a case of 'collusive corruption' (Smith et al. 2003: 294) where government agents and the private sector collude to deprive the state of revenues, or in this case, resources. Upon payment of the 'tax', the boom is released, to let the scaled logs pass under the bridge to the downriver side. Other operators and workers watch carefully, to ensure that none of their own logs float away at the same time. Fights over logs have been known to break out, and some men arm themselves for such an eventuality. The scaling, assessment and payment is repeated with each operator's stock until all logs have been

³⁴ Falcata is an exotic soft-wood tree (*Albizia falcataria*) harvested for their wood four to five years after planting. Hemp refers to plants resembling banana-plants (*Musa textilis*) which produce fiber harvestable two years after planting.

³⁵ This 'taxation-system' was later simplified, by charging a flat rate of PhP 15,000 to each operator or buyer, regardless of the volume of timber.

processed. When there are very many logs at the bridge, this can take up to three days, with workers sleeping in shifts to guard their logs.

The financier then pays the operator the assessed value of the delivered logs, less the amount advanced as operating capital. If the assessed value is less than the advance, the operator is said to be *O.D.* ('over-drawn'). The *transaksyon* is then a 'failure', and the operator becomes indebted to the financier; without a profit, the operator is often unable to give workers their unpaid wages. Upon payment, the various claims on the logs denoted by the log-marks are resolved, and the buyer or financier becomes their owner. She/he then gets hired pump-boats to tow the logs to Pilpak or elsewhere to await more log-deliveries; or down the Agusan River—paying off the local government, police, military and regional DENR personnel at their separate checkpoints along the route—to Butuan City, where the logs are usually resold. There, a *50-up* log would sell for PhP 6,000 per cubic meter, a 140 % markup over its price in Laminga.

All operators and workers are aware that while they shoulder the hardships of logging, the profits go mainly to the financiers; a few pointed out that while the financiers in San Luis have purchased SUVs, workers could barely afford local transportation. There were attempts by operators to pool their resources and tow their logs to Butuan City, where prices are higher. In one case, they underestimated the amount of bribes needed, so many suffered a net loss or had very low profits. In another even more unfortunate case the logs were seized by DENR personnel in their occasional show of enforcement. Most Banwaon operators and loggers prefer to sell their logs at the low rates at Laminga Bridge rather than face the difficulties, expense and uncertainties of towing them to Butuan City.

I shared these observations with Datu Batoy.

Batoy: [Prices here are] low, [it is] true. But we have also looked at what the buyers have to pay. Which is huge. They have to pay off nine [groups when they tow their logs to Butuan]. There's the DENR, the police, the soldiers, the Maritime [Authority] ...

AG: *How much do they get paid?*

Batoy: *A thousand-five hundred [Pesos] ... for every kubiko. (He noticed my surprise.) They have it easy, all right. They just sit around, and the money comes to them. All the effort is on [the side of] the loggers. They only [have to] catch the loggers [to make their money].” (His indignation rises.)*

The predatory attitude of government agencies is another common complaint among loggers, who describe them as *buwaya* (crocodiles), an apt image given the river-setting and the agents’ ambush-tactics.

AG: *This kind of livelihood is difficult. Why do people bother?*

Batoy: *There is no other [choice]. (Wa’ namay la-in.)*

From Salt to Students

I have provided a description of *transaksyon*-type logging to show the extent the Banwaon are implicated in logging operations; to emphasize that capitalization imposes on the operator the necessity of making a profit; and indicate the conditions under which that profit has to be produced.

This differs from the earlier type of small-scale logging—now called *kaugalingon* ([on] one’s own’; i.e., without a financier)—which was generally orientated towards making money with which to secure necessities. Often, logging of this sort actually operates on a loss, in that the money they receive for their logs is often less than the value of the labour they invested in producing and transporting the logs. As one logger said, *‘[we] practically gave away [our logs]’*. They engage in logging nevertheless because they need money for the purchase of necessities. Profit, in a sense, was incidental; what was essential was to have money in hand.

In the past, most Banwaon would answer the question of why they engaged in logging with *‘pang-asin.’* The term means, ‘for salt’; i.e., money for

purchasing salt. The word ‘salt’ is instructive, because it is a commodity the Banwaon—in hinterland villages more than a hundred kilometres from the coast—cannot produce by themselves, but must trade for. Interestingly, the term *pang-asin* has been extended to include similar commodities, such as soap, matches, coffee, sugar and children’s school supplies. The emphasis on particular commodities regarded as necessities underscores the presumption that the logger continues to be engaged in largely self-reliant agriculture; i.e., one goes into logging *just for* those things they need but cannot produce. Logging, in other words, merely supplements farming; it is a means of securing basic commodities. *Pang-asin* therefore sets up a discourse of necessity and local unavailability to explain engagement in logging.

In contrast, *transaksyon*-type logging requires that the operator produce and deliver enough logs to enable him/her to repay the capital advanced by the financier, make enough money besides to pay off any unpaid workers’ wages, and finally, produce a profit for him/herself. Loggers can no longer operate at a loss; they must not only make money, but make a profit. This concern for profit explains the protectiveness of operators and loggers towards their logs: Setting log-marks, rushing down the mountain to reduce the time their logs are out of sight, guarding their stock at the bridge, and if need be, fighting.

There is also a shift in the way logging is justified. Instead of *pang-asin*, loggers now say they have students to send to school, as Datu Batoy did. The element of necessity is still there, but there is an upward movement in scale from basic commodities, to the considerable expenses entailed by schooling. More significantly perhaps, there is a shift from satisfying short-term consumption needs to a long-term investment in education, which requires financing over a period of years. Almost all the logging operators and workers I know in Balit, my principal fieldsite, had children enrolled in school, and all expressed a desire to see them graduate, find jobs, and help support the family.

Datu Batoy however went on to cite the limitations of other economic options. Aside from engaging in logging, the only other alternatives for earning money in the area are *raha* or woodcutting, falcata cultivation, and farm labor. The first two provide markedly low returns compared to logging, even despite the risks and uncertainties attending the latter. In any case, the supply of tree species suitable for woodcutting is nearing exhaustion. Falcata trees are harvestable only after every four or five years. On this, one man expressed a widely-shared view when he said, '*we cannot eat only every five years.*' Nevertheless, many people in Balit and nearby villages do maintain stands of falcata as a supplementary source of income. As for farm labor, the demand is irregular and wages even lower. Rattan-cutting, which used to be widespread, is no longer viable because of over-exploitation. Finally, there is farming, centered on swidden rice-cultivation. Many Banwaon elders say they used to enjoy abundant harvests, but farm-output from the 1990s onwards rarely lasted four months after the rice-harvest. The reasons for this decline in productivity are unclear; I suspect this is part of the long-term impact of logging activities from the 1960s to the 1980s. Once the stock of harvested rice is consumed, Banwaon families historically subsisted on sweet-potatoes and other tubers (Garvan 1929: 76). Many families today however cannot long endure a diet without rice, and this compels them to purchase rice, and to earn money for that purpose. But even if farm productivity is improved, this would not avail the Banwaon, as there is a very strong *pamalihi* or taboo against selling rice, seen as the gift of the *ibabasok* or agricultural spirits. It is in cognizance of these economic constraints that Datu Batoy said, 'there is no other choice' but logging. A Tagdumahan leader, interviewed in 2012, was quoted as saying: '*Logging, although not a part of our traditions, is the only source of income many of us know*', before asking, '*what is the alternative they are offering?*'³⁶ This is a fair question. The remoteness, poor soils and woeful infrastructure of the area make the idea of investing in other commercial crops unattractive. At the same time, the rate of deforestation resulting from logging was clearly unsustainable, so finding an alternative or successor to logging is a critical economic question.

³⁶ See <http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article-1G1-250647340/logging-ban-forces-locals.html>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

When I left the field, there was growing interest in planting rubber-trees, but there has been no news of how such initiatives have fared.

Anxieties

The sisters of the RGS were aware of Banwaon engagement in logging. So long as it consisted of *pang-asin* operations, it could be dismissed as occasional ‘misdeeds’ impelled by necessity. When the Banwaon began shifting to the intensive, sustained *transaksyon*-type operations, they became concerned. They wanted the Banwaon to protect their forests, but instead saw them felling it at an unsustainable rate. In October 2008, there was a meeting between the Tagdumahan and the RGS in Tabon-tabon village, to discuss developments in the latter’s school program. Sr. Daisy Superable, RGS, head of the sisters’ community in San Luis then, took the opportunity to ask the Tagdumahan to clarify its stand on logging, which she insinuated was destructive and illegal. The atmosphere became tense, as Tagdumahan officials became defensive. The organization’s chair Eddie Badbaran asked the delegates from the various Banwaon communities present to respond. One after another, they all declared that logging must be allowed to continue, many citing the need for money for their children’s education. Then Badbaran asserted that if they wanted to, the officials could impose a logging-ban, but this would only turn the people against them. Instead, the Tagdumahan had tried to negotiate with financiers on behalf of some Banwaon *sektor*-owners; demanding that the logger only cut trees *50-up* in diameter, and to pay for smaller-sized trees destroyed in the course of the operations. He emphasised however that farming remained the Banwaons’ *prinsipal* (main) livelihood, and that logging was only *segundaryo* (secondary). To ensure this, the Tagdumahan will require its members to farm four months—from March to June, when swidden-fields are cleared, fired and sown—every year. Sr. Superable accepted these statements as the ‘voice of the people’, but never again attended a Tagdumahan meeting.

I was surprised to learn that the Tagdumahan had become involved in logging, having witnessed its inception as an activist association dedicated to protecting Banwaon rights and lands. What I found most striking about Badbaran's statement was how he found it necessary to assert that the Banwaon are farmers and not loggers, drawing a distinction between *prinsipal* and *segundaryo* economic activities. However, it is difficult to see how farming can be considered a principal economic activity if the Banwaon spend little time on it; or indeed, if they have to be told to spend time on it. The defensiveness of Badbaran and the other Tagdumahan officials, touched off by the nun's challenge, is suggestive of an underlying anxiety about Banwaon engagement in logging.

This anxiety manifests itself in other ways: Eddie Badbaran himself, in a conversation immediately after the meeting, said he was personally 'shamed' (*naulawan*) that the Tagdumahan got involved in logging. Recall also Datu Batoy's defensive response when I saw him at Laminga Bridge. I had only wished to register my surprise, but the circumstances turned my statement into an expression of surprise ... that he was in the company of loggers. This triggered an unexpected explanation for engaging in logging, the thrust of which was he was compelled by necessity. This sense of guilt came out again in an incident in Tabon-Tabon, where in late 2008, there was a logging-crew working for a villager undertaking *transaksyon*-logging. As the workers trekked into the forest each morning, the local school-teacher—who had an environmentalist streak—had her pupils sing the 'anti-logging' song.³⁷ The workers complained that the singing 'hurt' them, and pleaded fruitlessly with the teacher to stop. Finally, I was able to talk to the Banwaon enumerator who conducted the government's 2008 household census in the Side One area. She said none of her respondents admitted they were loggers. Like Eddie Badbaran, they were all insisting they were farmers.

³⁷ This is a cumulative song, with lines added as it progresses, set to the tune of 'When You're Happy and You Know It'. The last line goes: 'The logger died/because his house was destroyed/because the earth gave way/because the river flooded/because the logger cut/the tree on the top of the mountain.'

And of course, this anxiety can be, and was expressed explicitly. This was best articulated by Dakdak Tahudan, whom I met at a *hakladan* ritual where the celebrants asked the spirits to protect their kin engaged in logging, and prayed they would not lose their logs. Perhaps reacting to this intrusion by logging into ritual discourse, she complained to me afterwards:

Dakdak: The people have been himalakan!

AG: What is 'himalakan', mother?

Dakdak: That dancer who wears only underpants on T.V. The people of the land have been himalakan. There they are, watching T.V. The TV is all they see now.

AG: Is 'himalakan' like violating the olag?

Dakdak: Nothing is against the olag anymore, for everything now is paper. The people have left behind sky, earth and water. There they are with paper, with electricity, there the people are on concrete. They have forgotten their ritual obligations, they have abandoned their duties [to the spirits]. The houses now gleam [with roofs of metal-sheeting]. Great changes have happened. That is why the spirits have gone from us. The datu now are amidst these changes. They do not understand what is happening anymore. They themselves have cast off culture. The people themselves have cast off culture. Now we are like a [stagnant] pool, without source or destination, sitting in the stink.

She was describing a people *himalakan* [B] or seduced by change, symbolized by the scantily-clad dancer on television, as well as the images of state bureaucracy and schooling (the references to paper), electricity and appliances, and houses of concrete and metal roofs. This has driven off the spirits—a frequent explanation for hardship and poverty (Atkinson 1989: 44)—and distanced them from their own culture. She finally portrayed the Banwaon as a puddle, cut off from any source, without a sense of history or identity that would give them direction; unlike a river that ever flows but is never exhausted. Dakdak Tahudan's plaint, and others like it, expresses a fear that the Banwaon have forsaken the notion of *olag*, the injunction to live as one's ancestors had, and thus their link to their history.

The Banwaon know that their logging operations are unregistered, unregulated and—as far as national law is concerned—untaxed, hence illegal. Legality however is not their problem. In the hinterlands, there is no attempt to conceal logging operations. If I took photographs of logs, workers would hopefully ask to be included in the picture. As I demonstrated, Banwaon notions of land- and resource-ownership prevail in the hinterlands; they claim ownership of the lands and forests. Financers accept this. In a very real sense, the Banwaon exercise legal autonomy within their territory. It is only at Laminga Bridge, where hinterland and lowland, loggers and financers, timber and money meet, that people become conscious of state law, as marked by Datu Batoy's warning against picture-taking. The issue for the Banwaon then is not legality, but morality. There is awareness that logging transgresses *olag*, eroding the cultural autonomy they value. Indeed, can a society dependent on outside capital for its development be autonomous from the outside world? Are they using their legal autonomy to erode their political autonomy? Or can they log their way to self-determination? And how else are their people to progress, if not with education, and therefore through logging? What alternative is there to logging? This moment between cultural autonomy and economic integration is at the root of their denials and defensiveness. It is an unresolved contradiction that the Banwaon pragmatically take in their stride, consoling themselves with the idea that they have no other choice.

The Banwaon and the Global Timber Industry

Interestingly, a few months after the meeting at Tabon-tabon discussed above, the *katangkawan*—for some reason—proposed a log-ban in the Masam River area. People scoffed at this, pointing out that his own family was intensely involved in illegal logging. One operator commented, '*Even the people of Mahagsay (the katangkawan's home-village) won't heed him*'. True enough, nothing came of the proposal. This incident underscores how, despite the political differences between the *katangkawan* and the Tagdumahan, they are united in their dependence on logging. It marks the

pervasiveness of the timber-industry. If we look at Banwaon society as having a 'dual economy', with systems for the production of food for subsistence, and for the production of commodities for sale in the market to meet needs for cash or goods (Dove 2011: 13), we see that, in the light of the marginal productivity of swidden-agriculture in the area, logging assumes considerable economic importance for the Banwaon. It not only produces the money needed for 'salt' and needed by their students, but provides the means of addressing the inevitable short-falls in rice-production. This provides a better sense of just how threatening the national government's logging ban could be for the Banwaon and other hinterland groups in Agusan del Sur.

We might also consider how local history links up with global history, always keeping in mind that while the local is in part a product of interaction with the global, it is more than a simple product of that interaction (following Dove 1996: 34). Here we turn to Tsing's notion of 'friction', by which she refers to 'the grip of encounter' between the global and the local, attention to which provides the basis for an ethnography of global interconnection (2005: 5-6). This metaphor draws attention to 'the importance of interaction in defining movement, cultural form, and agency' (id.: 6), which contains the possibility of resistance, but is not limited to it. Indeed, friction in the sense of traction is what allows the global, for instance, to find purchase in the local.

I view the logging industry in the Agusan region as a manifestation of global economic forces. When the Banwaon first encountered it in the late 1950s or early 1960s, it came in the form of corporate logging, supplying timber for Japan's post-war reconstruction and reindustrialization. The capitalized small-scale logging from the late 1990s onwards, I suspect, is aimed at the massive China market. Through all this time, we find no local resistance to economic integration through the timber industry. Rather, the Banwaon have actively sought ways to benefit from the global interest in their timber. This is not to say they passively submitted to the industry. The Banwaon were able to secure corporate recognition of their then-emergent notion of landownership, in the form of *taym* payments for entry into each *sektor*, even

though these firms held state-awarded logging concession-rights. The intensive small-scale logging that followed—especially because most logging-operators were Banwaon—continued this recognition of indigenous landownership, to the point where we can quite plausibly speak of Banwaon legal autonomy within their territory. This is testimony to the agentive capacity of the Banwaon, but also of the audacity and adaptability of urban capitalists willing to venture into transactions with operators in the hinterlands.

I do not suggest an equivalency between corporate and small-scale logging. We have noted qualitative differences in how the two forms of logging operated, and how the Banwaon negotiated a place within those operations. More significant, to my mind, is how small-scale logging in a sense folds Banwaon society into itself. In corporate logging, the firm is always an alien entity, personified by Bisaya managers and workers. In small-scale logging, it is personified not by the distant financiers but by Banwaon operators and their Banwaon crews. The industry thus finds traction in the hinterlands through the social and personal relations between Banwaon *sektor*-owners, operators, and workers, and their families. Viewed from the margins then, a regional logging industry joined to global financial and resource flows has a very Banwaon face.

CHAPTER 4

A Banwaon Politics of Cosmology

Titling 'Ancestral Domains'

The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997³⁸ has been described as a response by the Philippine government to a long-standing demand from indigenous peoples for state recognition of their rights to their ancestral territories (Eder and McKenna 2004: 56, 65-66). This law outlines a procedure by which indigenous communities can obtain a Certificate of Ancestral Domains Title (CADT) over their 'ancestral domains'; i.e., their ancestral territory, consisting of lands and the resources there. The CADT is a 'communal' title recognizing the private but community property of the title-applicants and –awardees (IPRA secs. 5, 55). Implementation of the titling procedure is assigned to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). Most indigenous groups and communities have reacted positively to the IPRA and its titling procedures. As of 2013, 159 CADTs covering 4,392,891.36 hectares have been issued by the NCIP.³⁹

With the enactment and implementation of the IPRA, the Philippines was considered 'a relative bright spot' by Eder and McKenna in terms of state policies towards indigenous peoples (2004: 56), especially when compared the policies for indigenous populations adopted by other states in Southeast Asia (Duncan 2004). They conclude that the problems facing indigenous groups now have to do with a perceived unwillingness or inability of the government to cede genuine control of lands and resources to communities despite the IPRA, rooted partly in opposition from economically and politically powerful individuals and interest-groups (2004: 67). This focus on issues of

³⁸ Republic Act No. 8371 (*An Act to Recognize, Protect and Promote the Rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples, Creating a National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Establishing Implementing Mechanisms, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes*).

³⁹ See <http://202.57.46.78/adis/Public/ApprovedCADTSummary.aspx>, accessed 21 September 2013.

implementation however suggests an underlying assumption that the concept of titling is unproblematic, an unqualified good. However, all associations of place—such as those that the IPRA enables through its titling process—are social and historical creations that need to be explained (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a: 4); particularly because local or indigenous productions of place are so often at odds with the projects of the nation-state (Appadurai 1996: 191), even when these two become interwoven in the CADT application process. I have elsewhere pointed out how the CADT procedures homogenize ancestral lands by prescribing a single set of rights and obligations for all title-holders regardless of their indigenous practices, and commoditize them by defining the procedures for negotiating access to these homogenized areas with minority communities (Gatmaytan 2007, 2005). Here, I argue that the notion of titling is deeply problematic, at least for groups like the Banwaon.

In this chapter, I propose to examine the case of an application for a CADT filed by the *katangkawan*, covering the territory of the Ma-asam River Banwaon. I propose to treat the titling project as an attempt at dispossession, precisely as it was perceived by the Tagdumahan, and thereby respond to Li's challenge to anthropologists, to engage in the 'continuous exposure of the diverse and changing forms of dispossession' (2010: 400). To this end, I apply a mode of analysis proposed by Hall, Hirsch and Li (2011, hereafter Hall, et al.). These scholars emphasise that all land claims or uses necessarily entail the exclusion of others from the same land (id.: 4), and describe titling as the perfection of such exclusion (id.:36). Disputes over land are therefore contentious, and parties deploy interdependent 'powers' in their manoeuvres to secure their interests in the land. Among the most important 'powers' are regulations, force, the market, and legitimation (id.: 15 et seq.). Hall, Hirsch and Li's approach, however, is focused on the political economy of local land-disputes, which risks underemphasizing more ideological frames of meaning at play in such disputes. I would supplement their frame of analysis then with the notion that ownership is a system of symbolic communication through which people act and negotiate social and political relations (Busse and Strang 2011: 4, citing

Rose 1994). I argue that the titling project, seen as a dispute over ownership—or more particularly, over ways of ownership—reflects wider social and political relations and struggles. This way, I hope to respond to the call to politicize the anthropological commonplace that space is socially constructed (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b: 40).

As I noted in Chapter 1, rumors of the *katangkawan*'s titling project had been circulating for more than a year before I began fieldwork in that area. At the start, I had wanted to talk to the *katangkawan* about his plan, and was happily surprised to receive an invitation to attend a meeting set by the NCIP for 14 January 2009 to discuss his application. Early off, I anticipated two problem areas for the application. First, the project could affect Banwaon landowners' rights to land, which we saw from the previous chapter, has become vested in individuals or families; and to resources, in that landownership translates to ownership of the timber standing on those landholdings. There is a question, in other words, about how the idea of a communal title over territory articulates with *sektoral*-ownership. Second, the projected claim-area of the *katangkawan* lay between two other areas already claimed by two other leaders. To the north was a vast area controlled by Deo Manpatilan, Higaunon *datu*, mayor of the Municipality of Esperanza, and leader of the Wild Dogs, a paramilitary unit.⁴⁰ To the south was the Side Two area, covered by a CADT controlled by BenHur Mansolohay, a Banwaon *datu* who led still another paramilitary unit.⁴¹ I expected that there would be negotiations between the *katangkawan* and the two other paramilitary leaders over the boundaries of their respective areas, and the affiliation of affected local villages, residents and their landholdings. The invitation to Mahagsay offered the possibility of witnessing how these issues would be resolved, so I promptly accepted it.

⁴⁰ Deo Manpatilan controls 74,827 has. of land in the Municipality of Esperanza, Agusan del Sur province, under a Certificate of Ancestral Domains Certificate (CADC) no. R13-CADC-154, issued on 5 June 1998. Unlike the CADT, a CADC is not a title, but grants certain resource-rights to its holder (DENR Admin. Order no. 2, s. 1993).

⁴¹ CADT no. 158, issued on 3 September 2008, covering 25,895 has. (see <http://202.57.46.78/adis/Public/ApprovedCADTsRegion.aspx?Region=Region%2013>, accessed 21 September 2011).

The Meeting at Mahagsay

I found myself travelling to Mahagsay in the company of Eddie Badbaran, the chair of the Tagdumahan; and his second cousin, Ruel Badbaran, a former activist, organizer and chair of the Tagdumahan, now working in San Luis town hall as a personal assistant to the vice-mayor. Ruel was representing the municipal local government in the meeting. In my conversations with them before and during the trip, I found that they were both wary of the *katangkawan*'s plan.

The venue was Mahagsay's Social Hall, a barn-like structure with a wooden stage at one end and risers along the sides, framing a central area of compacted earth. It had an upper storey which then billeted soldiers. There were few people there when Eddie, Ruel and I reached it. A few minutes later, someone announced the *katangkawan* was coming, and I turned to see his lean figure, wearing his *datu*'s beaded headscarf, walking towards the hall. He had an escort of seven men, all armed with rifles. After ritually cleansing me, Ruel and Eddie with a chicken, the *katangkawan* surprised me by sitting beside me. He asked how I was, and I said I was fine. He tried to recall the last time we had met. That would have been a public forum where his fellow-Banwaon accused him of human-rights violations, but I decided not to mention this. Then he asked if I was still with the Legal Rights Center, an NGO I co-founded to provide legal assistance to indigenous communities. I said I was on its board of directors. He nodded. I took the opportunity to inform him that I was conducting fieldwork for my thesis, and would like to work with him in that project. He said, '*I think [there will be] no problem with that*'. He excused himself to join in a second ritual, for the success of the day's meeting. This was conducted at the entrance of the social hall, affording a view of logs being floated down the Ma-asam River.

The meeting began at 10.00. The wall behind the stage now bore an NCIP banner, large sheets of paper outlining its procedures, and a small map of San Luis. In front of the stage was a long table covered with a white table-

cloth, where Banwaon leaders, and NCIP and local government officials sat. There was a smaller table in front of the risers on the right, where NCIP staff sat. The audience sat on the risers. Sitting scattered among them were soldiers or militiamen, leaning on their firearms. I estimated attendance at around forty adults. I did not see representatives from the many Banwaon villages linked to the Tagdumahan.

The meeting was chaired by Gaga Dinglayan of the Municipal NCIP office. She asked Tony Saya-saya, the Barangay Captain of Mahagsay to give a 'welcome address'. He recognized Lt. Marlon Daguio, commanding officer of Bravo Company, the 26th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army; the *katangkawan*, introduced as the 'supreme datu' of the Banwaon, an Atty. Ferdausi Serna, legal officer of the NCIP regional office; Elvira Cataburan, a Regional NCIP official; another NCIP official from the provincial level; Nilo Manpatilan, representing the provincial government; Ruel Badbaran, representing the municipal government; and Forester Lucero Uwayan of the San Luis DENR Satellite Office. He thanked them all for their presence, and hoped for a fruitful meeting.

Dinglayan called on the *katangkawan*—whom she addressed as 'Supreme Datu'—to speak. Now wearing a shirt of dark blue with designs in red and white appliqué, in addition to his headscarf, he spoke in Bisaya, describing this meeting as an '*assembly of the tribe of the Ma-asam [river]*' in support of the application for title over their 'ancestral domain' (Figure 6, p. 269). He wished for a sustained effort in the processing of the application, which he hoped would bring about their '*peaceful residence*' in their territory. He added:

We now need to relate with the government. For it is through the government that we fulfil the Kiyala ha Batasan. What was not good in 2008, we now drive away. For 2009, let us think about how we can unite, so the government will be encouraged to help us. We have been separated from the government for too long.

He went on to stress the need for development, before adding:

[The right to own our] ancestral territory has been our long-held dream. Today, the government is now giving us what we dream of. Now we can benefit from our ancestral domain.

In conclusion, he issued another call for unity behind the application for title.

The NCIP officials then addressed the assembly. Gaga Dinglayan acknowledged receipt of the CADT application, but said the applicants still need to secure support from the people of Barangays Mahagsay, Sta. Rita, Nuevo Trabajo and San Pedro. Elvira Cataburan, a regional NCIP official, stressed that through the IPRA's titling procedure, the people can secure their rights to their land. She cited an administrative regulation which provided for the creation of the Special Provincial Task Force on Ancestral Domains (SPTFAD), composed of representatives of government agencies and an NGO. To my surprise, she asked me if I was willing to be the NGO representative. Now I saw why I had been invited. Even as I realized the opportunities this opened up for my fieldwork, I said I needed to consult the other members of the LRC's Board of Directors. Atty. Serna then gave a lecture on the 'four principal rights' of indigenous peoples. He focused on the 'right to ancestral domains', which is based on the principle that 'ancestral domains' are 'private lands' under 'native title.' He added that the title will not be in the name of the 'Supreme Datu' but '*in the name of the tribe*'; '*you will all be the owners ... not the individual*'.

Ruel Badbaran was asked to speak. He said he did not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the municipal local government, but assured the assembly that the town's officials will respect the communities' decisions about their land. Gaga Dinglayan asked him if he would join the titling project, seeming to presume that Ruel could speak for the Badbaran family. Ruel smiled, but said he was here to represent the municipality, not his family.

Elvira Cataburan then discussed the procedure for a CADT application. She emphasized that '*we will not force [anyone to join the titling project if they do*

not want to]. She proposed to begin work on the application with ‘*sektoral mapping*’.

Mapping

After a break, there was an ‘open forum’. The *katangkawan* stood up to talk about the scope of the claim-area covered by his CADT application. Referring to his version of the Tagdumahan, he said, ‘*MABANTAG had been holding meetings about the boundaries even before meeting with the NCIP*’, and that it was agreed that the claim-area will include the area around Mahagsay, but not Mahayahay, covered by BenHur Mansolohay’s CADT.

Three elderly men expressed their desire to join the titling project. Someone suggested that the Libang River area should also be included. The provincial government representative, Nilo Manpatilan, said that area was already covered by the ancestral domain claim of the Manpatilan family. A *datu* from the Libang River area declared, ‘*[I am] OK either way ... as long as [my lands are] included [in someone’s title]*’. Cataburan said that Banwaon from the Libang River area should come to a written agreement with the Manpatilan family.

Jesus Manlapinding of Mahagsay said he was the younger brother of Datu Batoy Manlapinding. He declared that their father had been the first to make farm-clearings in the Mahagsay area. Then he said he speaks for Datu Batoy, and will inform him he has decided to include their *sektor* in the titling project. I glanced at Eddie Badbaran, and saw he was tensing with anger. Cataburan said ‘*local disputes over property should be submitted to a council of elders*’, before being sent on to the NCIP. She added, ‘*if there are those of you who won’t join [the project], we will respect [your decision]. If siblings cannot come to an agreement, we will take [their sektor] out from the claim-area. There must be consensus within the clan.*’ Manlapinding said Datu Batoy was only adopted, implying he had a better right to decide on the

matter. Cataburan insisted he should refer the matter to the elders. Eddie was appeased.

Then Cesar Manbalalay said he was from the village of Agduka, and can speak for its people. He declared, '*Agduka will join [in the application for title]*'. Cataburan said he should submit a letter from the community declaring their intention to join the project, and naming him as their representative. Manbalalay seemed nonplussed.

Three other elders signalled their intention to join the project.

Joel Napongahan, the *katangkawan's* tall, burly brother, then stood up and rather aggressively asked old, frail Alipio Mancandado if he was joining the titling project. Mancandado replied, '*I agree [to join the application]*'. After a pause, he added, '*But I will have to ask what my family, and what the people of Sta. Rita think first, so there will be no criticism [of me]*'. After another pause, he very quietly said, '*I cannot decide [until then]*'.

Ruel Badbaran was asked to speak. He said he appreciated all he saw and heard today. Again, Cataburan asked him if he could bring the Badbaran family into the titling project, but he said could not decide for his family. Shortly after, the meeting was adjourned for lunch.

We reconvened at around 14.30. There was discussion around a table where the perimeters of the claim-area were being hand-drawn by Forester Uwayan on the basis of informants' descriptions of their consolidated *sektors*. Gradually, the area covered by the *katangkawan's* application came to include the land from the ridgeline of the Pantaron mountain range in the west, down to Barangays Nuevo Trabajo and San Pedro in the east, and along the line of the Libang River to the north, and of the Adgawan River to the south, covering around 70 % of the entire land area of San Luis. At 16.00, Cataburan pronounced herself satisfied with the map, and the conference was adjourned.

Conversation at Kinayang Creek

On the way home from the meeting, we paused at Kinayang Creek. Ruel said he was happy to have seen what the *katangkawan* planned. Thinking of my project, I said that with their permission, I would accept the NCIP's invitation to serve on the SPTFAD, where I could help ensure transparency. They approved the idea. Eddie then recalled how the *katangkawan*'s allies had tried to manoeuvre the Manlapinding *sektor* and the territory of Agduka village into the claim-area. I asked for clarification. Ruel said Datu Batoy held the Manlapinding *sektor*, not Jesus; and he doubted that Cesar Manbalalay could actually speak for Agduka village. I asked about Alipio Mancandado's case. Eddie said we should talk to him to see what he thinks. I (AG) was then surprised by a sudden turn in the conversation:

Ruel: Can a clan file a CADT application?

AG: Yes, as long as they have evidence of ownership of the area they are claiming as 'ancestral'.

Ruel: I am thinking that we should apply for our own CADT.

I had not imagined Ruel would be interested in titling. The Tagdumahan had previously declared that the Banwaon did not need titles, and that if the state truly wished to recognise their ownership of ancestral lands, it should respect their indigenous laws, the *Kiyala ha Batasan* [B], instead of imposing its own laws, and its alien notions of land and resource tenure. As a former chair of Tagdumahan, I expected he would take this position. Now, however he excitedly outlined the boundaries of the *sektor* of the Badbaran family, which I understood to be quite extensive.

AG: Why [would you apply for a CADT]?

Ruel: So our lands cannot be taken [from us].

Eddie: Isn't that against our principles?

Ruel: We have the right to self-determination [among our principles].

Eddie: Yes, but ... one does not need a title to own one's ancestral territory.

Ruel: [I am talking about] the lands of the Badbaran clan only, not the entire territory of the Banwaon [people].

Eddie: We might be trapped in applying [for a title].

This exchange was extremely interesting, but in a bid to set up a wider discussion of the subject, I remarked that this was an important issue which should be discussed with other Banwaon leaders. Ruel agreed, but I could see he was excited by the idea of titling his family's lands. They decided that the Tagdumahan should meet to discuss the *katangkawan's* CADT application in Tabon-tabon village, in February.

Drawing towards the State

The presence of regional, provincial and municipal officials at the meeting was striking, contrasting starkly with most Banwaons' everyday experience, where contact with the government is generally limited to the military and its paramilitary proxies. For the Banwaon present, the fact that these officials had left their distant offices to undertake the long, hard ride to meet the *katangkawan* reinforced his authority and lent weight to his project. It demonstrated his access to key government agencies, demonstrated by how these officials sat with the *katangkawan* at a table set apart from the rest of the assembly by its location. Lt. Daguio had not joined the officials at the table, but then everybody already knew of the *katangkawan's* links to the military.

In his speech, the *katangkawan* described the titling project as a way of achieving peace and prosperity, consciously or unconsciously echoing the military's then on-going campaign for 'peace and development'. His words suggested that development lay in forging closer links with the government. He also spoke of the titling project as an opportunity to achieve what the

Banwaon and other indigenous groups had long struggled for. When I first met him, more than a decade ago, the *katangkawan* had been an indigenous rights activist and organizer before ‘jumping across’ to become a paramilitary leader. When he spoke of ownership of Banwaon territory as being ‘our long-held dream’, he was articulating the affective bonds between his people and their land, and the desire to protect it. The project was thus framed as the state’s response to this aspiration, the culmination of their struggles. Implicit in this representation of the Banwaons’ history of activism and struggle was the idea that since the government had now given them what they had fought for, they no longer had any reason to support the government’s enemy, the NPA.

The focus of the discussions was on who wanted to join the titling project. My impression was that the several Banwaon elders who expressed interest in joining it truly wanted to have their lands included under a CADT; one of them not even caring whose title it was, as long as his lands were covered. I have to say though that they were mostly from further upriver from Mahagsay, and I did not know them as well as the leaders in Tagdumahan. In contrast to their apparently spontaneous interest in joining the project were the actuations of Cesar Manbalalay and Jesus Manlapinding, allies of the *katangkawan*. These two represented themselves as authorized to speak for the people of Agduka, and for the Manlapinding *sektor*, respectively. The *katangkawan*’s brother Joel also tried to intimidate Alipio Mancandado into bringing his *sektor* into the project. These manoeuvres suggest an awareness of the existence of ‘problem areas’, where the *katangkawan* has to resort to rather dubious means to expand the claim-area of the titling project. We shall explore the reason behind these actuations later in this chapter, which also has to do with why so many other Banwaon communities were not represented in the meeting. Unfortunately for the *katangkawan* and his allies, the regional NCIP officials insisted that they needed to authenticate their authority, and the consent of their supposed constituencies to the project. On the other hand, the municipal NCIP officials, apparently more amenable to the *katangkawan*’s plans, joined in the effort to build up the

claim-area by repeatedly pressing Ruel Badbaran to bring his family's *sektor* into the project.

The Meeting at Tabon-tabon

The Tagdumahan meeting to discuss the *katangkawan's* CADT application was set on 7 February. Early that morning, well before the meeting, Eddie Badbaran called at the house where I was billeted. He informed me that it had been decided that the Tagdumahan will announce that as an organisation, it will apply for a title of its own. Eddie explained that the Tagdumahan's application was a way of opposing the *katangkawan's* plan, as their *sektors* would now have to be excluded from his intended claim-area. However, they will not actually pursue the application beyond the announcement. Surprised and confused, I asked why they do not simply join the titling project. Eddie shook his head angrily, saying, '*That cannot be done.*' Why, I persisted. '*We really cannot trust [the katangkawan]*', he answered. I wanted to press him further, but instead asked why they did not make a genuine CADT application. '*We do not have the means*', replied Eddie. We talked about some other aspects of the meeting, but I later returned to their plan, and asked just what their position on the issue was. Eddie answered, '*Basta, we have agreed that our position on land [ownership] is that it is communal.*' What did that mean? '*A single person truly cannot claim the lands of a people. That is against the Kiyala [ha Batasan]*', he declared, referring to the body of Banwaon customary law. I pointed out that many *sektors* are owned by individuals. He responded: '*The sektors are a different issue. We are talking about the territory here. The territory ... cannot be controlled by only one [person]*'.

Later, I joined the assembly at Tabon-tabon's Social Hall. The thirty or so participants sat in a loose circle, on chairs, the floor or the low stage that ran along three sides of the interior. I recognized many community leaders present. Rudy Badbaran, a Tagdumahan official, called the meeting to order. It began with a prayer led by a representative of the RGS sisters.

Leaders from twelve villages were present, eleven of which had not been represented at Mahagsay. A certain Lisa of KARAPATAN, a left-wing human-rights watchdog was also present. I was introduced as a ‘consultant’ of the Tagdumahan.

The meeting began with a request for updates from the various communities represented. Datu Batoy said that the *katangkawan* had tried to settle his differences with Balit—arising from his brother’s 2007 grenade-attack on their Barangay Captain—but that he continued to distrust him. Many of the leaders reported that they were being pressurised to join the state’s paramilitary forces, or the *katangkawan*’s titling project. Lisa was called on to relate these reported events to developments at regional, national and global levels. She focused on the paramilitary units being organized by the military which people were pressurized to join, or else ‘death-squads’ would be loosed on them. The meeting was adjourned for lunch, after which I was asked to discuss the IPRA and its titling procedure. There was intense interest in my presentation. Eddie then reported the scope of the *katangkawan*’s CADT claim. A grim silence followed.

Old Datu Manlanganan immediately declared he was against any titling, saying it would confuse him.

Datu Batoy then presented the plan for Tagdumahan to apply for a title of its own. Most of the participants fell silent at this, perhaps surprised. Lisa objected, saying in so many words that this plan amounted to surrender to the state. Sumpangolon agreed with her, remarking, ‘*We will be [placed] under the government!*’.

Datu Batoy countered:

‘This is not a surrender, this is a manoeuvre. What else can we do, now that we are [positioned] between two clashing [forces]? The Tagdumahan will be cleared [of suspicion of being a rebel front] only if it applies for a CADT [under state law]. This is a way of asserting the Kiyala [ha Batasan].’

Bagutot Badbaran expressed support for the plan. I asked Datu Batoy how the IPRA and Banwaon indigenous law, the *Kiyala ha Batasan* can be reconciled here. Rather cryptically, he said: *'In principle, they contravene [each other], in action, they do not'.*

Lisa jumped back in, questioning the plan. Someone commented that because of this plan, *'maybe the season of killings will return'*, referring to the period from around 2005 to 2007, when there were many killings and other human-rights violations attributed to paramilitaries or the death-squad said to be controlled by the *katangkawan*. Eddie Badbaran said it was time to assert their identity as civilians, and as citizens with rights under law. Intense discussion over the possible adverse reaction of the *katangkawan* followed.

Finally, another man declared:

What we want to ensure is that [our lands] are not included in [the katangkawan's CADT application]. It would be alright if it were like the past, when his principles were like ours. Well, [they have] now [strayed] far [from ours]. We cannot trust him anymore. We are unsure of him [We have] no problem [with joining in] a unified [CADT] application, as long as it is not with [the katangkawan].

This shifted the talk to the scope of the proposed application, which Eddie suggested could be discussed tomorrow. The assembly agreed, and the meeting was adjourned.

Counter-Mapping

Eddie Badbaran again came over early in the morning to ask me to a meeting in the village schoolhouse. There, I found Datu Batoy, Magal Manseliohan and other Tagdumahan officials waiting. Datu Batoy said that to make the lawful character of the Tagdumahan clear, it should be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The organization's name however will be changed to *Tuod ko mga Laas* (roughly,

‘the righteous elders’). Datu Batoy asked me if I could help them in this. I said, ‘yes’, but added that I had my own request, for their consent to my research project. Someone asked me what I intended to do. I outlined my interests and plans, stressing that I wished to work in Tabon-tabon and Balit. After a brief pause, Datu Batoy said they will consider my request, and inform me of their decision in due time. I thanked them, then asked again if applying for a CADT contravened the *Kiyala ha Batasan*. Datu Batoy replied:

[The CADT application] truly contravenes [the Kiyala ha Batasan] That is why we will only declare that we will apply [for a CADT]. We will not actually go through the procedure.

I then asked how the law contravened the *Kiyala ha Batasan*. Magal Manseliohan explained, ‘*There were no titles in the past, Attorney; there are [no titles] in [our] culture*’. I countered that there was a Higaunon group in Bukidnon province that argued that their ancestors had enjoined them to protect their land, and if applying for a title protected their land, then they should do so. Datu Batoy shook his head: ‘*You know the story of Palamgowan and Palagsulat, Attorney.*’ I nodded. He went on: ‘*[That story teaches that] what is needed is respect for indigenous culture*’; meaning the state should not compel the Banwaon to conform to its laws, but respect the Banwaons’ own. I said, ‘*I thought your outlook was towards kombinasyon*’; i.e., the ‘combination’ of selected aspects of non-indigenous culture into their indigenous framework. Datu Batoy grunted assent, but added: ‘*But it is the people who decide what to accept and what not [to accept]. Na?*’ He was suggesting that titling was not something they would accept. I yielded.

The meeting reconvened an hour later, beginning with a general discussion of the plan Datu Batoy unveiled yesterday. From the comments I heard, it seemed that everyone now understood that the announced CADT application was ‘fake’. The representatives from the further villages said they expected a ‘storm’—insurgent’s jargon for government military operations—when the *katangkawan* learns about the Tagdumahan’s response. Delegates from other villages said they were willing to face any

consequences, *'as long as [their lands] were not included in [the CADT application] of ... [the katangkawan]'*.

Elderly Datu Bi-ay said the *katangkawan* had rights to his *sektor*, but not to the territory. I wondered aloud if the *katangkawan* was only applying for a CADT in his capacity as 'supreme datu' of the Banwaon people. He answered, *'Being katangkawan has nothing to do with land[ownership]'*.

Eddie Badbaran proposed to map the outline of the 'fake' Tagdumahan claim. There was great interest in this, and over the next few hours, they drew a map on a chalkboard, based on descriptions of the participants' respective *sektors* (Figure 7, p. 70). Whilst this 'counter-mapping' (Peluso 1995: 384) proceeded, two Tagdumahan officials drafted a short letter to the NCIP, to inform the agency of the supposed application. When the map was finished, it was presented to the assembly. As drawn, the 'fake' application reduced the *katangkawan's* claim-area by at least 60%. Moreover, it almost completely cut off his claim-area's western end, along the Pantaron range, from its eastern end, at Barangays Nuevo Trabajo and San Pedro. The letter drafted by Tagdumahan officials was also read to the assembly. Its most significant provisions were the following:

1. *"We respect the right and decision of ... [the katangkawan] ... to apply for a CADT over [his] ancestral lands.*
2. *"We declare and inform the office of the NCIP of this, our united stand on our ancestral lands included in the CADT application of ... [the katangkawan], that we do not agree to ... their application for a CADT, because we have our own unified application for a CADT, for the development of [our] tribe."*

The letter was approved. When the participants were asked to sign or thumb-mark the resolution, however, a few refused. Eddie Badbaran was assigned the task of delivering it to the municipal NCIP office.

Drawing Away from the Katangkawan

In contrast to the meeting in Mahagsay, there were no government officials in Tabon-tabon. There were no rituals, other than the prayer led by the RGS representative, which everyone took in stride, with the equanimity of practicing religious pluralists.

The question of whether or not the *katangkawan's* CADT application was acceptable was never explicitly raised; the meeting proceeded with the clear but unarticulated premise that it was not. The only issue was finding an appropriate response to it. There were indications of a marked distrust of the *katangkawan*, as seen in the statements of a number of participants. This suggests that opposition to the plan was partly a consequence of the *katangkawan's* involvement; i.e., had the idea for titling come from some other leader, Tagdumahan leaders might consider joining in. Indeed, one man said he was not opposed to titling, provided it did not involve the *katangkawan*. We recall as well Ruel Badbaran's excitement over the idea of titling.

Most participants however were opposed to titling. Old Datu Manlanganan's spontaneous reaction to Eddie's description of the *katangkawan's* project was to oppose it, saying it only confused him. When Datu Batoy proposed the plan, Sumpangolon objected, saying it would put them all 'under the government'. These are two differing perspectives on titling, though both lead to opposition to the project: Sumpangolon was a former-member of the NPA's militia-unit, and I suspect his opposition was rooted in Communist doctrine, which rejects all government authority. Indeed, he made his statement in support of Lisa's immediate objections, which was also rooted in radical-left ideology. In contrast, old Datu Manlanganan represents a more traditional Banwaon attitude, which valorises personal and familial autonomy, expressed in a preference for a free, unrestricted life unencumbered by organizational hierarchies and obligations, rules and procedures. For him, titling would mean going through tedious processes, ending with a regime of rules that would bureaucratize his 'simple' life. The tenacity and

pervasiveness of this notion of personal autonomy is evident in the very nature of the Tagdumahan itself: It is a loose association, functioning mainly as a forum for discussion, with little organizational discipline. Anything more structured than that would be too much encroachment on members' autonomy, and they would abandon the association; as the Tagdumahan officials feared they would over the logging issue, discussed in the previous chapter.

We have noted Datu Batoy's express distrust of the *katangkawan*, but I believe his opposition goes beyond that personal level, and is rooted in his understanding of the relationship between the Banwaons' *Kiyala ha Batasan* and the law and authority of the state. For him, the Banwaon are supposed to live in accordance with the *Kiyala ha Batasan*, and since it makes no positive provisions for the titling of ancestral territories, it is implied that seeking or securing one is prohibited. This recalls the principle of *olag*, discussed in Chapter 2. This is also another argument for a categorical rejection of the *katangkawan*'s—or anyone's—application for a CADT. This argument however was constructed in relation to the *katangkawan*'s project of titling the entire territory. Here we note the statements by Eddie Badbaran and the elder Datu Bi-ay, to the effect that no one person can claim ownership of Banwaon territory. It is unclear if it will apply as well to the titling of *sektor* by their respective owners, given the autonomy landowners are accorded over the use and disposition of their property under Banwaon law. Ruel Badbaran seems to believe that the *sektor*-owner's rights include titling his/her own holdings. And indeed, the Tagdumahan's letter concedes this right to the *katangkawan*, with respect to his *sektor*.

In contrast to the Mahagsay meeting, development did not figure at all in the discussions. Of greater concern to the participants was the question of security. It seemed that for the participants, the titling project was as much about asserting their rights over their *sektor* as about emphasising the lawful character of the Tagdumahan, as seen in their request for assistance in SEC registration. Perhaps the leaders felt that the project's invocation of state law challenged the legitimacy and legality of the Tagdumahan, weakening its

ability to speak for the Banwaon. More importantly, many participants anticipated that the *katangkawan* would respond with violence once he learns of the Tagdumahan's decision, so that a few even refused to sign or thumb-mark their letter. This concern helps explain aspects of the plan for a 'fake' application. To reduce the risk of reprisals, the letter sought to be diplomatic, recognizing the *katangkawan's* right to his *sektor*, and to have it titled, if he wished. It opposed his plan not by questioning his right, but by seeming to follow his lead and applying for their own title over their lands, as the law allowed them to. By invoking state law, the Tagdumahan showed it is not opposed to the state and its laws, only to inclusion in the *katangkawan's* project. At the same time, there is no violation of the *Kiyala ha Batasan* because the Tagdumahan would not actually go through the titling process; hence Datu Batoy's statement that the plan contravenes the *Kiyala ha Batasan* only in word, but not in deed. The 'fake' character of the Tagdumahan application also allows them to avoid possible criticism from the insurgents, who cannot accuse them of 'going over' to the side of the state. The Tagdumahan were thus tracing a path between state, *katangkawan* and the NPA. All in all, it was a rather clever plan.

The Aftermath

After the meeting at Tabon-tabon, I began preparing for my role in the SPTFAD, believing this offered me the interstitial position I wanted between the *katangkawan* and the Tagdumahan. I expected that on receipt of the Tagdumahan letter, the NCIP would call one or more meetings where the two groups could state and discuss their views, and possibly even negotiate a compromise. Even if these talks should fail, I would have been well-situated to observe the discussions. Unfortunately, the NCIP simply dropped the *katangkawan's* application when it received the Tagdumahan letter. Worse, contacts among the Banwaon, within the NGO network, and the *katangkawan's* friends from his activist days anxiously informed me that he was very angry with me, accusing me of attending the Mahagsay meeting only to provide information to the Tagdumahan and help them come up with

their plan. My contacts all advised me to look to my personal security. I immediately sent out feelers to the *katangkawan*, to arrange a meeting where I could explain my side of the events. My efforts were overshadowed by the subsequent arrest of Arbie Napongahan, the *katangkawan*'s brother, for drunkenly challenging a policeman to a gun-duel in a ramshackle karaoke-bar in San Luis town-centre. All the *katangkawan*'s attention was on his brother's case after that, and I realized I had little hope of attracting his attention. Fortunately for my project, I received the Tagdumahan's consent some two weeks after the Tabon-tabon meeting.

I was not the only object of the *katangkawan*'s anger, however. As expected—and despite all the care and craft that went into the making of their plan—the Tagdumahan's response drew his hostility towards the organization. Informants described him as having been put to shame (*naulawan*) before the NCIP and other government agencies by the rejection of his plan, because it dramatically exposed his lack of support or respect among his own people, despite his claims to being their 'supreme datu'. Over the following months, several Banwaon sources reported the *katangkawan*, his relatives and supporters as saying that all those who had signed the letter, or even just attended the meeting at Tabon-tabon would be '[placed in the] heat' (*initan*), or more bluntly, 'killed'. For instance, Ruel Badbaran reported having a heated exchange with Bagwis Domogan—the *katangkawan*'s son-in-law and reportedly the head of a local military intelligence-unit—shortly after the Tagdumahan's letter was submitted to the NCIP. Ruel recalled that after ranting about the letter, Domogan had hinted darkly, '*Maybe the [season of] conflict will return*'; to which Ruel retorted, '*Does it mean that you will now [wage] war on us, who did not join [your project]?*' Domogan had not replied.

Part of the vehemence of the *katangkawan*'s reaction came from how the Tagdumahan's response endangered his larger political project. I think the *katangkawan* was trying to reinvent himself from paramilitary proxy of the military to a mediatory figure between Philippine state and Banwaon society. To the latter, he presented himself as well-connected to the state and its

agents, in a position to intercede in their behalf. Thus, at the Mahagsay meeting, sat among government officials, at a table separated from the audience spatially by distance, and visually by decoration. In the process, he is redefining the role of the *katangkawan* from a mediator between feuding kin-groups to mediator between state and society; reproducing the ethnic hierarchy of the frontier, but producing a mediatory role for himself between the levels of this hierarchy. To note, there have been similar attempts by ambitious 'leaders' (Tsing 1993: 72) elsewhere in Mindanao to transform traditional leadership through the invention of the 'supreme datu' or 'supreme tribal chieftain' in order to establish privileged access to the state (Paredes 1997: 141, also Wenk Bruehlmann 2012: 197). At any rate, the *katagkawan* is presented to the state as the 'supreme datu' of the Banwaon, who can speak for his people. At the meeting, officials were treated to the sight of Banwaon elders declaring unity of purpose with the *katangkawan*, 'authentic' ethnic attire, and the rituals, all of which underlined his authenticity and authority. Finally, there were his forty or so paramilitaries, whose presence supported his claim to government-support by showing their participation in the state's counter-insurgency program (following Abinales 2000a: 206). The Tagdumahan's rejection of the *katangkawan*'s project however threw doubt on his credibility as the Banwaon 'supreme datu'.

The *katangkawan*'s positioning between state and society means that, in a context where government authority is unstable, he represents the state, enabling him to present his personal interests as those of the state. This view is reflected in an exchange I overheard in Nakadayas village. Someone reported that everyone who had signed the Tagdumahan letter would be considered by the *katangkawan* to have 'violated [the law]' (*nakalapas*), at which another commented, 'There was no violation. They just say that there was a violation because [the letter] contravened their plan'. The *katangkawan*'s practice of con-fusing his own and the state's interests was so well-known that the Tagdumahan tried to anticipate it by saying they were not opposed to the state and its laws, but only to the titling project in their letter; and by 'legalizing' the organization through registration with the SEC under a new name. Unfortunately these measures were insufficient to

protect the organization from the *katangkawan*, who treated the rejection of his project as if it were an act of subversion of the state, deserving of retaliatory violence, as will be seen in Chapter 7.

Titling as Dispossession

I later learned that many people saw the *katangkawan* as covetous of other's *sektors*, a view not aired at the Tabon-tabon meeting, though it may have been implicit in the discussions. I found this assessment articulated repeatedly and emphatically throughout my fieldwork. Old Datu Manlanganan, for instance, considered the titling-project as a 'land-grabbing [scheme]' (*pagpangilog sa yuta*), a means of seizing control of timber and other resources. Referring to the *katangkawan*, he explained that, '*people now see that there is money in land. So they seek to expand their [land] claims, to gain more timber and rattan.*' In a conversation I had with Datu Manbalanio, he said of the *katangkawan*: '*He wants to hog the [dinner] table*' (*Ingon niya solohon ang la mesa*). Then he added, '*Well. I am against his plan.*' Why, I asked. '*It is important that we govern our own lands*', he replied, asserting family-autonomy over their *sektor*. These views strongly indicate that the titling project was partly seen as an attempt at dispossession, and opposition thus represented a defense of property rights.

Hall, et al. (2011) call attention to actors' use of 'powers' in their negotiations over property rights. First among four principal powers they identified were market forces (id.: 17-18), by which they refer to economic factors that affect access to land. We saw from the previous chapter that the value of land here is not in its productivity, but in how it establishes ownership over commercially-valuable timber-stands. 'Micro-capitalism' (Li 2010: 400, citing Davis 2006) operates here in terms of logging rather than agriculture. To accumulate capital in the form of timber, it would seem necessary to purchase other *sektors*. Landowners in the hinterlands however are offended by the idea of buying or selling land, as pointed out in Chapter 3. The only other way to appropriate *sektors* would be to encapsulate them

under a single title, which is precisely what the *katangkawan*'s project proposes to do. We shall return to this in the discussion of force, below.

In terms of the 'power' of regulations or law (Hall, et al. 2011: 15-16), the *katangkawan* invoked the IPRA. The Tagdumahan countered with Banwaon indigenous law, the *Kiyala ha Batasan*. Closely linked to the choice of legal framework are the legitimising discourses (id.: 18-19) each side deploys. The *katangkawan* invoked the need for development, linked to the government and its modernizing laws (see Duncan 2004). The Tagdumahan however saw this merely as cover for his designs on the territory. They invoked two major discourses to counter the titling project: First, was the notion that titling, particularly of the territory, contravenes the *Kiyala ha Batasan*. They assert that the Banwaon should live in accordance with the *Kiyala ha Batasan*, and since it does not provide for titling of lands, titling of lands is inappropriate. Months after the Tabon-tabon meeting, Magal Manseliohan recalled a chance-encounter with the *katangkawan*, who had angrily asked him why the Tagdumahan had rejected his titling project, when they had been struggling to protect their territory for so long. He had replied that the 'ancestral domain' they were fighting for was '*outside the state*' (*gawas sa estado*), not within it; titling was inappropriate as it brought the territory into the state. Asked for clarification, he said, '*kay kultura man ang ipabarog*' (lit., 'culture is made to stand', but more at 'we assert our culture [as against state law]'); reiterating the separation between Banwaon culture and state law and authority. In this connection, we recall old Datu Manlanganan's spontaneous rejection of titling, representing a preference for the life free of rules and hierarchies his ancestors enjoyed. Second, was the radical-left critique of the state, which calls for the rejection of all forms of government authority, and sees registration of persons (e.g., the Tagdumahan as a corporate entity) or property (e.g., Banwaon territory) with state agencies as submission to that authority. Here we recall the adverse reaction of ex-insurgent Sumpangolon to the Tagdumahan's plan, before he learned that the application would be 'fake'. Interestingly, these discourses come from two directions—indigenous and Marxist—yet they both lead to opposition to the titling project. When I pointed this out to Magal

Manseliohan, he nodded, saying, *'It is as if they have come to an agreement'*.

Finally, there is the 'power' of force (id.: 16-17). No violence was involved in the proposal or resolution of the titling issue, but the Tagdumahan leaders were very aware of the *katangkawan's* military and political power. With such power, he and his allies could very easily control other Banwaon. When I said that under the law, a CADT is a 'communal' title—which meant that the *katangkawan* could not become the sole owner of all Banwaon territory through a CADT application—Magal Manseliohan replied, *'Sila gihapon ang na'y control; mamahimo ta'g elemento lang' ([the katangkawan] will still have control; we will be mere elements.)*. Manseliohan's use of the term 'elemento' is suggestive. It is military jargon for the individual soldiers in a squad or section. It denotes one who must obey commands, and connotes social relations structured as a military or autocratic hierarchy. This means a loss of personal autonomy that runs counter to the Banwaons' egalitarian social values. As one leader said: *'I cannot agree to becoming a mere running-dog [of the katangkawan] (Di' ko mosugot nga mahimong itoy-itoy lang sa kadugayan.)*. Thus, even though the *katangkawan's* titling project was inclusive, with him urging everyone to join him as his putative co-owners of their to-be-titled territory, the reality of stark asymmetries in power between himself and the rest of his people meant he could easily exclude them later from their properties. In other words, inclusion in the project meant coming under the authority and power of the *katangkawan*, setting them up for future exclusion.

My sense is that the very idea of having the entire territory covered by a single title was threatening, in that the various *sektor* would be 'papered over', subsumed under a single title. Decisions over land and resources would then have to be negotiated between the co-owners, one of whom had access to guns and men willing to use them. How fair could such negotiations be? Despite the law's assurances, 'ancestral domains' can in effect be titled to one man, if he were powerful enough to dominate his co-owners. In sum, processes of dispossession can be more subtle and

complex than the cases described by Hall, et al. in their chapter on ‘intimate exclusions’ (2011: 145 et seq.), being bound up in this case with larger struggles over economic and political autonomy.

Cosmologies and the Personal

Busse and Strang (2011: 4) see ownership as a form of symbolic communication by which parties articulate and negotiate social and political relations. I read this to mean that the positions taken by actors contending over property reflect their respective political cosmologies, their visions of appropriate relations between themselves and the state. Property ownership then is a lens by which we gain insight into the broader political significance of contests over property. In their mapping and counter-mapping of the land, the Tagdumahan and the *katangkawan* engage in a ‘politics of cosmology’ (Corlin 2000). In the *katangkawan*’s political cosmology, Banwaon society is brought closer to the Philippine state, and on to peace and development; ideally with himself in the strategic mediatory role between them. In the political cosmology of the Tagdumahan leaders, the Banwaon should have political and cultural autonomy from the state. Its laws should not be imposed on them; they should instead be accorded the freedom to practice their own notions of political and property relations. For still others perhaps, it may be the utopia promised by the radical- and underground-left. Titling as a concept and practice is thus, *contra* Eder and McKenna (2004), deeply and politically problematical.

Political cosmologies aside, however, there is also the personal factor at play in this case. Tagdumahan leaders *also* rejected the titling project because of its association with the *katangkawan*. Some feared it was an attempt of an avaricious man to seize control of their *sektors*. Many simply do not trust him; as can be seen from the statements of several of my sources. The *katangkawan*’s involvement in counter-insurgency operations has alienated him from many of his people, particularly those aligned with the Tagdumahan, who since 2003 have suffered much at his hands, as noted in

Chapter 1. This explains why so many villages did not send representatives to the Mahagsay meeting; or indeed to a *domalongdong*—a major political ritual—organized a few months later by the *katangkawan*. This lack of popular support among his own people was dramatised by the huge hole carved into the *katangkawan*'s proposed claim-area by the Tagdumahan's refusal to participate in his project. The *katangkawan* and his allies are aware of his weak popular support, and perhaps this is why at Mahagsay they resorted to dubious means to manoeuvre the Manlapinding family, Agduka village, Alipio Mancandado, and through pressure on Ruel, the Badbaran *sektor*, into the titling project. Unfortunately for them, their tactics were unavailing.

We see how the state's counter-insurgency program has shaped responses to the issue of titling: The experience of state violence coloured local perceptions of the IPRA, which was not seen as the radical piece of social justice legislation it was intended to be. Because of its association with a man who embodies not just the state but the violence of its counter-insurgency program, land-titling could only be seen as another means of extending his power, and the state's. Extending power, after all, is what he does. What was nominally a dispute over whether or not Banwaon territory can and should be titled was thus politicised as a struggle, not only over rights to land and timber, but for autonomy itself. As we saw, people feared that once the territory was titled, they would be reduced to mere 'elements' under the command of the *katangkawan*. Titling thus had to be rejected as a threat to autonomy.

CHAPTER 5

From the Forest to the Village

Culture and Anticipated Violence

The French anthropologist Montano, who travelled through the Agusan Region in the late 19th century, described the area as '*le pais de terreur*' (Garvan 1929: 139). Today, in the early 21st century, much of the Agusan Region remains a 'land of terror'. The causes for this terror, however, have changed. In Montano's time, it was attributed to the frequent raids for slaves or vengeance that hinterland communities and families waged against each other, in a context where effective government and policing was extremely difficult (id.: 139, 184, 241 et seq., also Schreurs 1989, Arcilla, trans. 2003). In this, our time, it is rooted in the often violent efforts of the government to establish its authority in the 'tribal zone' (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992), where state-building, insurgency, and a hinterland people trying to assert its autonomy come together.

This sense that violence does haunt the day to day of the Banwaon calls to mind an essay on Southern Sri Lankan identity by Pradeep Jeganathan, who argued that 'Tamilness' is produced 'in anticipation of violence', to which end he examined 'a repertoire of practices that are produced by Tamils given an anticipation of violence' (2000: 112-113). I follow his lead here first, in his decision not so much to refuse but to defer the search for a meaning or explanation for violence, instead accepting its pervasive reality. Second, I will also examine local practices—in Jeganathan's terms, 'tactics of anticipation' (id.)—that signify, or at least partly shape Banwaon identity or culture. It is my argument that community-building is just such a practice; the formation of villages and their residents' assertion that they are 'people of the village' is a response to a felt need for security or safety, a measure taken in anticipation of further or future violence from the state. Where I differ with Jeganathan at this point is in his insistence that the relevant signifying

practices are 'ephemeral' (2000: 114). Doubtless, some such practices are in fact ephemeral. By focusing on shifts in local spatial categories and practices however, I suggest rather that 'tactics of anticipation' may become 'coherently available to the ethnographic eye'.

In the previous chapter, I considered a dispute over land and how it reflects competing visions of political futures. This contest over meanings however was deeply inflected by a context saturated with the politics and tensions of militarisation. Here, I turn to consider a more direct experience of counter-insurgency, in the form of the military occupation of the village of Tabon-tabon. The series of incidents recounted here are understood by the village residents as part of the *katangkawan's* retaliation for the frustration of his titling project, and the slaying of his brother. This chapter thus traces the consequences partly arising from the events described in the previous one. It also sets the theme of political circumscription or encirclement by armed forces of the state, which is continued in the succeeding chapter.

I will begin by exploring the evolution of Banwaon attitudes towards the forest and the emergence of the village, both as responses to more than two decades of counter-insurgency operations. In particular, I argue that the village is becoming the Banwaons' refuge from danger. I then consider what happens when that refuge is itself invaded by the military, with particular attention to how one community leader navigates this constricted space. In the process, I lay out ethnographic material on the practice of cultural citizenship in a context where state, autonomous hinterland groups, and insurgent forces struggle over space and its meaning, and over the meaning of belonging in the national polity. It is indeed unfortunate that I did not have the resources to enable me to elicit the views of anti-state forces. Perhaps that is a matter for future research. For now, I focus on Banwaon responses to the pervasiveness of violence, in memory and in its constant possibility.

Into the Forest

In the early 1980s, the area now occupied by Tabon-tabon village was the log-deck of the Kalilid Wood Industries, Inc., where timber was stockpiled before being trucked to the lowlands. The families of Banwaon men employed by the company lived nearby, with the women and children continuing to tend their swidden-fields. This time of enterprise and ease ended when, as I recounted in Chapter 1, the logging companies abandoned the area in the wake of the violent counter-insurgency operations. The last trucks to leave the area carried Bisaya workers and Banwaon evacuees, not logs. Many of the latter were from the larger villages of Mahagsay, Yandang, Sta. Rita and Policarpo. Of the larger communities, only Balit was not evacuated; to this day, its older residents take pride in this fact. Many Banwaon however chose instead to retreat into the surrounding forests, including the branches of the Badbaran and Manseliohan families in what is now Tabon-tabon village. Datu Manbalanio Badbaran of Tabon-tabon, who was among those who fled into the forest, referred to this period as '*the most bitter of times*'. They led furtive lives, constantly monitoring the presence and movement of government troops who continued conducting counter-insurgency operations; never staying in one place more than one night; cooking only at night so the smoke from their fires would not be seen. Initially, they stopped performing their *tulumanon* or ritual obligations, but it seems the spirits were insistent, and they practiced hushed versions of their rituals for fear their chants, music and dancing would betray them.

The imprint of this time of insecurity can be seen today in the patterns of land-use in Tabon-tabon. At the time of my fieldwork, the villagers' swidden-fields were located in three loose clusters, each between thirty minutes' to an hour's walk from the community. To my eyes, Banwaon swidden agriculture was broadly similar to the practices of other hinterland groups described in the literature (cf. Condominas 1977, Conklin 1967, Hanks 1992 [1972], R. Rosaldo 1980). After the rice had been sown and the women began weeding the fields, I heard Gagay Mandombo-an complain about having to wake up early to walk to their fields, and then back to the village every day. I

asked her why they do not stay in their farms. She replied, '*If we are found by the soldiers in the forest, they will accuse us of being NPA [insurgents] ...*'. The elderly Sakobag Makalo-oy told me on a separate occasion, '*We do not [stay] at our farms [after dark] because we are afraid of soldiers*'. Later, village women explained that arranging the farms in clusters allows them to walk to and from their fields together, providing mutual security and support. Then I learned that the clustering of swidden-fields began during that time when Banwaon hid in the forests. When I talked to a man who had been a member of the NPA's militia then, he said people began clustering their farms because it allowed the militiamen to better reconnoitre the fields and guard the farmers, than if the fields had been scattered across the forest. The degree to which clustering has become normalised can be seen in how, when I shared my realisation of militarisation's impact on agriculture, one informant exclaimed, in a tone of sudden recollection, that in his youth farms were at least a kilometre away from each other. An older man said it used to take a whole day to walk to another's farm and back. Moreover, people used to live in huts beside their farms, so there would have been none of the daily trek Gagay Mandombo-an complained about. In a sense, the current pattern of swidden-farming is an artefact of the state, by-products of its decades of counter-insurgency, as well as symbols of cultural continuity.

It has to be said that, living in the forest, the Banwaon could not have avoided contact with the NPA. It can be argued that the abuses and terror of counter-insurgency threw the Banwaon into closer contact with the NPA. Many were radicalised by their experiences, and as we saw, some of them joined the NPA or its Pulang Bagani [B] (red warrior) militia. Yet, even the former-militiaman I talked to referred to the Banwaon whose farms he reconnoitred and guarded as 'civilians'. Like the Magindanaon described by McKenna (1998: 191 et seq.), people seemed to have evaluated actors in terms of the protection they provided. The government's soldiers and paramilitaries were hostile, and the NPA and its militia seemed to afford them safety. This did not make them insurgents; they were unarmed civilians, with no one else to turn to.

I have no clear data on how many of the Banwaon lived in the forests in the above manner, between the 1980s and the 1990s. Anecdotal evidence suggests there were a considerable number. Some informants speak of at least one Banwaon generation which grew up in the forests, where they outgrew their childhood, married, and raised their own families. There were even attempts to set up schools in the forests. Some RGS teachers tried to continue providing grade-school education in the face of near-constant militarisation. The NPA, too, set up educational services as part of its organising work. Looking back, Datu Manbalanio laughed at how such efforts probably only deepened the military's suspicion that they were NPA supporters or members.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, evacuees began to repopulate the larger villages, though they would still flee when particularly intense military operations occurred. In the 1990s, many of those who hid in the forests began establishing villages, a point I will return to below. But even after former-president Marcos was deposed, the people of Tabon-tabon remained in hiding, in part because counter-insurgency operations continued despite the country's return to democracy (Hedman and Sidel 2000: 51 et seq.). For many years, relatives, local officials, community organisers and the RGS sisters tried to persuade them to leave the forest and settle in a community. Sometime in the late 1990s, they finally agreed, establishing their village at the former log-deck, and making their clustered swidden-clearings in the surrounding forests.

Unfortunately, the continuing militarisation of the area meant that Tabon-tabon would come into its share of hardships. In 2001, a troop of soldiers with their name-cloths and unit-patches removed from their field-jackets marched into the village, which they occupied for three days. The residents were subjected to interrogations, threats and abuses. People were so terrified that when the soldiers later tried to separate the men from the women, they feared this was the prelude to a massacre; they refused to be parted from each other, reasoning that if they were to die, they would at least die together. In the event, they were only subjected to a long anti-

Communist tirade by an officer, the day after which the soldiers left. After the 1999 ‘surrender’ of the *katangkawan* and his re-emergence as a paramilitary leader, militarisation in the area intensified. Magal Manseliohan recalls how in 2002, he heard the *katangkawan* declare himself the only Banwaon leader in this area, and that the village of Tabon-tabon would be ‘cancelled’ (*ipakansela*). Shortly after, they were forced into a hastily-erected hamlet by the Side One road, where after days of harassment and hunger, they trekked *en masse* to Balit, where they stayed for five months.

And yet, they were not passive victims of military and paramilitary pressure. They reported human-rights abuses, though none of these were acted on by the government. As we saw in Chapter 4, they hosted the February 2009 meeting where the Tagdumahan rejected the *katangkawan*’s titling-project. In May 2009, the *katangkawan* called for a *dumalongdong* or council of leaders, but like many other Banwaon villages, the community did not send a representative, believing he/she would only be pressurised to join the titling project. Instead, the villagers hiked to Balit—leaving only four adults, their children and an anthropologist in the community—saying they had to register for the 2010 elections. Still, people were afraid, expecting that the *katangkawan* would retaliate for the humiliation of having his titling-project rejected, and for the subsequent killing of his brother on 13 August 2009.

From Forest to Village

What I found most striking about Tabon-tabon’s history was their changing attitude towards the forest. In the face of militarisation in the 1980s, many Banwaon sought safety in the forest, knowing that government troops were mostly lowlanders unfamiliar with the lay of the rough, forested land; the Banwaon could monitor their movements and avoid them with relative ease. True, there were also paramilitaries drawn from their Higaunon neighbours to the north, but even they were not that familiar with the terrain. Also, soldiers reportedly had difficulty understanding the Banwaon language. Members of the generation which grew up ‘in the forest’ recall how, when accosted by

soldiers while on visits to the larger communities, they would simply pretend not to understand Bisaya, the regional lingua-franca. Men who joined the NPA militia recalled that speaking Banwaon over their hand-held radios—transmissions of which were monitored by the military—was enough to guarantee communications-security.

Still, life in the forest was difficult. Some of these former-fugitives recall how happy they were to receive the occasional supplies sent upriver by relatives and the RGS nuns. People wanted to live settled lives, but there was still the constant threat of being victimised by counter-insurgency operations. It seems that the Banwaon in the forests were able to establish villages only when there was some outside agency that could look out for them, and help guarantee their safety. This came to be the role of the RGS schools. Indeed, the re/settlement of many villages is today associated with the establishment of a school. The villages of Minlinaw, Nakadayas, Kipuyag, Kihinggay, Kimambukagyang and Manlahing were all established in the 1990s around RGS schools; the older schools in Balit, Sta. Rita and Mahagsay were maintained or upgraded. The school is so important that it sometimes was the focal point of the community. In my description of Tabon-tabon in Chapter 1, we saw how the community's social hall—read as a symbol of the people—seemed to take shelter in the school's compound.

In 2002, when they could no longer bear the conditions in the road-side hamlet into which the *katangkawan*'s paramilitaries had herded them, they escaped not into the forests, but to the village of Balit, at the edge of the lowlands. A handful of men initially remained behind, hiding in the bush, to watch over their fields and livestock, but they eventually joined their neighbours in Balit. Some villagers explain the differing responses to militarisation by pointing out that, in contrast to the situation in the 1980s, they now had a social and political network in the lowlands they could fall back on for support. True enough, the Tagdumahan, Barog Balit—the community-association of Balit—and the RGS were much more active then. Others however noted a significant change in the character of the government's military forces: Whereas before, the soldiers and

paramilitaries were strangers to the land and the people, by the 2000s, most of the CAFGU paramilitaries were Banwaon, and a few of them had even been integrated into the ranks of the military itself. Most military units in the area today are still composed mostly of lowlanders, but their operations can rely on Banwaon guides drawn from the ranks of the CAFGU. This ‘indigenization’ of paramilitary forces began in the 1990s, and accelerated after the military was able to recruit the *katangkawan*, his family and supporters in 1999. After years of hiding in the forests themselves, the *katangkawan* and his followers knew the land and the people well. This meant that for all other Banwaon, the forests became accessible to the military and could no longer offer them safety from counter-insurgency operations.

Instead, the village is becoming the people’s zone of refuge and safety. In contrast to the way the Banwaon had had to be coaxed into settlement by the presence of schools in the 1990s, by the mid-2000s, being a resident of a village was so urgent that if Tabon-tabon did not exist, said Signal Mandombo-an, he and his family would have to live in Mahagsay village. Life outside a village, in other words, was no longer an option. This ‘lesson’ may have been underscored for the people of Tabon-tabon by the murder of Ben Liganio on 23 July 2009. Liganio was a former-member of the NPA’s militia, who eschewed village life, and instead stayed with his family in a hut by their rice-field—reiterating a more traditional residence-pattern—somewhere in the forest. Alone in his hut, he was surrounded and shot dead by a combined force of soldiers and paramilitaries apparently avenging an earlier NPA attack on a military truck. This case seems to suggest the folly of seeking safety in the forest, and emphasized how village life could better provide safety or support to its residents.

Living in a village offers safety not only in a pragmatic sense, but also in a symbolic sense. During my fieldwork, there was a trend towards drawing a distinction between villagers, who described themselves as the ‘*taga-Tabon-tabon*’ ([people] of Tabon-tabon), and the NPA, who were ‘*taga-lasang*’ ([people] of the forest). Thus, when one villager once encountered a troop of

soldiers along the track to the Side One road, and one of the soldiers joked that he had thought the villager was an NPA fighter, he retorted, '*Where would you find an NPA [fighter] on a road [i.e., as opposed to a forest trail]?*' Similarly, when a number of villagers attended Balit's fiesta in May 2010, they followed the Side One road, avoiding the soldiers in the forests. We laughed at the irony of forest people walking the road, while soldiers from the lowlands lurked in the bush. The Banwaon appear to be signalling how they no longer live in the forest like the outlawed NPA, but in settled, orderly villages accessible by road, with Bisaya-style houses and even schools. They seem to be presenting to the state a spatial order with peaceful villages occupied by simple farmers, on one hand; and dangerous forests prowled by outlaw NPA fighters, on the other (following Stepputat 2000: 128).

Encounter

But what happens when the village itself is occupied by the military? This is precisely the problem the Banwaon of Tabon-tabon faced, when in the late afternoon of 14 September 2009, a troop of about fifteen soldiers entered the village, and occupied it for three weeks. Although soldiers had occasionally been sighted in the woods around the village for many weeks before, everyone was surprised by their sudden entry into the village. I myself was bathing at the local spring after a day in the swidden-fields when they arrived. By the time I returned and changed clothes, the soldiers had made camp under the raised floor of Datu Manbalanio's house, across from the local schoolteachers' cottage where I was staying. We were informed there would be a meeting with the soldiers at the social hall tomorrow morning.

When I went there the next morning, a number of villagers were already there, chatting among themselves. There was some dismay that those present had few areca-nuts for chewing. One young man said, '*We have a nut-crisis; we're too scared to walk in the forest [to look for nuts]*'. His wife added, '*They might ask us for an identity card*'. He answered worriedly, '*And this betel-chew bag is my only identity card*'.

The conversation died down when seven soldiers entered the social hall. They were led by a lean, dark, and tough-looking man in boots and camouflage-trousers, and another who was short, and rather pale and soft-looking, in a sweater, sweat-pants, and flip-flops. Neither was armed. Their men were in various versions of military attire; they all carried assault-rifles. The two officers sat on the edge of the stage. Magal Manseiohan, who had served as the village's leader since the departure of Datu Manbalanio, sat to their right. One of the soldiers went around, taking down the villagers' names.

The first man stood up and, speaking in Bisaya, introduced himself as Sgt. Villaganas of the 26th IB, based in Talacogon. He introduced the other as his commanding officer, Lt. Amer B. Narra. I expected Narra to take over, but he remained seated, and did not say a word, not even to greet us. Instead, Villaganas addressed the assembly:

.....

We are here today for we have been tasked with the implementation of the Community Organizing for Peace and Development [program]. Do you have your village-secretary? (Heads shake.) Then your village hasn't been organised yet! You need to have an organization in this village! Maybe that is why there is no [development] project here. One of our objectives in our organising work is to ensure that you are represented in Barangay meetings, so you will have a voice ... in the Barangay. Because if people do not participate in government, they end up on the other side (i.e., the NPA). This is important in defeating the Communist Party. People should look upwards, not to the other side. So there should be elections here for your village-secretary. Do you agree? (No answer.)

What should we tell the government [on your behalf]? (No answer.) Well, we are here as the bridge [of government] to give you information. We now have the Social Integration Program, to give former-rebels a livelihood. This livelihood program, it is not in cash. It provides things for a livelihood, like buffaloes and motorcycles. Other than the livelihood program, we also have the Balik-Baril Program ... which gives cash-awards for surrendered firearms.

.....

There is another thing we wish to tell you. We will conduct our survey. We will talk to each family. By becoming registered [this way], you will receive government services, like medical [assistance]. Please give us [the] information [we need] So there will be no trouble. Look at Esperanza town today. They were bombed by the [military]. Three barangay officials were arrested. [Their lives were upset], because the people, they did not give information to the military.

A villager asks, 'What will you ask in your census?

Sgt. Villaganas: Why are you afraid of a [mere] list? It's for benefits. And those boys eighteen-years or older, we'll ask them if they want to join the CAFGU. [But] we won't force anyone [to join]. The census, that's for benefits, ha?

Magal Manseliohan asked if participation in the census is mandatory. Villaganas said, no. Magal: 'We have agreed then, that no one will be forced to answer the census.'

Sgt. Villaganas: We hiked here with thirty-kilo packs. Did we do that for our own sakes? We did so to bring these programs to you. The NPA, what do they bring you?

Magal: In our experience, if we just talk to the NPA, [we are already considered NPA].

Sgt. Villaganas: We're not like that. (He asks for the villager's help in getting word of the programs to the NPA.)

Magal: Well. If we meet any NPA, we will tell them [about the programs].

Nora Badbaran declares she is afraid of soldiers, because of the abuses she and others have suffered.

.....

Sgt. Villaganas: That's in the past. It is different now. Today, if a soldier shoots [to frighten people], there will be a report within two weeks. If we do anything wrong ... write a petition [of complaint].

Komedyas: In 2001, the 62nd came here. It was terrible. When they arrived, they asked, 'where is your chicken, where is your pig?' Thieves! We starved! If you have operations against the NPA, then go

fight the NPA. Not us, who struggle so hard just to make a living. We are civilians. [Such abuses are] why we are wary of soldiers.

.....

Gagay: Sir, I have a request. If you go to our farms, tell us beforehand. And do not take anything without permission.

Sgt. Villaganas: Yes, mother.

Visa: And don't blame civilians if you get attacked. We do not know the NPA's plans.

Magal: [It is our experience that] if soldiers are attacked near a village, they always think the community betrayed them.

.....

Gagay: Back in 2002, the katangkawan forced us out, onto the road. They threatened us terribly. And there was no food, not even coffee. [We weren't allowed to gather sweet-potatoes in our farms]. (I thought she would cry.)

.....

Sgt. Villaganas: That's all in the past. We are grateful [that you have spoken out]; we can now watch [against mistakes]. (He repeats his assurances that people have nothing to fear, and that they can report any abuses.)

Suddenly, Komedyas stood up and declared, *'This is the work of the soldier!'* She thrust the short metal pestle she uses to pound her areca-nuts into her seatmate's face and shouted, *'You! Are you NPA?!'* She ran back and forth across the floor, asking her neighbours, *'You! You, are you NPA?!'*, pointing the pestle like a pistol as she went. Finally, she stopped to ask, *'Who would not be frightened [by that]? Do not mistreat us civilians'*. She sat down. The atmosphere grew tense. Sgt. Villaganas remained silent, staring at Komedyas, his face unreadable. At this point, I heard one young woman behind me whisper in Banwaon, *'I am frightened'*; to which another woman murmured in reply, *'Flee!'*. Nobody moved, however. Magal said awkwardly, *'That [case] did not involve you,'* then asks again that civilians not be harmed.

The tension was broken by the entry of a soldier carrying copies of brochures for the programs the sergeant discussed. They were distributed among the audience.

Sgt. Villaganas: Those are about the [programs]. We have agreed on the survey, no? So we can see your needs here, and we can inform those higher-up. So, how do we set up a [military] detachment here? Are there eighteen year-olds who have finished Grade 2 at least? They might want to join the CAFGU.

Nora: I object! I am not used to military camps! Put your detachment on the road! Those who want to join the CAFGU, [go and stay there]! (Several women agree.)

Magal: We are OK with daily military operations. [But] as the forests remain, so do our beliefs. A military camp might transgress on our beliefs. [But] if you want to clear the forests around the village [of NPA], [we will not object].

Villaganas turned to Narra. Some unspoken communication passed between them.

Sgt. Villagansa: I repeat what I said before. We will not force you into anything you're not ready for.

Magal: One more thing. This is our main concern. Will you stay long here?

Sgt. Villagansa: That's up to our CO. If it were up to me, we could leave now, since we've told you about the programs already.

Someone said: 'If you're going to stay, you can't camp out in the middle of the village.' Another added, 'Do not draw bullets to us, please!' I spoke up to say the soldiers' presence in the village might mean civilians will get caught in any crossfire with the NPA. There was some argument with the sergeant over the issue, until he finally promised to consult their higher-ups (Figure 8, p. 271). Shortly after that, he abruptly thanked everyone, and declared the meeting over. People got up, seemingly glad to escape. The two officers approached me to introduce themselves, then saying they had much else to do, they turned away.

Life under Occupation

Initially, there were small acts of defiance shown by some villagers towards the soldiers. There was a young man who sang activist songs whenever he saw soldiers. An older man would passionately hawk and spit from his betel-chewing in the soldier's direction whenever he visited the teachers at their home. A boy of thirteen, spotting the remains of a soldier's cooking-fire along a trail, trampled it viciously underfoot with his pink rubber boots. After a few days however people tired of such acts. The villagers simply kept away from the soldiers as much as they could, and tried to concentrate on their farm work as the rice-harvest drew near. For their part, the soldiers tended to stay together under the *datu's* house, never going far from the village except in twos or threes, and with their firearms.

On the surface, it looked as if people were coping. A few days later however Gagay Mandombo-an broke down in tears on a visit to the teacher's cottage, sobbing that she could not sleep or work for fear of what the soldiers might do to them. She said she was grateful for the presence of the teachers, as otherwise the situation would be worse. While awkwardly trying to comfort her, I asked how the other villagers were faring, and she replied they were all afraid. People did continue working in their farms, but spent as little time there as they could. I realised this when I accompanied them to their farms another day, and when it came time to walk home, they kept an anxious pace all the way back to the village, with none of the usual stops and conversations along the way. Another time, a party of youths from another village came upon us at the rice-fields, and we decided to walk back to Tabon-tabon together. They said I should go first, since my pace was slower than theirs. I said they should go ahead, as I planned to take photographs along the trail. After a pause, one of them explained, '*We are afraid of the soldiers*'. I led the way, answering their questions about what to do if confronted by soldiers. Finally, in the fields and their homes, villagers kept asking me or each other about the likelihood that they will be 'massacred'. I tried to allay such fears, pointing out that the soldiers seemed to be behaving

themselves. They were an inconvenience certainly, but at least they were not acting abusively. A number of people retorted however that that was only because of my own, and the schoolteachers' presence; if we left, they were sure that the soldiers would turn on them. When I did leave the village about two weeks later to attend to an urgent matter, a man who accompanied me to the 'waiting shed' urged me to return as soon as possible, as the soldiers might 'massacre' them.

Noting how the soldiers were clearly using the residents as a shield against a possible NPA attack—the sergeant had practically confessed to this—I asked the people why they did not abandon the village and stay in their farm-huts. Without the villagers, I argued, the soldiers would feel vulnerable and be forced to leave. A few replied that it was better to stay together in the village, because if there was a massacre, they would at least die together in their homeland. Others said staying in the village allayed any suspicions that the villagers were in communication with the NPA. Most informants, however, said they were afraid of encountering the soldiers in the forests and risking violence at their hands. For the people of Tabon-tabon then, the forest had become so identified with the military and its paramilitary proxies that it no longer offered them safety. This was brought home to me when I witnessed the interrogation of Ando, a young man from Nakadayas village, who happened to visit Tabon-tabon. Rather imprudently, he loudly criticized the government within earshot of the soldiers. Sgt. Villaganas came over to talk to him; I observed the interview to forestall any abuse. The sergeant was joined by two soldiers, both cradling assault-rifles in their arms. The sergeant began by ascertaining Ando's identity. Ando tried to explain that he had been born in Mahagsay, now lives in Nakadayas, and was visiting relatives in Tabon-tabon. Villaganas asked if Ando was trying to make a fool of him. Ando denied this; he began to sweat. One of the soldiers whispered something to Villaganas.

Sgt. Villaganas: Ah! Now I remember you! Weren't you the one we saw in the forest, after that strafing incident at (?). (Ando did not answer.) Weren't you?

Ando: Yes, sir.

Sgt. Villaganas: And who was it again with you, then?

Ando: [It was] Ray-gun, sir.

Villaganas: So you probably were part [of the group] that strafed us, no?

Ando: No, sir.

Villaganas: Then what were you doing in the forest?

Ando: I was then on my way home.

Villaganas: To Nakadayas?

Ando: Yes, sir.

Villaganas: Then how come Ray-gun's story was different?

Ando: (Sweating, shifting from foot to foot nervously.) I don't know, sir. The truth is we had nothing to do with the incident. We just heard the gunshots. We were only heading home when the soldiers saw us. (His voice took on whining tone.)

(Villaganas and the soldier whispered to each other. The sergeant nodded, looked at Ando, and gave a dramatic sigh.)

Villaganas: You're afraid of me, aren't you? (Ando made no reply.) You're afraid of me, aren't you? (Voice raised ever so slightly.)

Ando: Yes, sir.

As this exchange suggests, the sergeant had access to knowledge not only of places, but also of people in the area, if not his own then those of his soldiers or paramilitary troops. Such knowledge restricts the ability of the Banwaon to elude government forces; or in Ando's case, to dissemble about his identity, movements or social connections. The resulting terror can be seen in the way the sergeant punctuated his interrogation; by forcing Ando to acknowledge his fear of the soldier. In spatial terms, the landscape of the Banwaon of Tabon-tabon had been progressively circumscribed. The presence of soldiers had forced them out of the forests and into the village, and now that even the village was occupied, they had nowhere to run.

The Tribulations of Magal Manseliohan

As we have just seen, some villagers spoke of a massacre not as a possibility, but as a probability, consoling themselves with the hope of dying together. For me, this fixation with the idea of massacre is a measure of the terror with which the soldier is regarded; for them, it is a figure from whom atrocity is expected. This is not to say that they fell into despair. As noted, people tried their best to continue their daily routines of work; they may fear the worst, but until the arrival of that terrible moment, they would go on doing what they could to support their families. Still, Komedy Manseliohan summed up her feelings about the military's presence by bitterly saying, 'My plans have been disrupted!' (*Nayagaw ang akong mga plano*), a sentiment echoed by a number of women. They draw attention to how the presence of the military disrupted the physical and emotional rhythm with which the farm cycle and its attendant social and religious rituals are supposed to be lived out, hence their reference to the ruination of their respective 'plans'.

Not everyone in Tabon-tabon, however, assumed this fatalistic fortitude, fearing and accepting the possibility of atrocity, but continuing to labour while yet they could. Magal Manseliohan, for one, could not afford to adopt such an attitude. After Datu Manbalanio had moved to Gisawan village when he remarried a woman there, Manseliohan had become the senior village leader even though he was not a datu. Calm and cautious, articulate and reflective, Magal earned his people's respect after years of activism on behalf of his village, and through his participation in the Tagdumahan. Now he had to mediate between his neighbours in the village and the soldiers occupying it. It may thus be instructive to examine his responses to the military occupation of Tabon-tabon, in a context of on-going spatial and political circumscription.

Magal Manseliohan subscribes to the view that it is problematic for the Banwaon to come under the authority of the state. In one conversation, he pointed out that:

The ways of the indigenous people are different from the lowlanders'. It is there, in the story of Palamgowan and Palagsulat. They may be brothers, but they differ in their perspective.

At another occasion, he said:

Indigenous peoples have always been against the government. They would not have anything to do with the lowlands. They would not accept government authority over themselves.

He thus frames a political tradition that he traces back to their ancestors' rejection of the Spanish colonial state, the predecessor of the Philippine state. He said:

At first, the indigenous people lived by the sea. When the Spaniards came, registration with the church and the state began. Those who could not accept this just left; they climbed up here to the mountains. But the government is chasing after them now. (He laughs.)

He acknowledges however the realities of his time:

Now, there have come changes. The government once said, [the people] must form villages. The people obeyed. Even though they weren't used to it, they obeyed. Then, the government said, [people] must register. And it's the soldiers who are so forceful [in their insistence that people should have] registration papers. It's as if you are not complete as a person if you have no papers. So the indigenous people were forced [to register], even though registration is against their culture.

Now, under pressure from the state, the people must demonstrate that they pose no threat or danger to the state. When in May 2009, three community members—a man and two women—pretended to be surrendering rebels in order to collect benefits from the very same programs the sergeant had spoken of, this was seen as a threat to the community. At a meeting called to address this issue, Manseliohan spoke against any action that might give the impression that there were rebels in the village:

To take hold of a weapon means your intention is death. If you take hold of your machete or axe, your intention is peaceful livelihood. If we are civilians, let us act like civilians.

This insistence that they were civilians again re-emerged in the 15 September 2009 meeting between the newly-arrived soldiers and the villagers, when the latter repeatedly asked that the soldiers refrain from abusing civilians. Interestingly, the sergeant had promised that if villagers report any abuses, they will act on it; but when they took him up on this by reporting all they had suffered at the hands of the military and the paramilitary, he said that was all in the past. The day after the meeting, Manseliohan and I discussed the situation at his farm, away from the soldiers in the village. He reflected on his leadership role:

It is difficult for us here, as we are caught in the middle. You need to act, but without angering the soldiers. [Otherwise,] the problem might get worse.

The difficulty of his intermediary role was underscored later on, when it emerged that a villager criticized him for failing to prevent the soldiers from conducting their census in the community. This man bemoaned the fact that, as a result, they were ‘now [all] listed down’ (*listado na*), as if at some symbolic level, they had all been captured. In his defense, Manseliohan said that the soldiers may have their ‘names’, but not their ‘hearts’; suggesting that having become enrolled in the military’s data-base did not necessarily signify surrender. In fairness to him, the soldiers had gone in groups to the houses in the village for their survey, all carrying their firearms. While no one can say they were forced to answer the survey-questions, the presence of armed men effectively negated all resistance. A few days after that, his intermediary role again subjected him to pressure, this time from the military. Almost immediately after a brief visit to the village by the *katangkawan*’s paramilitaries—led by his brother—Magal Manseliohan was summoned to the soldier’s bivouac for questioning. I offered to go with him, but he said it might look as if he had something to hide, and went alone. I was concerned for him however, and after twenty or thirty minutes could no longer stay away; I dropped in on the soldiers’ encampment uninvited.

Magal: (Seeing me.) Attorney, I told them about our experiences here. In the past, soldiers came here, and we were so frightened. They were so fierce; we thought they would kill us all. And they would ask such questions! You would not know how to answer them. If you do not reply, they will say, 'Why don't you answer? You must be frightened, because you really are NPA!' But if you do answer them, they will say, 'How is it you know how to answer us? You must have been trained by the NPA!' (The soldiers laugh.) Now, about our school, sir. [It] is constantly suspected of being a school of the NPA.

Sgt. Villaganas: Ah. As long as I do not see any armed [fighters] repairing its roof, I would not say such things.

Magal: It is just that you might be misled by rumours going about that we here are supporters of the other side. That is not true at all. We are just civilians, concerned only with survival. As you yourselves have seen, we have no weapons. My plea is that you do not simply take the [katangkawan] at their word.

Sgt. Villaganas: Just what does [the katangkawan] say about you?

Magal: They say we have something to do with the killing of [his brother]. How can that be, when we are here in the hinterlands?

Directly after Magal's interview, Sgt. Villaganas and Lt. Narra approached me to discuss the possibility that Tabon-tabon would apply for a title under the IPRA. I told them of the *katangkawan's* titling project, which they said they had not known about. Taking my cue from Manseliohan's plea, I said that we had received many reports that the *katangkawan* was particularly angry with Tabon-tabon village for its role in his project's rejection. I asked them to be objective in assessing anything the *katangkawan* told them, and not just take him at his word. Over the shoulders of the officers, I could see Nora Badbaran behind them, standing on her porch, smiling, nodding vigorously and pumping her fists in the air, like a pantomime of a cheerleader. I managed to keep a straight face.

The soldiers eventually left Tabon-tabon village, on 8 October 2009. I did not see Magal Manseliohan again until May 2010, when he came to Balit's fiesta. Reflecting over the events of the past year, he said: '*Today, even though*

we have the right to self-determination, the government looks at us with suspicion'.

Manoeuvring in a Time of Circumscription

As we have seen, Magal Manseliohan was, as a village leader located between his people and the intruding soldiers, subject to pressures from various sides. His neighbours expected him to ensure their safety, as he tried to do in the first meeting with the soldiers. The soldiers, on the other hand, probably expected him to be a 'legitimate' leader, without ties to the NPA, hence the summons to the interview at the soldiers' camp apparently as a result of an adverse report by the *katangkawan's* paramilitaries. Compromises were perhaps unavoidable. In the community's meeting with the soldiers, Magal helped block the soldiers' declared intention of setting up a 'detachment' in Tabon-tabon, but could not find a way to prevent the soldiers from conducting a census in the village without antagonizing them. For this, however, he was criticized.

More substantively, we see how, in a context where both forest and village had become dangerous because controlled by government forces, Manseliohan had tried to build on the goodwill he generated in his interview—even managing to set the soldiers laughing—and explore or exploit the space between the government forces. It is unclear to me, at least, what his objective was at that time; whether he wanted to simply plead for some objectivity on the part of the military in their reading of the paramilitaries' representations about the people of Tabon-tabon (which was my understanding at that time), to weaken the *katangkawan's* credibility with the military, or perhaps to even try to set the soldiers against the paramilitaries. What is clear is that Manseliohan was pioneering one possible response to a situation where the Banwaon have nowhere else to run; i.e., to try to navigate between the twin terrors posed by the soldier on one hand, and the paramilitary, on the other. This is a difficult, politically delicate manoeuvre, as one's intentions could very easily be misinterpreted,

for example, as actually aligning one's self with the military in an effort to nullify the threat from the paramilitary. In this context, it could invite suspicion or worse from the NPA. I also recall a conversation I had with the RGS nuns sometime after I moved from Tabon-tabon to Balit village, when they expressed puzzlement over Manseliohan's intentions and actions during this period. In a situation where the village—their refuge from the militarized forest surrounding them—has itself been occupied by the military, perhaps Manseliohan had felt it tactically necessary to choose the lesser of the two evils. Unfortunately, I had no means of evaluating the effectiveness of any such attempt to play off one force against another.

For my own part, I have to say I appreciate the practical, tactical value of this approach. When the paramilitaries appeared in Tabon-tabon, I felt considerably more apprehensive about my security, given their reported animosity towards me. On reflection, I realize that I was more wary of paramilitaries than of soldiers, whom I considered comparatively more disciplined and accountable for breaches of discipline, more predictable, and indeed more comprehensible. I was grateful then, that there were officers in the village, available to check any abuses by the paramilitary. Indeed, the occupation of Tabon-tabon could be read as a game of shields: The Banwaon villagers used me and the schoolteachers as a shield against the military, the military used the villagers as a shield against the NPA, the paramilitary used the military as a shield against the NPA (otherwise they would not have dared trek to Tabon-tabon from their camp in Mahagsay village), and Magal Manseliohan tried to use the military against the paramilitary.

We saw from both Magal Manseliohan's and the other villagers' speech an insistence upon their status as civilians. This is, of course, not a new development. After decades of interaction with local officials, church workers, activists, human rights workers and the media, it is hardly surprising that the Banwaon would invoke the status of the civilian. My sense however was that through the 1980s and 1990s, the Banwaon of Tabon-tabon had no real sense of being neutral non-combatants. Indeed, the petty acts of

defiance shown by some villagers, young and old, suggests an underlying distrust or even hostility towards the military. Emerging from the forest into which they had been driven by counter-insurgency operations, and continuing to experience abuses from the military and the paramilitary, I think it is safe to say that many Banwaon feel antagonistic towards the state. I do not mean to say they were NPA, though a few of them were. Rather, they did not have a neutral stance towards the state, as a civilian should at least be. Now however, in a time marked by political circumscription, invoking civilian status meant locating one's self in a neutral position, between the government and its military and paramilitary forces, on one hand; and the NPA on the other. In short, the Banwaon are now becoming 'serious' about being civilians. This is suggested by Manseliohan's adverse reaction to the false surrender of three Tabon-tabon villagers. The people themselves now insist that they are 'people of the village', not of 'the forest' where the NPA—and now the military and their paramilitary proxies—are. In a sense, the identification with the village signifies their neutral positioning as civilians of a peaceful and orderly community, leaving the forests to the state and anti-state forces to contend over. To my mind, this signifies an assertion of autonomy, from both the government and the insurgents. The basic political premise remains: The integration of the Banwaon into the state is culturally problematic. However, here we see an increasing emphasis on distinguishing themselves from the NPA, who also have an adverse stance towards the state, though more politically than culturally so. The result is a forest people insisting that they are not forest people, but people of the village. Still, this may perhaps open up a space for asserting autonomy without inviting the suspicion or violence of the state. It also raises questions about the particulars of the relation between autonomy and citizenship. Here we saw the villagers invoking the soldiers' duty to protect civilian citizens. They were, in other words, claiming political inclusion in the state hence entitled to its agents' protection. This suggests that their interest is not in absolute exclusion or secession from the state, but the redefinition of the relations between the latter and their people.

In sum, the value of examining the way Magal Manseliohan addressed his tribulations lies in his role as a leader. As someone who proposes possible solutions for his people while on the front-line facing the military, his responses to the latter's occupation of his village represent the embattled cutting edge of Banwaon political discourse, as they struggle to come to terms with the processes of political circumscription. His tentative solutions—to politicize the space between two forces of terror, the military and the paramilitary; and the exploration of a middle space between two contending forces, the government and the insurgent NPA—underscore the degree to which the Banwaon have become spatially constricted, and the apparently accelerating enclosure of this political frontier.

Conclusion

Even as the Banwaon made a claim on the soldier's discipline, demanding respect for themselves and their property, we saw the state make its own demands on them, through the soldiers. In the meeting between soldiers and villagers, the sergeant outlined the military's expectations: That the villagers will participate in government affairs, serve as conduit to the NPA for relaying information about state programs, submit to a census, and send their youths to join the paramilitary CAFGU. All these demands were presented as aspects of the state's counter-insurgency program. They foreground the centrality of this program for the state, which thus dominates or dictates how it would relate to hinterland populations such as the people of Balit. Interestingly, the villagers did not simply submit to these demands, but had tried to them off. They managed to block the recruitment of paramilitaries and the establishment of a camp in the village, and they never did elect a village-secretary. They could easily promise to relay information to the NPA, as Magal Manseliohan did at the meeting, without anyone knowing if they actually did so or not. And they won themselves an agreement that no one would be forced to respond to the census, though in the end no one was able to refuse to answer the questions posed by the armed census-takers. However, they could not get the soldiers to leave, or

to camp somewhere other than the middle of the village. They could push back only so far. As the sergeant hinted when discussing the census, violence could result from a refusal or failure to give information to the state. Still, this show of resistance could be read as an assertion of true civilian neutrality, in that if they insist on distinguishing themselves from the NPA, they also refuse to align themselves too closely with the state.

Their agency is all the more remarkable given the widespread fear or anxiety, which I think I have demonstrated, arising from the pervasiveness of state-violence. Certainly, the village of Tabon-tabon is not an actual war-zone, but an unstable space between peace and war, where violence, its memory and its possibility, haunts daily life without ever managing to make global or even national headlines. This brings us back to Jeganathan's argument (2000) that the pervasiveness of violence gives rise to practices in anticipation of violence. Here we saw how the spatiality of swidden-agriculture has been altered in reaction to, and in preparation for possible violence. Similarly, the emergence of a new space—the village—is both a reaction to past violence, and an anticipation of the same. The hinterland village is thus not the symbol of a society removed from the reach of the state, but an active response to the constant threat of its violence. In a sense, the village is a 'state effect' (Mitchell 1999), arising here from a government's overriding concern with counter-insurgency; and its development in this case affords us a glimpse of the iterative foundational violence of the state.

CHAPTER 6

Living with the Promise of Violence

Introduction

It was a bright Sunday morning, and I was in the small Catholic chapel in Balit village, having attended the *kasaulogan*, a service led by a lay-minister. The ritual had ended, but participants remained seated on the benches, discussing parish matters. I was bored. I watched a small boy pick up a discarded plastic bag from the ground, blow it up with air, and pop it. The bag burst with a loud, sharp sound. '*In Jesus' name!*', a woman exclaimed in English. Then there was complete silence; no one moved. After what seemed like a long time, people broke out in muted, nervous laughter. Then they began asking what had happened, muttering about children and their mischief, and resuming their interrupted discussion.

It was a matter of three seconds; a silence following the explosion of sound that was just three seconds too long. I wondered why it took everybody so long to react, until I realised that in their surprise they had mistaken the bursting of the balloon for the sound of an assassin's gun. In that space of perfect silence and stillness, people had been waiting for someone to fall down dead, or moan in wounded pain. Only when it was clear there was no danger did life resume, beginning with relieved, cathartic laughter. Those three extra seconds of silence testified to the profound anxiety that haunted the people of Balit.

This chapter focuses on the period from early August 2009 to April 2010, when Balit's residents lived through a period of virtual siege, and they feared that unseen enemies lay in wait for them, hoping for an opportunity to kill. I should note here that as a result of the Philippine state's counter-insurgency operations, Balit and other Banwaon villages have lived in insecure conditions for more than twenty years. The period under consideration

however, marks a period of particularly intense unease about safety and security, the causes of which will be discussed shortly. I readily acknowledge that the violence and intimidation described here does not compare with the scale or intensity of other conflicts reported (compare Nordstrom 1995, Daniel 1996), but the fear, anger and confusion I witnessed are no less real for that.

Here, I am interested in what the people's framings of their experience of virtual siege can tell us about local understandings of the Philippine state. For this project, I proceed from the premise that violence is not an absence of order and meaning, as Whitehead argues (2004a: 8). Rather, he says:

'Violent actions, no less than any other kind of behavioral expression, are deeply infused with cultural meaning and are the moment for individual agency within historically embedded patterns of behavior. Individual agency, utilizing extant cultural forms, symbols, and icons, may thus be considered "poetic" for the rule-governed substrate that underlies it, and for how this substrate is deployed, through which new meanings and forms of cultural expression emerge.' (2004a: 9-10)

Acts of violence, in sum, are freighted with meaning for both victims and victimizers. Similarly, Ellis cites Anton Blok, to the effect that violence must be considered as 'a changing form of interaction and communication, as a historically developed cultural form of *meaningful* action' (2004: 108, emphasis original). Whitehead goes on to argue for the need to approach and interpret violence as a discursive practice (2004a: 5; also Weiss and Six-Hohenbalken 2011: 3-4). This draws due attention to the 'imaginaries of violence' which provide 'models of appropriate action' in the execution of violent acts, even as I take Schroder and Schmidt's point (2001: 9-11) that such imaginaries should be considered in dialectic relation to the practices of violence. It is hoped this chapter can respond to the call to interpret violence as meaningful action through its attempt to describe and explore the 'poetics of violence' (Whitehead 2004b) that haunted Balit. It also hopes to contribute to the literature on violence, ethnicity and the state in the 'tribal zone' (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992; also Enloe 1980), the 'violent edge' of the

political frontier, where the state-making project comes up against hinterland communities struggling to maintain their autonomy (Li 1999: 11-12, Poole 2004: 40-41, Nelson 2004: 121-122).

Six Deaths and a Wake

Over the years, the military has accused Balit's village association, 'Barog Balit' as a 'front' of the Communist insurgency. It has attempted various means of 'breaking' the association, including filing criminal charges against local leaders, setting up an alternative village association, trying to organize a local CAFGU force, and even posting troops in the village. None of these efforts succeeded. However, Barog Balit was no longer active when I began fieldwork in 2008, due to funding problems. Still, the association's former leaders, along with those of the Tagdumahan, retained the respect of their neighbors. The village itself was seen by many observers as a centre of dissent against the Mayor and his administration, and against the government's counter-insurgency program. It has also become a refuge for Banwaon and Manobo families from other villages threatened by the continuing militarisation of the hinterlands. Villagers thus complain that the military seems to blame the *taga-Balit* (people of Balit) for every setback suffered by government forces in its anti-insurgency operations.

When I arrived to begin fieldwork in 2008 however, there was relative peace in the area, perhaps because the *katangkawan* was trying to gather support for his titling project, discussed in Chapter 4. This peace ended on the morning of 16 July 2009, when the NPA set off a roadside improvised explosive device, which threw a passing military truck filled with government troops onto its side, only two kilometers up the road from Balit. One soldier reportedly died of injuries sustained from the blast. In apparent reprisal, a mixed group of soldiers and paramilitaries surrounded and killed Ben Liganio, a Banwaon ex-rebel, on 23 July, at his farm-hut near Tabon-tabon village. Then on 13 August, Arbie Napongahan, brother to the *katangkawan* and paramilitary leader, was ambushed and killed along with his teen-aged

buddy and bodyguard, Taso Liganio, while riding to San Luis town-centre. There was much speculation about who the ambushers were—there was no shortage of suspects, as the deceased made many enemies—but most people concluded it was the NPA. Anxiety in both town-centre and the hinterlands understandably intensified as these killings succeeded each other, but it rose dramatically after the *katangkawan*—at Arbie Napongahan’s wake—was quoted as saying: ‘*Gisugdan naman nila, kita ang mohuman*’ (They started [it, but] we will finish [it]), which was understood as a vow to avenge his brother’s death. People thus expected more violence to follow.

I was in distant Tabon-tabon village when in the evening of 28 September, we received a text-message saying Bagutot Badbaran, a Tagdumahan official, had been murdered riding home to Balit. His wife Mimi, then seven months pregnant, and a Tagdumahan official as well, had been with him and was wounded in the attack. This news was followed by calls and text-messages from various sources, advising me to leave Tabon-tabon, as my previous work with Tagdumahan and Barog Balit may have made me a target. Unfortunately, the route from Tabon-tabon entailed a trek through the forest, to where a motorcycle-for-hire could pick me up and bring me twenty-two kilometers down the narrow Side One road to Balit village, the nearest place of safety. I considered hiking through the forest to Balit, but I was advised against it; as described in the previous chapter, people feared encountering the military in the forests. It was two days before my contacts found a driver to come up the mountain and fetch me. The ride down was extremely tense, as there were many points along the road which were ideal for an ambush, and the driver and I half-expected to be attacked at any moment.

On arriving in Balit, I was brought to the house of Ruel Badbaran, a Tagdumahan leader who briefed me on the situation, including how Bagutot his cousin had been killed by ‘*mga nag-bonnet*’ (‘those wearing bonnets’), ‘bonnet’ being the local term for a knitted ski-mask. Badbaran was agitated; he had been supposed to ride to Balit with Bagutot that evening they were ambushed. He then directed me to the wake, at the village Social Hall.

Bagutot Badbaran's white-painted coffin was on the stage in the Social Hall; small groups of people stood about, speaking in subdued tones. Mimi sat by the coffin's head, attended by two women. I approached her and asked how she was. She spoke of her shoulder-wound and how it had been treated. A member of the RGS staff, who like me had just arrived from the hinterland, asked what had happened. Her terse account began with how she and Bagutot had set off for Balit from the town-centre on their motorcycle, bringing with them a sack of rice they had purchased.

(T)hen we reached [Km.] six. It was muddy there, so Bagutot had to down-shift gears (nagmenor). That is when they shot at us. Bagutot was hit immediately [in the head]. I knew he was dead. I did not [hesitate]. I really ran; I asked for help from the people [of Balit].

After offering condolences, we turned to pay our respects to Bagutot Badbaran. Through the coffin's glass top, I could see the ugly web of stitches with which the mortician had tried and failed to conceal the gunshot wound that was now his left eye. His mouth was partly open; another bullet had shattered the jaw and made it impossible to close without a further insult of clumsy stitching. After again expressing my condolences to Mimi, I stepped down from the stage, to be summoned before Datu Batoy, a village leader. He rehearsed the information Ruel had given me, and then added that one of his contacts had given him a copy of the *listahan*, the hit- or death-list used by the *nag-bonnet*. This suggested that more people—those on the list, most of them from Balit—will be killed. I asked if I was on it. He said 'no', but advised me to leave San Luis immediately, and return only when the situation had quieted down. I obeyed, and so did not witness Bagutot Badbaran's burial the next day.

After the killing of Arbie Napongahan, and even more so after the *katangkawan's* promise of retaliatory violence seemed to have been realised in Bagutot Badbaran's murder, the people of Balit acted as if they were under siege by the *nag-bonnet*, who were said to lie in ambush at the margins of the village. They believed—and the hit-list underscored this—that the

katangkawan was not yet done avenging his brother, and that he will kill someone on the list. As it turned out, they were both right and wrong; the *katangkawan* did strike again, but not in Balit. On the morning of 24 November 2008, Rico Badbaran—Ruel's brother, a former CAFGU militiaman, and another of my informants—was shot and killed by two unidentified men as he led his horse to pasture in Tabon-tabon village. People in Balit and elsewhere blamed the killing on the *nag-bonnet*.

Men in Bonnets

The *nag-bonnet* or *naka-bonnet* is the local term for the 'death squad' (Campbell 2000: 1-2, also Mazzei 2009) said to be operating in San Luis. Again, 'bonnet' is the term for a ski-mask, so for my informants, '*nag-bonnet*' does not connote someone in a quaint piece of feminine headwear, but has the more sinister sense of 'the masked ones'. I have however chosen to use the term *nag-bonnet* here, in accord with local usage. There was frequent speculation as to the identities of these masked men. Indeed, members of the death squad were also referred to as, '*mga wala ma-ilhi*', 'the unrecognizable' or 'those who are unknown'. At the same time, my sources believe that as a unit, the *nag-bonnet* are a mix of soldiers and paramilitaries. It was said to have been organized by the military, to operate semi-clandestinely in support of the government's anti-insurgency program. My informants cannot agree on when this unit began operating in the area; by the time I began fieldwork, it had long become a part of the local political context.

As the *katangkawan* is a leader and/or organizer of the local CAFGU—in which his younger brothers Arbie and Joel were enlisted—he is seen as having control over the *nag-bonnet* and its activities. Indeed, many people spoke of the *nag-bonnet* as if they were under his command. They would cite how Arbie Napongahan was supposedly part of the death squad. More, among the six men later named by Mimi Badbaran as responsible for the murder of her husband were paramilitaries like Antag Liganio and Raul

Martinez, who were from the *katangkawan*'s home-village of Mahagsay. These men, who have kin or other links to the *katangkawan*, affirm the conviction that the latter has some control over the death squad. Mimi also named one or two soldiers among the men who ambushed them. Their alleged presence, on the other hand, convinced people that the *nag-bonnet* were organized and supported by the military.

I myself found no particularly convincing evidence of support by the government for the *nag-bonnet* and their activities, but most Banwaon believed so. They said the death-squad was directed by the military through a 'Military Intelligence Bureau' (MIB). Tata Cinco described the MIB's function as follows:

They are the ones who decide who will be [the nag-bonnet's] targets. It is like they have a list, which they look at [and ask], 'Is this person still active [against the government]?' If say a relative is heard to say, 'not anymore', then they remove [that person's name from the list]. But if they say, 'This [person], has anyone [monitored] him/her?', and someone says, 'That one, she/he deserves to be [killed]', well. They'll put an 'X' [next to her/his name]. Then you'll be targeted. They're like a committee. And whatever their decision, the death squad will implement it. It's like they help each other. [In this] system, if your name [stays] on the list, they will place a bounty on your head.

Datu Batoy, on a separate occasion, explained the mechanics of the bounty system Tata Cinco referred to:

In that system, they'll give fifty-thousand [Pesos] to their people to kill [someone]. If that person cannot do so because of the way circumstances seem to him, he'll hire another person to do the killing, at the price of thirty-thousand. So, he already has twenty [thousand]. This person who agreed to do the killing for thirty-thousand, he'll look for someone else who'll do it for ten-thousand. And this [last man], he'll look for someone who'll agree [to do it] for five-thousand. That's why it is difficult to trace who is behind a killing.

If this is true, then—as many of my sources believed—alongside the soldiers and paramilitaries in the death-squad are guns-for-hire with purely mercenary motives for participating in *nag-bonnet* operations.

Bagwis Domogan, one of the *katangkawan*'s sons-in-law, is widely known to be part of the MIB. Some sources say he is the MIB's principal intelligence officer. According to Rudy Badbaran:

[In this] system, Bagwis prepares the list of targets. This is presented [by the katangkawan] to the government; 'These are the people who should be killed, for they are our true enemies'. And the government listens to [him], and sets bounties on the names on the list. Intelligence[-gathering] is intense these days That is why we, who are not sure if our names are on the list, should beware.

Given that in the traditional Banwaon kinship system, a man enjoys a strong influence over his sons-in-law, many local people see Domogan's presence as another indication of the *katangkawan*'s control over the death-squad.

There are also reported links between the *nag-bonnet* and purely criminal activities. This link emerges in incidents such as that of 1 August 2009, when a trucker carrying PhP 30,000 for a San Luis trader's purchases was robbed by two masked men. One of the men was captured later that day with the cash stuffed into his underwear, and was identified as a Lt. Roel Hengania, of the 4th Infantry Division.⁴² According to a retired policeman with military contacts, Hengania was one of those who organised the death-squad in San Luis. It is unknown whether Hengania was conducting such criminal activities on his own, as a form of off-duty livelihood, or if it was allowed or tolerated by the military, as a perquisite for death-squad members. This incident affirmed many people's belief in the links between government personnel and criminal activities, be it robbery or political murder (following Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; see also Tilly 1985).

⁴² See *Periodico Agsur*, 6 August 2009 (Year 3, Vol. 164), p. 2. Hengania was charged with robbery, but made bail. The victimized trader—Hengania's own godmother by marriage—refused to press charges, for fear of reprisal.

For most Banwaon then, the *nag-bonnet* represent a shadowy, threatening netherworld where soldiers and spies, Banwaon kinship and paramilitaries, guns-for-hire and highwaymen entangle counter-insurgency, vengeance and a quite literally sub-contracted violence with each other, all under the direction of the *katangkawan* and his military handlers. To note, the Banwaon could have referred to the death-squad and its members as ‘killer[s]’ or ‘the armed ones’, or simply as the ‘death-squad’ or ‘MIB’, as they sometimes do. Most people however refer to them as the *nag-bonnet*, choosing to identify them by their reputed use of ski-masks. I suggest this is not merely a descriptive reference, particularly as few have actually seen them, but reflects an underlying anxiety over the identity of these men. There is, of course, the practical aspect of determining their identities, which bears on the making of security-arrangements and political or legal plans. But beyond that, I believe that people are drawn to the fact of the mask, that by putting on their ski-masks, the members of the death-squad remove their faces, their identities; they remove themselves, in other words, from the Banwaon—or indeed, human—domains of kinship and friendship, community and ethnicity, and so become something wholly, utterly alien (compare Taussig 1998). The *nag-bonnet* are thus doubly sinister, as violent men granted impunity by anonymity, and as the perfect embodiment of the dangerous ‘other’. It is no accident of imagination then, that these masked beings were believed to lurk at the borders of their community of un-masked relatives, friends and neighbors.

Life Under Siege

I have already noted how the promise of vengeance for the death of Arbie Napongahan engendered among Balit residents a sense of menace and circumscription. I am not saying that daily life in Balit was completely disrupted. As Emil Tugay sighed, ‘*This [trouble] is nothing new to us*’. True, the situation added to the stress of already insecure lives, and laid further constraints on marginal livelihoods. At one point, several families contemplated abandoning Balit, but were dissuaded from doing so by their

neighbors; none of the founding-families of Balit considered evacuation. The villagers adapted, doing their best to maintain the order of their lives—children attended school, farms were tended, and laundry washed, to the sound of pop-songs and tele-novela dialogue—even as they deployed behaviors intended to minimize the risk to their individual and collective selves. I was impressed by their stubborn, almost heroic determination to survive under conditions of insecurity, constructing a sense of order or normality with which to push back against the chaos at their village-borders.

I should note that the deep anxiety I describe here, while pervasive, was not experienced evenly. There were those who did not feel threatened by the death-squad, because as one of them said, *'di naman ako initado'* (I am not in the heat; i.e., I am not under suspicion). Others said their names were not on the hit-list. In general, these were people who had no connections with Barog Balit, Tagdumahan or the RGS. It is safe to say, however, that most Balit residents did feel threatened by the *nag-bonnet*. One Bisaya man said, *'[E]ven if we can say we have done no wrong, we still have to be cautious'*, stressing the need for prudence or caution. One elderly Banwaon woman called for solidarity between those who were and were not on the list: *'[I]t cannot be that we have no regard for our neighbors. We are a community after all'* Most residents constantly worried about their security. They weighted the significance of motorcycles heard passing through the village at night, or dogs barking in the early-morning darkness. They shared rumors that the *nag-bonnet* had been sighted, usually in the brush near where Bagutot Badbaran had been murdered. They of course took what safety precautions they could. And over and over, in confusion or frustration, they would ask me what they should do when, as it seemed to them, the state was stalking them (compare Taussig 2003).

I had no answer to this question, beyond suggesting precautions they might take, a matter in which they clearly needed no guidance. Residents avoided what were considered high-risk areas, such as distant farms or forests. They visited their farms and worked in groups, and shortened their hours of work

so as to be home before dark. Some men shifted from logging in distant forests to woodcutting, which was expressly described as a response to militarisation; it could be done closer to the village, and unlike farming, allowed more flexible, less predictable working hours. Neighbors watched out for each other; people were sometimes scolded for perceived lapses in security. Houses were fenced about with high wooden palisades; security-lights were installed out front. More residents began to keep dogs. At night, people barricaded themselves in their homes, and a few kept their 'home-made' shotguns (*surit* [B, M]) perpetually loaded and at the ready. Young men were detailed for occasional night-patrols, or were sent ahead to scout out the road against a possible ambush when individuals considered under high risk of attack—like Balit's Barangay Captain, Aver Precioso, who had filed a criminal complaint against Arbie Napongahan after the latter staged a drunken grenade attack against him—had to travel to San Luis town-centre.

As a resident in the village, I experienced something of the sense of threat and circumscription under which people lived. A number of people told me they had been approached by military officers or intelligence operatives, asking about my activities. More alarming were reports that I was a target. There was, for example, a story of how I was supposed to be ambushed on one of my trips into the hinterland, but the designated killer—Arbie Napongahan himself—was hung-over and did not make it into position in time. In another story, told by a Banwaon paramilitary to a relative in Balit, I had been spotted by a hit-man buying a watch in a shop in my home-city of Davao, but had been able to ride off in my car before he could set his sights. There was in short a steady flow of information to assess, and I had to decide whether a given story was true or false, valuable intelligence, idle gossip or disinformation. I thus dismissed the latter story, because I had not been out shopping for a watch at the time the incident supposedly took place. The second story was credible enough that my 'regular' motorcycle-for-hire driver apologetically informed me he could no longer drive for me, for fear of getting hurt himself, should I be attacked while with him. Such stories made me somewhat paranoid.

The sense of being surrounded by danger was eased somewhat by villagers' attempts at humor. For example, Nene Boyante commented on seeing military helicopters in the sky: '*Perhaps they are hunting for us, for we are communists here*'. I read this as an ironic mock-acceptance of the military's categorization of Balit as a village of NPA supporters. Most jokes show a similar play on victimhood or persecution. While I take Navaro-Yashin's argument that 'humor and rumor' can profitably be studied for the discursive knowledge they reflect (2002: 23), my material unfortunately does not make this a particularly appealing project. There was one particular exchange that I did find interesting, however. This occurred between Tata Cinco and myself (AG), a few weeks after the death of Bagutot Badbaran, as follows:

Tata: There are twenty-eight names on the [death-]list.

AG: I'm not on the list.

Tata: True! Were you dropped [from the rolls]?

AG: (I laugh.) Ah, I didn't even get to enroll. I had no money [for tuition].

Tata: (She laughs.) Well, then you won't get taught your lessons!

AG: (I laugh.) That's OK, [I heard] the teacher is very strict anyway.

Tata: (She laughs.)

Tata Cinco drew an interesting parallel between the hit-list and a school's roll of students, hence our references to tuition, lessons, etc. It suggests that for Tata Cinco and the two other Balit residents I heard repeating variants of this joke, the state was a 'school', with its structures of power and knowledge, where threats and violence are the pedagogical methods of choice to inculcate in restive Banwaon 'students' the disciplines of citizenship.

Seeking Help

Beyond these pragmatic measures, villagers also looked to others for help. Some sought supernatural assistance. More elderly residents would conduct one of various forms of *pagbala* [B] or omen-taking before deciding to travel from Balit. I found a group of men debating the efficacy of ‘magic’ shirts purporting to be impervious to bullets, which they decided were ineffective. Their conclusion was based on the belief that Arbie Napongahan was wearing such a ‘bullet-proof’ shirt when he was killed. One of the men pointed out that the shirt may have been bullet-proof, but Napongahan had been shot in the head. Interestingly, Dodong Mamerto, one of the men engaged in the discussion, said that if he had such a shirt, he would go to Manila and capture the President, presumably to force her to rein in the death-squad. Finally, people would directly consult the spirits when the opportunity offered itself. In the *hakladan* ritual I described in Chapter 2, there was this exchange between Datu Batoy and a spirit who introduced himself as Don Juan Kalipayan:

Batoy: We still have a question, amigo. The people have a great problem, for we are [set] in the heat (giinitan) by the armed ones. I myself, this datu (He sets his hand on the arm of Datu Manbalanio, sitting beside him.), [Datu] Luay-luay, even Attorney [there] (He gestures towards me), and many others, are in danger because those who wear bonnets have us in the heat. What should we do, amigo?

Don Juan: As long as you fulfill [your ritual obligations], nothing will happen to you, for you will be protected [by the spirits].

Batoy: Aw, that is true.

Don Juan: As long as you keep your ritual obligations, it is they who will come to harm; it is they who will lose [from their numbers] (makuhaan).

Batoy: (Nodding.) Just so. Just so.

Don Juan: (S/he addresses the assembly.) What is important is that we do not forget the old ways (kinaraan). [It is] necessary that we not be with the bible. [It is] necessary that we not allow ourselves to be swept [away] (magpadala) by the bible, because

ours is the keeping of the old ways. (He turns to Datu Batoy.) Are you satisfied [with my answer], amigo?

Batoy: Ah, [your answer is] sufficient.

Despite his words, Datu Batoy's face, tone and deportment clearly indicated his disappointment. He wanted perhaps more wordly, practical advice.

This would be along the lines of a possible legal response to the crisis, which Datu Batoy and a few other Balit residents also explored. Their plan was to file a criminal complaint for murder against the killers of Bagutot Badbaran, whom Mimi his wife identified. The idea was that the case would alienate the *nag-bonnet* from their military and government handlers, leaving them vulnerable to attack by the NPA in the highlands, and to arrest by the police in the lowlands, thus causing their dissolution. When consulted, the San Luis police-chief advised Datu Batoy that while a case could be filed on the strength of Mimi's eyewitness-account, it would be weak; it would be better, he said, if another witness could corroborate Mimi's testimony. Knowing that no one else had witnessed the ambush, Datu Batoy tried to find someone willing to falsely testify in support of Mimi's account, in exchange for money to be collected from the community. No one came forward to bear false witness, and the plan was shelved.

Recourse to local government officials in San Luis was similarly unavailing. The mayor Jose Chua, was a frail, near-blind octogenarian who was often in Butuan City, as to be near a hospital. When approached, he promised to bring Balit's situation to the governor's attention. Nothing came of these promises. Indeed, he was heard to say that he shuts himself in his home every night when he is in San Luis, for fear of the *nag-bonnet*. Most municipal councilors were seen as more concerned with their personal 'rackets' (cf. Sidel 1999) rather than the welfare of their constituents. Two or three of them genuinely sympathized with Balit, but felt powerless against a force of masked gunmen backed by the military. Barangay officials and village leaders raised their concerns at the Municipal Peace and Order Council (MPOC) and the Provincial Peace and Order Council (PPOC), where

the military and police were represented. The military denied any connection to the *nag-bonnet*, insisting the latter were distinct from their CAFGU paramilitaries. They promised to investigate, even asking for the communities' help in apprehending these gunmen. Like similar cases elsewhere in the Philippines (cf. Alston 2008), nothing came of these efforts. I suspect that frustration over government inaction was one reason Balit later explored electoral politics, which I discuss in the next chapter.

I urged people to contact the media and get their story publicised. Those villagers with activist backgrounds said they had already informed KARAPATAN, a human-rights watchdog with media contacts. Unfortunately, KARAPATAN was so closely associated with the underground left that it had very little credibility with the media and the public in general. My sense was that there was an opportunity to project the Banwaons' situation by linking it to other stories which then enjoyed public interest over the media. These were the 'Ampatuan Massacre' of 23 November 2009, where 58 people were killed by police and paramilitaries controlled by a powerful political family in Maguindanao province,⁴³ and—much closer to home—a four-day incident where 75 people were taken hostage by ex-paramilitaries in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur province, beginning 10 December 2009.⁴⁴ However, Balit residents did not seem to appreciate my idea, perhaps seeing their situation as entirely different from these other cases. One activist later reported that, with help from KARAPATAN, she and a few others were able to talk about local issues over the radio in early 2010, but I was not able to hear the broadcast.

Finally, those with contacts in the NGO-community, sought help from that sector as well. Three institutions, KARAPATAN, KALUMARAN and the Indigenous Peoples' Resource Center⁴⁵ responded by co-organising a human-rights conference in Balit, over 29 to 30 October 2009. When it

⁴³ See http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/26/world/asia/26phils.html?_r=0. Accessed 20 September 2013.

⁴⁴ *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 11 December 2009 (vol. 25, no. 3), pp. 1, 19.

⁴⁵ KALUMARAN is a regional alliance of indigenous peoples' organizations, with which the Tagdumahan is affiliated. The IPRC is another human-rights group.

opened, there was intense public interest in the proceedings. However, as speaker after speaker catalogued for the audience their various rights, interest and attendance waned, and frustration set in. By evening, only the most dedicated leaders and activists remained; all others had long since left the conference. I believe the people already knew their rights, if not by article and paragraph of the law, then in substance; their problem was what to do when the state itself is violating those rights. Finally, Don Badbaran—who had survived being shot by Arbie Napongahan—asked: *‘What should we do when our rights are not respected [by the government]?’* Sadly, none of the speakers could give an answer that was meaningful in Balit’s context. A youth shouted, *‘Let us just buy guns!’*, putting the day’s discussions into question. One speaker emphasized the need to document human-rights violations. Datu Batoy tiredly replied, *‘Just [give us] arms!’* I suggested that documentation was not incompatible with fighting, if that was what they wanted to do. Datu Batoy said, *‘Na, you write the reports, I will do the fighting’*. Later, Emil Tugay stood up to share her fears and confusion, ending with the rhetorical question: *‘What is the solution [to our problems]?’* (*Unsay kasulbaran?*). Someone shouted, *‘Revolution!’*, setting off another round of confused exchanges. By then it was late, and the conference adjourned without resolving the core question: How does one enforce one’s rights against a state intent on one’s destruction?

The State and the Katangkawan

State-building, as a number of scholars have suggested, is a constant work-in-progress (e.g., Mitchell 1999, Althusser 2006 [1971], Abrams 1988). It includes the processes of ‘territorialization’ (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995), of—at the risk of caricaturing this complex notion—ordering what the state construes as wild, lawless, hence ‘illegible’ spaces and peoples into ‘legible’ (following Scott 1998) parts of the state’s national territory and polity. Violence with which to subdue this imputed wildness and savagery (Das and Poole 2004: 6, Tsing 1993: 75, 90), and a ‘pedagogy of conversion’ (Das and Poole 2004: 9) with which to discipline new, unruly subjects, are key to this

ordering function of the state. In this project, however, the state inevitably encounters constraints upon its political and military ability to establish and maintain its power, forming a spatial frontier along which state authority encounters local autonomy. Here the state is compelled to compromise with those whom Tsing calls 'leaders', those who 'are ambitious enough to tell the government that they represent the community and their neighbors that they represent the state' (1993: 72), who 'do not draw their models of power from a cultural space outside state rule' but 'within that space', drawing people together into communities which thus 'emerge in the shadow of the state' (id.: 74). Poole asserts that such 'leaders' represent 'both the state and the principal forms of private, extrajudicial, and even criminal power that the state purportedly seeks to displace through law, citizenship and public administration' (2004: 43-44). She thus relocates the frontier—the margin of the state—in the person of such a leader, who 'embodies the state, yet ... also marks the spot where the state's rationality and jurisdiction fade into the uncontrollable ... dominions of extrajudicial force and violence' (id.: 45).

This broad framework foregrounds the Philippine state's struggle to assert its political and administrative authority across its territory, a project challenged in areas by the NPA and other insurgencies. In response, the government has been conducting counter-insurgency operations since the 1970s, such that in some areas the military is synonymous with the state. This was the case for San Luis hinterlands, where people's first experience of the state was through the militarisation of the 1980s. At the same time, those same disputed areas form 'the tribal zone' (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992: 3) where the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples like the Banwaon are, entangling them in the politics of insurgency and counter-insurgency. To win control of these frontier zones, the military—and by extension, the government—conspires with local 'leaders' like the *katangkawan*, whose traditional authority is amplified by the paramilitary forces they organize and command as part of the state's counter-insurgency program. This phenomenon is not restricted to the Philippine hinterlands, as Muslim 'big men' (Abinales 2000b: 193-194), gangsters (Sidel 2000: 155), local politicians (cf. McCoy, ed. 2009), and paramilitaries (Hedman and Sidel

2000: 58) have similarly been shown to manoeuvre for positions of power between the state and society. Other scholars have described similar cases of political ambition or entrepreneurship by local leaders elsewhere in the world (Poole 2004: 43, also Nugent 2001, Crais 2005, Tsing 1993, Kahn 1999). Yet even as the *katangkawan* attempts to build a Banwaon political community 'in the shadow of the state', his efforts are resisted by other Banwaon. Some resist because of a tradition of cultural and political autonomy they still value; leaders of the Tagdumahan do so because they appreciate indigenous self-determination as a political project; the few who have joined the NPA presumably fight out of ideological conviction.

In Chapter 1, we noted the traditional role of the *katangkawan* in resolving feuds. He is, in this aspect, a figure who stands outside, or prior to, the state. As a paramilitary leader, however, he also represents the state, even more than the rather pathetic figure of the mayor of San Luis. He does so because he is the face and front-line of the military, which in a context like the Ma-asam River area, is the embodiment of the state. In his person, he combines both 'private power and the supposedly impersonal or neutral authority of the state', allowing him 'to move across—and thus muddy—the seemingly clear divide separating legal and extralegal forms of punishment and enforcement' (Das and Poole 2004: 14). In a sense, the Banwaon of Balit and other villages see the *katangkawan* as the state, and his acts as those of government. This conflation of public and private interests, and public and private violence is reflected in the list naming the *nag-bonnets'* targets. On one hand, it supposedly listed known or suspected NPA-supporters. On the other hand, the list can be read as that of local leaders and organizers who are critical of the *katangkawan*, his record of abuses and projects, and—as discussed in Chapter 4—have an alternative political vision to that offered by the *katangkawan*. It is in this light that some villagers questioned the very basis for the inclusion of some names on the list. Datu Batoy echoed a common sentiment when he said:

"Those who object to [the katangkawan's] plans are those he accuses of being rebels or NPA-supporters. [Unfortunately,] he is

the only one the government trusts here. So of course they believe him. Especially with Bagwis (the katangkawan's son-in-law) being part of the [military's] intelligence [service]. [The katangkawan] can then be sure that those to be targeted by the government are their enemies [rather than those of the government]."

In short, my informants assert that the list contains the names of critics of the katangkawan, and not NPA-supporters; they are opposed to the former and his ambitions, not to the government. This is a crucial distinction that fashions a space for asserting a legitimate right to speech and assembly, dissent and self-determination, but which the *katangkawan* obscures through his influence on the state's understanding of the local political landscape. By deconstructing the list in this fashion, the people of Balit de-stabilize its seeming authority, reducing this supposed product of methodical intelligence-gathering to an emblem of the *katangkawan's* pettiness and insecurity. In the process, they suggest how the *katangkawan's* personal interests are inscribed into the state's intelligence and counter-insurgency work. In this way he turns his personal rivals in defining the Banwaons' political future into the government's public enemies; his own ambitions into national security; and—to bring us back to the case at hand—his private justice into state counter-insurgency.

The Poetics of Vendetta

Whitehead spoke of violence as 'poetic' for the way its performer utilizes cultural forms, symbols and icons to articulate an underlying rule-governed substrate, and for the way this 'substrate' is deployed (2004a: 9-10, compare Hinton 2004: 161-162, Ellis 2004: 109). I suggest that the relevant 'substrate' underlying the murders of Bagutot and Rico Badbaran, and the subsequent terror these unleashed, is vendetta. This seems clear enough from the *katangkawan's* declaration of intent to avenge his brother's killing, and from the subsequent, lethal acts of the *nag-bonnet*, presumably pursuant to his commands. The vow of vengeance draws on a set of traditional notions and practices of vendetta, described by 19th century Jesuit

missionaries in Agusan (cf. Arcilla, trans. 2003), and by the early 20th century anthropologist Garvan (1929: 146). Garvan, in fact, considered vengeance as one of only two motives for ‘war’ in the region (1929: 146; also Otterbein 2009: 44, Turney-High 1971 [1949]: 149). Comparative ethnographic material also document similar notions elsewhere in Mindanao (see essays in Torres III, ed. 2007, but especially Montillo-Burton, et al. 2007). Parenthetically, I would note that feuding and vendetta are indicative again of how the Banwaon traditionally were, and still largely are, centered on their families, which they defend or avenge using their resources. It is clear from these sources, as well as my own informants, that the practice of avenging the murder of one’s kin has historical and contemporary resonance for the Banwaon: The *katangkawan* promised and pursued it. Bagutot Badbaran’s brothers reportedly planned to avenge him, as well, but were dissuaded by Datu Batoy. Other informants similarly interpreted the situation as a conflict between the *katangkawan* and his supporters on one hand, and the rest of the Banwaon on the other; or between Balit and the *katangkawan*’s home-village of Mahagsay (or, in one version, the paramilitary camp at Km. 24); or, even more narrowly, between the Napongahan and the Badbaran families, especially as both victims of the *katangkawan*’s vengeance were from the latter family. Thus, when I asked people why they thought Rico Badbaran—the second victim, in Tabon-tabon—had been killed when he had once been a CAGU paramilitary, one source said, ‘*It seems they just looked at surnames*’ (*Murag apelyido na lang ang gitan-aw*) in choosing victims. Finally, terms such as *bahad* (vow or threat), *lido* (feud [B]), and *pangayaw* (an armed expedition or attack [B, M]), terms associated with the warrior past (*panahon sa bagani*), reemerged in people’s attempts to understand and explain their situation. The point is that the *katangkawan* invoked local notions of vendetta; and the people of Balit and other villages understood his subsequent actions as acts of vendetta.

Let us turn to the question of how the *katangkawan* performed the substrate of vendetta, invoking and reinterpreting it. His ‘performance’ of vendetta is broadly true to traditional notions and practices, enough at any rate to be recognizable as such. The immediate cause and motivation (revenge for a

murdered brother), the vow of vengeance, the tactics employed (secrecy, surveillance and ambush), mutilation of the victim's body (both victims were shot in the head at close range after they were killed), and even the resort to 'hired' non-kin killers; these are all in accord with traditional practice (Garvan 1929: 146 et seq.). Still, the *katangkawan*'s performance of vendetta does vary from traditional practices in important respects.

First is the way the *katangkawan* defined who he was waging vendetta against. In traditional vendetta, one attacks those responsible for killing one's kin, or their family-members. In this case, he did not vow vengeance on the NPA, who were credited with the killing. Instead, he targeted two villages—Balit and Tabon-tabon—and had a member of the Badbaran family in both places killed, even though there was no evidence these men or their family were involved in Arbie Napongahan's death. For some of my sources, it appears that villages not clearly aligned *with* the *katangkawan* were simply deemed *against* him. As Dodong Mamerto put it: '*It seems the government no longer allows people to [remain neutral]; you [now] have to choose which side you are on*'; for 'the government', read 'the *katangkawan*'. This suggests that the praxis of vendetta was mapped onto a polarized political landscape, with the *katangkawan* as/and the state on one side, and whoever was not with him on the other. This is perhaps why, after the killing of Bagutot Badbaran, a number of Balit residents reportedly suggested that the entire village should 'surrender' to the *katangkawan*, even though none of them had committed any offense against him or the state. The intention was simply to realign the village *with* the *katangkawan*. This was opposed by others, who said they had not committed any offense they should surrender for, but surrendering would mean admitting that they had. The idea was dropped when a clear lack of consensus made collective surrender impossible. The proposal however is striking in its acceptance of the *katangkawan*'s logic; i.e., that Balit was his 'enemy', thus making 'surrender' an option. For other informants, there was more behind the killings than vengeance for a slain brother. As we saw, the names on the hit-list were of those who were critical of the *katangkawan* and his militant subservience to the state. Moreover, the Badbaran family, historically linked to the area

around Tabon-tabon village, had been instrumental to the failure of the *katangkawan*'s titling project, discussed in Chapter 4. Finally, Balit in particular has a reputation for opposition to the state's counter-insurgency program, of which the *katangkawan* was part. In other words, the vendetta was declared against everyone who had ever expressed or manifested opposition to the *katangkawan* and his projects.

Second, there is the massive asymmetry between the forces involved. In traditional vendetta, opposing kin-groups rely on their respective resources. Here, there is a grotesque disparity in the military power between the *katangkawan* and his targets. Where the latter can deploy a score of amateurs armed with *surit* at best, the *katangkawan* has a force of hardened men with high-powered firearms at his disposal. If he could justify it, he could even plausibly call on the Philippine Army and Air Force, with their armor and aircraft (compare Canuday 2007: 281-282). But it must be remembered that the *katangkawan*'s military assets were issued to him and his supporters by the government, for use in counter-insurgency. In other words, the *katangkawan* drew beyond his kin-group's military power, to implicate the state's. This helps explain the pleas for help in buying firearms at the human-rights conference, as well as the general sense of frustration of many Banwaon. What can one do against such forces? Traditionally, one can (even perhaps should) retaliate and, but the disparity in military capability here is such that retaliation or feuding is foolhardy or unworkable. The violence has thus become unilateral; the *katangkawan* can declare vendetta and deal death, but his opponents effectively cannot. The *katangkawan*—and by extension the state—has achieved a monopoly of force.

Third, traditional vendetta was an affair between autonomous kin-groups, operating outside or even in defiance of the state. Here, the Philippine state has been implicated, not only in the sense that it is seen as standing behind the *katangkawan*, but also in that—as I have argued in the previous section—the *katangkawan* himself represents or embodies the state. Here the full dimensions of the central question posed at the human-rights

conference in Balit come through: Is the *katangkawan* acting as an avenging kinsman or an agent of the state? Is this private justice or government counter-insurgency? Can they legitimately retaliate against him, as one responsible for the deaths of two kinsmen? Or would that be an act of rebellion against the state? Can a vendetta be legitimately waged against the state itself? Conversely, can a state legitimately go on vendetta, alongside the *katangkawan*, and against the Banwaon of Balit and other villages? And again, what can one do when attacked or threatened by the *katangkawan* qua state; what do you do when the state seems to be waging vendetta against you? These are questions that emerge from the *katangkawan's* reinterpretation of traditional vendetta as an aspect of counter-insurgency and state-making. Clearly, the state cannot be bracketed out of this discussion of vendetta or local violence (Whitehead 2004: 14), given the way its presence, interests and actions have positioned the *katangkawan* and structured his performance of vendetta on its behalf.

It appears then that the negotiation of political relations between the state and the Banwaon was conducted here in the violent idiom of vendetta. This is seen in how the state is represented by the *katangkawan*, who executes its counter-insurgency program in the form of a vendetta, or conversely, performs vendetta as counter-insurgency. Those he considers responsible for his brother's death, his enemies, are the state's enemies. To send the *nag-bonnet* to kill these enemies is to execute both vengeance *and* counter-insurgency. The people of Balit and Tabon-tabon were unarmed civilians who had nothing to do with the death of Arbie Napongahan, but they were treated as if they did perhaps because they were opposed to the *katangkawan*, and therefore, to the state. In a sense, the state has been 'tribalised'; embodied by the traditional figure of the avenging kinsman, and operating by the familial logic of vengeance where everyone outside his circle of family and supporters is an enemy.

Interestingly, no one commented on the obvious illegality of the state's use of a death-squad to implement its counter-insurgency program. The Banwaon took it for granted that the Philippine state can and will deploy death-squads

in implementing its counter-insurgency program. Their problem with the *nag-bonnet* was that it was aimed at them, when it should not have been. As revealed in their deconstruction of the supposed hit- or death-list, what they oppose is not the state but the *katangkawan*. Unfortunately, the *katangkawan* is in a position to obliterate this critical distinction, labeling all who oppose him as enemies of the state, hence deserving of the death-squad's attentions. For the Banwaon aligned with the Tagdumahan then, the state becomes real not just in the sign of the soldier or a paramilitarised *katangkawan*, but now in the sinister figure of a masked assassin, as well. And where the census or tax-roll may elsewhere be the textual symbol of the state, here it is a death-list. I recall Tata Cinco's half-joking vision of the state as a school where the Banwaon are being terrorised into becoming submissive citizens. What indeed do you do under such dire circumstances? How do you assert your rights within such a system? It is a question the Banwaon were unable to answer, and one which deserves further inquiry.

Epilogue: Remembering

What do you do when your government is hunting you? In one sense, the Banwaon of Balit were saved from having to answer this question by the approach of the 2010 elections, which no one wanted to jeopardize. In another, the villagers' perseverance, their quietly heroic striving to ensure their political and economic security in the face of militarisation, suggests another answer. When one is threatened or attacked by a state—in the form of the *katangkawan* and the *nag-bonnet*—one can only endure. And endure they did, working and watching out for each other until they reached the respite offered by the elections.

To endure means taking the blows and bearing the scars that afterwards remind you of your history. Many of my informants have 'war-stories'; tales of how they escaped or survived violence: Nene Boyante remembers how she and her eldest daughter had played hide-and-seek with a helicopter gunship hunting over the forest. Datu Batoy was savagely beaten by

paramilitaries, and would have been executed but for the intervention of an elderly *datu*. Aver Precioso and Don Badbaran each survived attempts on their lives. These are essentially private stories, however, emerging only within the intimacy of family and friendship. Until now, that is.

Bagutot Badbaran's grave is a low, rectangular slab of unpainted concrete. It has a roof of blue tarpaulin, across which 'Badvaran' was painted in white. At its upper end, a cross had been molded onto its surface. Across its arms Bagutot's name had been inscribed while the concrete was still soft. Down the body of the cross were the year of his birth and death. Beside the cross, two spent 5.56 mm bullet-cartridges, and a cal. .45 slug—presumably found at the ambush-site or extracted from Badbaran's body—were embedded in the concrete (Figure 9, p. 272). On one side of the grave, 'Datu Mansubaybay', Badbaran's formal title as a *datu* was inscribed. Across the rest of the grave were various messages, such as '*[you were a] great man*', '*you were martyred for our sake*' (*marter ka alang kanamo*), and '*[a] good father*', below which was written '*Love u Papa*'. On the grave is a small porcelain bowl similar to that used in Banwaon rituals, to receive offerings for the dead.

To my knowledge, this is the first Banwaon grave that shifts from private memorial to public monument; a remembrance not just of an individual, but also of a chapter in the history of Balit. In the past, the dead would have been buried quickly, with little ceremony, far from the village, the intention being to sever all links between the living and the dead (compare Garvan 1929: 123-125, Cole 1956: 76-77). Relations between them are thereafter limited to occasional ritual offerings by those family members who have living memories of the dead, rituals which will cease being performed at the death of the last person who knew them. Here however, the dead has been made to address the living, through the enduring presence of his grave. It reminds the viewer of Bagutot Badbaran as a *datu*, member of a kin-group, and a father. It recalls the manner of his death; and through references such as that to martyrdom, its meaning for the people. In some measure, the family has re-appropriated Badbaran's body, which his killers had used as a

message of terror. More, the grave is a literally concrete reminder that speaks not only to those with living memory of Badbaran, but potentially, all succeeding generations of all Banwaon families. The social- and time-horizon of the Banwaon dead has been expanded by militarisation.

But older ways of remembering persist, as well. When Mimi and her children were looking at photographs of Bagutot Badbaran I gave them, she set her baby boy—the child she had been pregnant with when she and Bagutot were ambushed—on her lap, showed him one of the pictures, and told him, in the softest, most tender of tones:

Who is that, hmm? Who is that? That is your father. Do you know where your father is now? He is no more. He is dead now. He was shot [dead] by the soldiers' death-squad. Over there, on that road. But that is no matter; that is no matter. We will have our revenge, when the time comes.

CHAPTER 7

The Electoral Campaign of Aver Precioso

Elections in a Frontier Town

In the previous chapter, I remarked on how the Banwaon of Balit village struggled to find a response to the threat posed by a death-squad believed to be controlled by the *katangkawan*. Here, I explore one political response to that crisis: Engaging in local politics as a candidate for office. To that end, I focus here on the village of Balit, and its residents' participation in the 2010 national and local elections in the Philippines. I proceed on the premise that there exists a multiplicity of democracies (Paley 2008: 4-6; Bertrand et al., 2007: 6), and veer away from what Nugent calls 'normative democracy' (2008: 21-22), that single, largely Western-derived standard by which all societies can be—and all too often are—evaluated. This usefully warns us against any pre-conceived notion of what democracy should be like as we approach the case of Balit, and its residents' perceptions and experience of electoral politics, in the context of militarisation. It has been observed that 'the anthropological contribution to the study of democracy has been rather disappointing (Spencer 2007: 4). This essay hopes to address this seeming deficiency.

More specifically, I will focus on two aspects of how the Banwaon of Balit engaged in electoral politics: First, I will examine the local words used by voters in the process of engaging with the state's electoral processes, rather than investigating how 'common' political terms such as 'administration' or 'bureaucracy' are used or understood (Paley 2002: 471, 486; also Paley 2008: 7). This is not to take away from the ethnographic value of studying local understandings or interpretations of such terms. My focus was dictated in part by the fact that, as we shall see, Banwaon perspectives on elections quite simply do not employ the terms most people would normally associate with popular sovereignty and suffrage. And so, rather than limit myself to

asking why this should be so, I judged it would be more productive to see how the Banwaon themselves frame the electoral process discursively. Second, I will look into their electoral practices, or how they go actually went about voting in the 2010 elections. It is unfortunate that I am not in a position to examine electoral discourses and practices during periods when there are no elections (Banerjee 2008: 64-65). I can only say that almost all my informants saw the 2010 elections as a reprieve from months of near-constant threat of violence; something that they could 'endure towards'.

In both these tasks, I hope to outline as well how political ideas and practices can be, and were, renegotiated, and thus provide insight into the political adaptiveness of local communities, on one hand, and the limits of that adaptiveness, on the other. It is hoped that this can help answer the question of why the Banwaon even engage in elections, in a context where the state is perceived as hostile to them. In this, this chapter responds to the need to study the 'vernacularization of democracy'; i.e., the 'the ways in which values and practices of democracy become embedded in particular cultural and social practices, and in the process become entrenched in the consciousness of ordinary people' (Michelutti 2007: 639).

I begin first by providing an overview of the national political context at the time of the 2010 elections. I will then examine what I call the 'dominant' perspective on elections current among the Banwaon of Balit; to be followed by a discussion of an 'alternative' perspective, represented here by a specific local leader, named Aver Precioso. I will then describe his brief electoral campaign, before finally considering the implications of his political project for the Banwaon.

Context

The 2010 elections in the Philippines was a massive political exercise, with simultaneous electoral contests for national and local offices. These included the positions of the President, Vice-President, twelve of the twenty-

four seats of the Senate, all seats in the House of Representatives; and the local government posts of provincial governors, city and municipal mayors, as well as the legislative councillors for provinces, cities and towns.

While electoral contests in the Philippines have historically been characterized by intense public interest, participation and excitement, the 2010 elections were exceptional so, thanks to the tension between the outgoing president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of the Lakas-Kampi-CMD party, and her administration's principal challenger, Sen. Benigno Cojuangco Aquino III of the Liberal Party. Arroyo's nine years in office had been marked by a succession of widely-publicized scandals alleging corruption on her part, her husband and cabinet-members; and lingering questions about the legitimacy of her 2004 election victory (Hicken 2008: 75-77; Thompson 2010: 156, 160). She had weathered the political and media criticisms and low public opinion through her cunning use of political alliances with key government officials (Quimpo 2009: 343-345; Abinales 2008: 297-299; Thompson 2010: 156). Barred by the country's Constitution from seeking another term, she chose Gilberto Teodoro, her cabinet's Secretary for National Defence, as her party's candidate for the presidency. She then stood for election as a member of the House of Representatives, for her home-district in Pampanga province.

Sen. Aquino's father was Sen. Benigno Aquino, Jr., believed to have been assassinated in 1983 on orders of former-President Ferdinand Marcos, who saw him as a threat to his power. Aquino's mother was Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, a self-described housewife who rode the wave of opposition catalysed by the murder of her husband into a clear electoral victory over Marcos in the 1985 presidential elections, despite the latter's resort to widespread violence and intimidation. When Marcos refused to acknowledge her victory, she led a series of protest demonstrations culminating in the so-called People Power Revolution of February 1986, after which she was declared President of the Philippines (see Boudreau 2004, chapter 8). The residual appeal from his parents' roles as icons of the anti-dictatorship struggle allowed Aquino to draw on the spirit of change they

represented. It helped as well that Corazon Aquino died at the right time: A few months before the campaign period began, so that her funeral as a former head-of-state garnered media attention, and recalled the Aquino family's role in the Philippine history and politics (Abinales 2010: 219-220; Thompson 2010: 156). Not surprisingly, her son ran on an anti-corruption platform. This set down a narrative that equated Arroyo with the corrupt and power-hungry Marcos, and himself with his mother's anti-establishment role. This allowed him to evoke the hopes and dreams of the 1986 revolution, and insinuate that Arroyo and her party betrayed those dreams. Change therefore was his message, and this was clearly one of the principal discourses throughout the elections.

As it happened, the incumbent governor of Agusan del Sur province, Maria Valentina Plaza, and the incumbent mayor of San Luis municipality, Jose Chua, both belonged to the same political party as Arroyo. The sense that there was a need and here an opportunity for change from an administration that did not serve the interests of the public resonated with many Banwaon, who have had to endure the economic and other hardships that went with being—at that time—one of the most impoverished municipalities, in one of the most impoverished provinces, in one of the most impoverished regions of the country. Some observers point to the fact that Agusan del Sur province is controlled by the Plaza family, one of the so-called 'political dynasties', as a partial explanation for the widespread poverty in the province. Beginning with their father, Democrito Plaza—a logger of humble origins who parlayed his folksy populism and vast fortune into political power—the Plazas have controlled the province's Congressional representation and provincial government for more than thirty years (see Severino 1996). In the 2010 elections, out-going Gov. Plaza would stand for election as a member of the House of Representatives, representing one of Agusan del Sur's two electoral districts. Her brother, the out-going representative of Agusan del Sur in Congress, Rep. Adolph Edward Plaza, would run for the governorship. The wife of another brother was to stand for election for the other electoral district of the province.

In San Luis, out-going Mayor Chua was, like Arroyo, barred from seeking another term, and stood instead for election as Vice-Mayor, designating his then Vice-Mayor, Ronaldo ‘Dodong’ Corvera as their ‘administration’ party’s candidate for the Mayoralty. Corvera’s run for office was contested by two ‘opposition’ candidates, Jinny Liganio and Andres ‘Bebot’ Collantes. Collantes is a Manobo who had previously managed to win a seat on the municipal legislative council. He seems to have relied on the fact that he hails from the same Barangay as Corvera, and thus hoped to split the latter’s bailiwick. Collantes stood for election as a candidate of the Nacionalista Party. Liganio is from Barangay Laminga, who had also previously served on the legislative council. He campaigned under the Liberal Party of Sen. Aquino III, echoing his call for change. Liganio is a Manobo, but because he is a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, he could not consume pork or wine, barring him from participating in traditional rituals. There was much speculation as to how local actors—the Church, the RGS sisters, the Tagdumahan, as well as paramilitary leaders like the *katangkawan* and BenHur Mansolohay—would position themselves in the elections.

It should also be noted that aside from voting for twelve senators and their legislative district’s one representative to the House of Representatives, each voter could also vote for a ‘party-list’ candidate. This was a system of sectoral representation where voters could choose from a list of accredited political parties representing marginalized social sectors, on the basis of their platforms. There were parties representing the disabled, regional groups such as for Bicol, the Ilocos and Mindanao, gays, occupational groups, and indigenous people, among many others. Interestingly, the 2010 elections saw the emergence of seven competing parties claiming to represent the indigenous peoples, as a sector.⁴⁶ Of these, the Banwaon mostly favoured KATRIBU, which had a nationwide network of indigenous community organizations and formations with links to the radical left.

⁴⁶ For the official list of accredited party-list groups, see <http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=Elections/2010natloc/2010NatLocCandidates/partylist>).

Finally, just to add even more to the excitement of the elections, the 2010 exercise would be the first to use electronic voting machines. This gave rise to more speculation about the integrity of the polls. In San Luis, there were misgivings about the use of the machines, given that there was no electricity in a number of barangays, and power supply was subject to unpredictable outages lasting anywhere from a few minutes to two or three days.

The Importance of Being Approachable

Everyone expected that as elections drew near, there would be an easing of the threat of violence from the death-squad. True enough, no sightings of masked men were reported from February 2010 onwards; Balit was once more 'peaceful', to use one man's description. With radio and television devoting increasing coverage of the elections, people's thoughts and conversations began to focus on the electoral contest as well. A few weeks before the election, I (AG) had the following conversation with an elderly Banwaon couple (W for the woman, and H for her husband) at their home in Balit:

AG: Who will you vote for [in the elections]?

W: The one in our bossom, [the one] who can help.

AG: What do you mean by 'help'?

W: (Haltingly.) ... with our livelihood, and in [case of] an emergency.

.....

H: [We will vote for] the one we see has helped us, who can help us when the time comes.

AG: Help with your livelihood?

W: Yes, with our livelihood. Life is harder now than before.

AG: What are your problems with your livelihood?

W: Our harvest is poor, and sells for a low price. At the same time, prices for goods are high. (Pause.) It is now time to clear the underbrush [in the swidden fields] (She sighs, as if merely thinking of the labour ahead makes her tired already.)

H: We do have a paddy-farm [elsewhere], but I said, 'if something happens to us there, we would have no one to run to'. [It would have been different] if we were younger; we [would] have the energy for running or hiding.

W: [Barangay] Captain [Aver Precioso] told us, 'Don't worry, you're not the targets of the [death-squad]; we officials are the ones in the heat'. But it cannot be that we have no regard for our neighbours. And we can never be sure, but they may regard everyone here in Balit the same way. We are a community, after all. What do you think?

To keep the conversation on the elections, I speak of the importance of elections and the need to consider candidate's track-records.

H: (Angrily.) For me, these candidates are just using the [indigenous people], so they could win. Once they sit [in office], [we will hear] nothing more [from them].

AG: So why vote at all?

W: We need to find someone to help us.

H: What is important is that our surroundings are peaceful, without conflict, so we can all farm properly, and we can all work without fear of anyone.

W: [It is] true, it is difficult if we have to keep turning around [to see if anyone is behind us]; we cannot work properly.

I have chosen to quote this conversation at some length because it captures rather well the views and attitudes towards the election of most of the Banwaon in Balit. We see here the overwhelming concern over livelihood, and how it is constrained by the security situation in Balit. In this case, the man had a paddy-field they could cultivate, instead of relying mainly on woodcutting as they did during my fieldwork, but they could not farm it for fear of being attacked. This linking of economic constraint to political insecurity is a perspective very widely shared in Balit. I noted in Chapter 6 how Balit residents explain the rise of woodcutting in their community as a

response to security problems. It is clear that the two main issues for Balit residents are livelihood and security, and these two issues are understood as linked to each other. Specifically, the fear of becoming victims of the death-squad prevents Balit residents from maximizing their livelihood options—they have land they cannot till, work-opportunities they cannot take, trees they cannot cut—exacerbating their immiseration.

The conversation also reveals how voting is seen as a means of ensuring that someone who ‘who can help’ will be in office. This imperative even overrides the underlying cynicism most Banwaon feel towards politicians, who are seen as concerned more about their personal interests than public service. This perspective indicates, first of all, the local irrelevance of notions of popular sovereignty on which the very idea of elections are premised. Rather, elections were about installing someone who can ‘help’—not through political representation—but materially, in the form of services or, indeed, money. Secondly, it reflects an implicit awareness of the Banwaons’ economic vulnerability. There is, in other words, a cognizance of the limits of their personal, kin and community’s economic and social resources, in a volatile world. Lastly, the response to those limits is to turn to persons in office for assistance. Elected officials may thus be approached for help with a sudden illness or accident in the family, donations for a community project, or mediation with another government agency. Other prominent people, such as a parish priest, or the head of an NGO may similarly be approached. However, such cases do not have the illusion of reciprocity at play between a Banwaon petitioner and an elected official; i.e., the Banwaon voted for that official, and the official reciprocates by providing assistance. I say ‘illusion’ because there are extremely few long-term patron-client relations between Banwaon or their families, and politicians and their families. Banwaon do recognise debts-of-gratitude, but this in itself does not make them the ‘followers’ of one or another politician. Moreover, most Banwaon seek politicians’ help only as a last resort. There are many cases, for example, where assistance in hospitalisation was sought only after exhausting all possible options, including resort to shamanic healing, by which time the patient was near death. The point is that approaching local officials for help

is undertaken with more of a sense of embarrassment rather than entitlement or expectation, as would be the case if 'true' reciprocity was at play. Indeed, the point of choosing someone known to be generous is to increase the chances of a successful petition. My sense is that the sense of embarrassment or shame petitioners may feel can be endured only through a largely fictive claim to reciprocity between voter and politician.

This brings us to the primary standard by which electoral candidates are evaluated by the Banwaon: Approachability, or to use the local terms, one who is '*mado-olan*' (someone you can approach) or '*makatabang*' (someone who can help); or less often, '*maka-istorya*' (someone you can talk to [about problems]) or '*makasabot*' (someone who can understand [your situation]). They seek one who is approachable and solicitous; who will not look down on you and deepen your shame. In conversation after conversation about elections, this notion of *mado-olan* is almost always cited by Banwaon in Balit as their basis for deciding who to vote for. To a large extent, the candidates' electoral platforms or promises, and their qualifications for office are irrelevant. So important is this standard that it is extended to a candidate's spouse. A candidate can actually lose support if his/her spouse has a reputation for being aloof or severe, so a poor farmer would be too intimidated to approach them. Thus, one issue some voters had with one 'opposition' candidate was that his wife reputedly would not allow anyone without a mobile-phone into their home; i.e., she was '*mata-pobre*', someone who looks down on poor people, marked by their lack of mobile-phones. Conversely, politicians who are warm, down-to-earth, and are known to have helped out in the past, like Eddie Sacabin—who was an 'administration' candidate for a seat on the town-council—could expect strong support from those in Balit he had previously assisted. I do not mean to suggest that there is unanimity in evaluations of candidates' qualifications. The interplay of personal interests and affects, networks and histories ensures that a candidate who is eminently *mado-olan* in the eyes of one Banwaon is less so to another. Still, it is possible to speak of people like Sacabin who are widely considered as approachable.

The need for someone *mado-olan* is so important that the people of Balit sometimes met to split their votes between two candidates. That way, they could still feel comfortable approaching whoever won the election, who they could plausibly claim to have voted for. In the 2010 elections however, there was no need to pre-arrange Balit's votes as they were already split between the three mayoral candidates, if unevenly. Interestingly, and despite the wide currency of the idea that the Banwaon needed to have people who are *mado-olan* in town-hall, the notion of forming a Banwaon voting or electoral bloc has never developed, probably because of the degree of autonomy accorded each Banwaon family and individual. Banwaon communities can agree on how to split their votes in a given election, but would be wary of organising a body that institutionalises the process of deciding who to vote for; there was too much risk of hierarchisation. At the height of its influence—the late 1990s and early 2000s—the Tagdumahan was approached by candidates soliciting electoral support, but it could never guarantee the delivery of votes even then.

The concern for electing someone who can help is clearly the dominant attitude of Banwaon towards elections, but I suspect many non-Banwaon share this attitude, as well. Indeed, this helps explain how the out-going mayor, Jose Chua, had been able to remain in office for so many years. He was mayor of San Luis for sixteen of the twenty years preceding the 2010 elections, and the only reason he could not sit as mayor those four years was because the law barred him from holding more than two consecutive terms. Chua is not however the stereotypical Philippine political dynast. He relies on a social network of kin and mercantile allies drawn from the Yecyec and other families in San Luis, rather than the force of his authority or access to means of violence (Sidel 1997: 947-948; also McCoy 1993). He does not have the autocratic leadership style of a 'boss' (Sidel 1997: 950, also 1999, 1998). He is unpretentious; he does not have a grand home, bodyguards or other outward sign of wealth or power. Nor does he have the lavish appetites a leader is supposed to have (Mbembe 1992; see also Bayart 2009). He is not a saintly man, however. There were stories of how he and other officials took cuts out of government program budgets; and public

infrastructure and services were severely neglected especially in the hinterlands. Indeed, his notion of public service seems to be limited to his occasional acts of solicited generosity; the rest of the time, he ignored his constituency and went about securing his own interests and those of his allies. Still, he is a generous man. Chua's family is among the first Bisaya settlers in San Luis, with lands in and around the town-centre. However, he has practically given away some of those lands, which now form Pilpak, the commercial, transport, residential and religious centre of the town. Jose Chua is a rather fine example of someone who is *mado-olan*.

The Campaign of Aver Precioso

Aver Precioso was the elected Barangay Captain of Balit at the time of my fieldwork. He is Banwaon, a son of one of the five founding fathers of the village. He is notorious for getting into a heated argument with Mayor Chua over the latter's longstanding inaction on the threats on Balit's security, during which Precioso famously picked up his chair and smashed it down onto the floor. In Balit, he is known to scold youths who are out of school but do not work. I have also heard people from other villages tell with awe and wonder the story of how Precioso challenged the military's company commander in San Luis to a fist-fight. This last tale is apocryphal, but is indicative of his reputation for standing up for his convictions. He is more than a hothead free of all sense of diplomacy, however. One man commented that Precioso's rages come from a desire to see his people improve. And while he does not have even a high-school diploma, Precioso impresses one as perceptive, intelligent and articulate. He also has a vision of his people drawing on the best that Banwaon tradition and modernity can offer, though the details of this happy balance escape him and most other Banwaon leaders. Finally, he is in touch with his people's concerns; he has no airs, sometimes strolling about the village talking to people, who accept his company as they would a trusted neighbour. He shared his constituency's difficult situation. He had survived a grenade-attack by the *katangkawan*'s brother, and was on the death-squad's hit-list. He had been

working a cornfield in 2009 but had to abandon it as it was too near where death-squad assassins supposedly lay in wait. It was to help address this threat that he decided to enter the 2012 electoral race for a seat in the legislative council of San Luis, as a candidate of the Liberal Party of Sen. Benigno Aquino III.

I only had two occasions to converse with Precioso after he declared his intention to stand for office, and before Election Day. He was understandably busy with his duties as Barangay Captain, and his campaign work. When I did manage to ask him why he decided on this course, he provided a thorough critique of Chua's leadership:

'This Mayor, he has done almost nothing for the indigenous people. In his campaign [speeches], he keeps saying, 'I am indigenous!' But if you look [closely], [you see] he has done nothing [for them]. He has no plans, no vision of the future. He just makes sure he has something to hand out if someone [asks for help]. If you go to him, to ask for medicine for the sick, he will have something to give. Never mind that there are no medicines in the RHU.⁴⁷ If you ask for help for [your] hunger, he will have something to give. Never mind that he has no program for [improving] farming. If you are an evacuee, he will give you rice [to eat]. But he will not look too closely into your situation. He is not about service. You need to have programs; you need to have a holistic perspective [on problems]. Just look at our roads. He built many side-roads in the lowlands. Which are all [in disrepair]. What he should have done is improve the road to Bayugan. [That way] we do not have to go around, through Talacogon. Then they take 'short-cuts' on projects.⁴⁸ How cunning. [No one opposes him] because they all owe him, or owe a debt-of-soul to him. Especially the [Manobo and Banwaon], who are easy to snare. That is why, though he has sat in power for so long, there is no progress in San Luis. Here ... we have so many employees. Some of them have nothing to do, they just hang around the town-hall, waiting to be told to maybe buy whatever. [They are] lackeys of the politicians. And municipal officials and employees have so much money! In first-class municipalities, you see councillors riding old motorcycles [to work]. Here, [some] councillors have two Stradas each.⁴⁹ Employees—you just have to wonder—are able to build houses in Butuan City. In Butuan, yet! I do not know

⁴⁷ The RHU or Regional Health Unit is a government-run clinic.

⁴⁸ This is a euphemism for officials taking a cut out of a government program's budget.

⁴⁹ The Mitsubishi Strada is a high-status SUV.

where they got the money [for that]. This is why, if those in town-hall are not replaced, nothing will come of us.'

Again, we see here references to violence and poverty. Though Precioso did not link the two as many Banwaon did, he did call for understanding the peoples' problems holistically. Note how he speaks of looking deeper into the situation of evacuees, refusing to see them only as a humanitarian problem, but as living signs of larger forces at work. This, I think is what he means by being holistic (*sa kinatibuk-an*). He is also on-point about the limits of Chua's mode of leadership; its lack of vision, fecklessness, poor planning, and alleged corruption.

By and large, Precioso's plan was well received by people in Balit, despite its apparent quixotic nature. A young Banwaon activist described people's reaction to Precioso's decision to seek office thus:

'Many people are positive [about it]. The indigenous people are taking courage, for now [there is] one who can reveal [to the world] their [true] situation. These councilors who are loggers, they play deaf [to our plight].'

This was in a context where—as I noted in another chapter—the people of Balit were seeking ways to generate public awareness of the oppressive conditions they endured. On another occasion, a woman stressed the need for genuine debate over issues of public concern in the town's legislative council, indicating a perception that local councillors had heretofore been mere yes-men of the mayor. She said:

'It would be well if [Precioso] won, so [things] will get lively for those in town-hall. They will surely have debates, because that man has a critical frame of mind.'

There were even unconfirmed reports that Balit's nemesis, the *katangkawan*, had endorsed Precioso's candidacy. When I wondered why the *katangkawan* himself did not seek election, a Banwaon informant commented, 'Their people are so few; they would only lose'. An electoral

defeat, in other words, would reveal how small the *katangkawan*'s following actually was.

Precioso's election opponents seemed very concerned. The governor summoned him to her office, and in so many words, offered him a job if he would only quit the race. He declined. It was this rejection of the governor's offer that led me to believe that—while conceding that ambition may be part of Precioso's motivations—there is an element of idealism, as well. In any case, Mayor Chua responded by withholding the salaries of the public school teachers in Balit. And as everyone expected, the 'administration' party 'splurged' on votes on Election Day, handing out PhP 500.00 to voters in Balit and other key villages, in an effort to persuade them not to vote for opposition candidates like Precioso.

There were also fears that government troops would be stationed in Balit for the elections, ostensibly to ensure peace and order, but serving to intimidate the many voters wary of the military. This fear seemed to have come true when, on the day before the elections, a police wagon, a troop-carrier and a military truck, all carrying troops in combat-gear entered Balit. Standing beside the road, I watched the convoy drive between the houses lining its sides. In its wake, residents looked out their doors and windows in alarm, asking me where the troops were headed. I watched the vehicles turn right, onto the side road to the Barangay Hall, and told them. One woman joked that the troops were here to arrest me; I smiled dutifully. Following the vehicles, I saw Datu Batoy already heading towards the Barangay Hall. I passed Bobbie Gaud at the door of her house, furiously texting on her mobile-phone, who asked me where the troops went. I answered her, and moved on. When I reached the road junction, Datu Batoy was already approaching the troops. I decided to wait at my hang-out, 'Nay Melania's store-front, near the junction. Tata Cinco and Itel, Aver Precioso's wife, were there. Cinco observed that people were threatened by the arrival of the troops. Itel wished that only policemen, not soldiers, would be posted in Balit for election security. Datu Batoy joined us after a few minutes, informing us that the new arrivals were policemen from the provincial capital, here to

secure the elections. The atmosphere lightened immediately. We watched as Aver Precioso—who must have been at the Barangay Hall—gave a group of twelve policemen a tour of the village. Two or three of them handed out candies to children playing in the road. Some children happily accepted the sweets; others did so reluctantly, as if wishing only not to offend; and still others simply stared, silent and still, at the armed men. ‘There truly are [people] afraid of soldiers’, Tata Cinco said. In the event, the policemen remained in and around the Barangay Hall through Election Day, and presented no problems to the community.

Election Day and its Aftermath

Election Day, 10 May 2010, was cold and rainy. I woke up early to check the government school-house which would be used as the polling-station. On the way, I passed Precioso’s home, and saw a large mass of flip-flops on the ground before his door, indicating his many visitors. Jovencia Rocero emerged from within, found her flip-flops, and walked with me. I asked her who she’ll vote for. ‘*The [Barangay] Captain*’, she replied, referring to Precioso. ‘*And for mayor?*’, I continued. ‘*The Captain’s line-up [of candidates] ... (and anticipating my next question, added) ... all the way up to the governor and president.*’ Grumbling about the need to oust the Plazas and Chuas from office, she turned towards her home, leaving me in front of the school-house.

The polling-station opened late at 7.20, thanks to the rain. Residents began arriving, individually or in small groups. Voting began with the residents deputised to help the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) team assigned to Balit. The first two ballots were received by the electronic voting machine without incident, but the third was rejected because the voter had smudged it. ‘*A waste[d vote]!*’, many commented. Word of this spread quickly among the growing crowd outside; people grew uneasy at the thought that their votes might similarly be voided. Poll-watchers warned voters to be careful in handling their ballots, and the spell of anxiety passed. By 9.00, despite

intermittent, heavy rain, there was a large crowd standing in the mud in front of the polling-station, waiting for their turn to vote. At about 10.30, there was a brief power outage, after which the voting machine stopped functioning. People grew anxious again. Sensing a lull in the activities, I went home for breakfast. On returning, I saw that despite the problems with the voting machine, everyone remained outside the polling-station. The COMELEC team had removed the voting machine from off the top of its columnar plastic ballot-box, which now looked like a glorified wheelie-bin. Voting continued, with people dropping their ballots into the bin, without the machine's intervention. Outside, I kept running into residents from Balit's farther settlements, people I had not seen in a long time but had come to cast their votes. At 15.40, a muddy motorcycle arrived. Riding pillion was a COMELEC representative, with a replacement voting machine wrapped in spattered plastic. There was another pause in the proceedings as the new machine was installed. It failed to even boot up, and was removed as well. There was grumbling from the people outside, some of whom disparaged the 'automatic delaying machine', but voting continued.

The last vote was cast at around 18.35. 356 out of 422 registered voters in Balit had participated, representing a very respectable turnout of 84.36 %, despite the harsh weather and the muddy distances some voters had to walk (Figures 10, 11, pp. 273-274).⁵⁰ This was well above the voter-turnout in previous elections. Precioso and a group of about fifty men and women remained on guard in front of the polling-station after voting ended. It was dark, because of a second power outage. The COMELEC team-leader wanted to bring the ballot box to the town-hall. Precioso objected, preferring that it remain where he and his supporters could guard it. The atmosphere grew tense, but after a series of phone calls and consultations, it was agreed that the ballot box will be escorted from Balit by Precioso's watchers to the town-hall, where his party-mates' watchers will receive it from them, all under COMELEC supervision.

⁵⁰ Voter-turnout would be higher had those who had died or out-migrated been taken off the roll.

At around 19.35, I was standing midway between the school-yard gate and the group of forty men and women still in front of the polling-station. Just as I turned to look out the gate, I saw the orange flash of two gunshots fired in our direction. I remained standing there, enthralled by the sight of actual gunfire—all those security briefings emphasising the immediate need to take cover were wasted on me—before thinking to check the peoples' reaction. I turned to see Precioso and the others angrily marching in a phalanx towards the source of the gunfire, some of them shouting for torches. Another shot was fired. Undaunted, the people surged past me, towards the gate. A COMELEC official shouted that the ballot box must be protected, and this halted the charge. A few men ran on, bent on capturing the shooter, but they returned empty-handed ten minutes later. No one was hurt, but we waited for the policemen to investigate. After thirty minutes, they still had not made an appearance. 'They must be guarding the television [at the Barangay Hall]', someone finally said. No one made anything more of the shooting incident.

At 20.20, the ballot box was brought by a convoy of motorcycles to the town-hall. I joined the remaining residents as they exited the schoolyard. I was surprised when, instead of dispersing, the group began to tour through the village, with individuals peeling away as they came to their homes, until we came to my door and I stopped, watching those who remained walk on. This was the only time I have ever seen such behaviour.

With the nation-wide use of electronic voting machines, election results were known, by Philippine standards, in a shockingly short time. Instead of the usual manual vote-counting that could go on for weeks—giving ample opportunity for tricks, bribes, threats or violence—it was clear by the next day that Aquino had a commanding lead in the presidential race. He eventually won by a very comfortable margin, reaping 42% of all votes cast in a field of nine presidential candidates, with deposed former-President Joseph Estrada a distant second with 26% (Abinales 2011: 166; Thompson 2010: 154, 155, 159). Arroyo's party was humiliated at the polls. Her presidential nominee got little more than 11% of the votes cast (Thompson 2010: 159); the party's

senate line-up won only two of twelve contested seats; and though they retained control of the House of Representatives, it was expected that their majority would erode when Aquino began trading committee-appointments for legislative support in the House (id.: 155). The national trend, in sum, saw 'opposition' candidates defeating 'administration' candidates.

In San Luis, the voting-machine double-debacle meant that votes had to be counted by hand. On the day after the elections, I woke up to find a subdued atmosphere in the village, with people anxiously awaiting text-messages from neighbours monitoring the ballot-counting at town-hall. I found Arnold Carcillar—a man I would more usually see working or on his way to some task or another—sitting contemplatively at 'Nay Melania's' store-front. I asked him for news.

Arnold: Corvera [the 'administration' candidate for mayor] is leading.

AG: Is it a big lead?

Arnold: More than a thousand votes. Minlana [the candidate with whom Precioso was aligned] is the underdog.

Melania: In [Barangay] Baylo, the 'administration' handed out PhP 500.00 each [to buy votes], but Minlana still won.

Arnold: [Minlana's] hope is [Barangay] Binicalan, because there are more than a thousand voters there.

AG: I thought Balit has the largest voting population [among the hinterland communities].

Arnold: No. It is not [readily] apparent, because their [village] centre looks small, but they have [many] settlements scattered around it. Binicalan is larger than [Balit]; we only have some 400 voters here.

Melania: What are the results for [Barangay] Laminga [Minlana's home-village]?

Arnold: Minlana [will win there], but [the village will] not be solidly [behind him].

AG: Why not?

Arnold: There will be those swayed by money.

AG: Politicians really resort to vote-buying here, don't they?

Arnold: (Pause.) [Aver Precioso] gave out PhP 400.00; Cullantes, PhP 400.00 as well. If only the 'administration' [party] had also approached me... (He smiles.) It doesn't matter that I received money, I just vote for my chosen candidate anyway. I cannot turn my back on [Precioso], because he is one of our own. We can go to him, he understands us. I cannot abandon him. You can even check my ballot [if you want]. [I am not] like the Otacan [family], who clearly backed the 'administration'.

Note that while I asked about the elections in general, Arnold Carcillar had assumed I meant the local elections. I found over the next few days how almost everyone was similarly focused on the local elections, keen to discuss their analyses and the evidence they marshalled to support their views.

Later that afternoon, it was clear that Precioso and his party-mates were lagging behind the 'administration' candidates in the counting, and villagers were growing dejected. I was again at my hang-out, talking to 'Nay Melania and Mimi Badbaran, when Precioso's wife Itel came and sat down across from me, immediately launching into an election update:

Itel: There are seven or eight barangays still without complete election results. But four of those [will be split between the candidates]. And it looks like the ['administration' party] junked Sacabin.⁵¹

Melania: Na! What will become of us? The [candidates] we can talk to are being [brought] down. (A heavy silence follows.)

AG: How is Aver (Precioso) doing?

Itel: In the counting here [in Balit, he got] 73 %.

Mimi: [They say he is the leading all other candidates for a seat on the town council.]

⁵¹ Eddie Sacabin was a long-standing ally of Balit on the town-council, who was on the administration slate.

Itel: (She shakes her head.) *The counting is still ongoing.*

.....

AG: *Do you think he'll win?*

Itel: *I don't know.* (She sighs.)

AG: (I try to sound hopeful.) *[I think] if he can get solid votes [from the remaining villages], he can still make it.*

Itel: *That won't happen, Attorney. Even in Laminga (Minlana's home-village), Corvera got votes. (Pause.) Eddie was Corvera's man here. Did you see him yesterday, going around [the village] on his motorcycle? That was it; he was handing out money [for Corvera]. Money is a powerful demon, no? (She shakes her head.) It would have been better had Cullantes just handed over his votes to Minlana. When he saw he was surely going to lose, he should have just endorsed Minlana. After all, he said it was OK for people not to vote for him, as long as they did not vote for the 'administration' [party].*

Dongdong Andreca strode by the store-front, and shouted: *'My friends! The victory of one is the victory of all! The defeat of one is the defeat of all!'* This was greeted with sad laughter by the people in the vicinity. Someone said, *'True!'* Andreca walked away.

Unlike the rest of the country, where 'opposition' outperformed 'administration' candidates, the municipality of San Luis and Agusan del Sur province remained in 'administration' hands. The Plazas and their allies swept the provincial elections, and won the two Congressional seats for Agusan del Sur, as well.⁵² In San Luis, 'administration' candidate Ronaldo Corvera—and his running-mate, Jose Chua—took town-hall.⁵³ Precioso, despite the support of (most of) the people of Balit, did not win a seat on the town-council. Eddie Sacabin, a Bisaya known in Balit as *mado-olan*, won

⁵² For official election results for the positions of governor and councillors of the provincial legislative council of Agusan del Sur province, see <http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=Elections/2010natloc/Results/provelec>. For official election results for Agusan del Sur's two congressional districts, see <http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=Elections/2010natloc/Results/congelec>.

⁵³ For official election results for the positions of mayor, vice-mayor and councillors of the municipal legislative council for the Municipality of San Luis, see <http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=Elections/2010natloc/Results/cityelec>.

another term on the town-council despite being junked by his party; he publicly attributed his victory to the support of Balit. One would have thought that people in an impoverished province and municipality, at a time when the *zeitgeist* was fairly howling for change, would have shown greater affinity for 'opposition' candidates, but there is no underestimating the combined power of money, machinery and manipulable patron-client ties among the Bisaya. It also seems that the Liberal and other political parties took one look at the Plaza family's strangle-hold on Agusan del Sur politics and decided to allocate their resources elsewhere. Indeed, while Balit was festooned—as all inhabited places in the Philippines are at election time—with posters and streamers, none of them featured candidates for national offices. In San Luis town-centre, there were election paraphernalia for candidates for provincial offices, but very few from those for national posts. This is indicative of how places that really needed change, like the village of Balit and the town of San Luis, and indeed Agusan del Sur province itself, were bypassed by national political movements articulated through electoral contests, underscoring and intensifying their political marginality.

Banwaon Politics is Local

But even as the Banwaon were bypassed by national politics and politicians in the 2010 elections, so did the Banwaon of Balit sidestep national politicians. The rather lengthy quotes I employed above were intended not only to foreshadow the electoral fates of Minlana and Precioso, but also to indicate most Banwaons' intense engagement with local politics. Conversely, they exhibited little concern for the national politics. While they were aware that the presidency, vice-presidency and twelve senate seats were also at stake in the 2010 elections, few people seemed interested in them. Not one of my sources, for example, even mentioned the senate race without my prompting. From the responses I got, the tendency was to link one's choices for senator to one's choice of president. However, few seemed really interested in the presidential race, either. The drama of the Aquino vs. Arroyo, pure people-power vs. money-from-corruption

confrontation was lost on the Banwaon. After the elections, I asked as many people as I could about their choice for president. All but one declared they had voted for Aquino; their reasons for doing so struck me as somewhat superficial. Most answered with something like, *'I liked him'*; or as one woman put it, *'He was my trip'* (*Siya man ang na-tripan ko*). A few chose Aquino because they felt that was already the trend, and they simply got on the metaphorical band-wagon. As one man said, *'I just asked who the other people chose'*. One informant said, *'These Aquinos are known to be good people'*, but could not discuss this with any further depth. Another proudly said he had chosen Aquino, sounding as if the elections were a grand guessing game and he had lucked on the correct answer. To be sure, there was a minority of Banwaon voters who invoked the notion of *makatabang* or 'someone who can help' in deciding on their choice for president. The sense however of a great spatial and political distance between politicians in the capital Manila, and Barangay Balit, posed a problem for them. When I pressed them on how Aquino would be able to 'help', most of these voters shrugged, and adopted a 'let's just hope for the best' attitude. Datu Batoy, who had campaigned hard for the defeated Minlana, tried to console himself with the idea that since Aquino—leader of Minlana's party—was now the president, they can now appeal to him directly, and bypass the unsympathetic officials who retained control of the municipal and provincial offices. Even he, however, did not sound convinced by his argument. The sense of distance simply defeated the idea of being able to approach the president or any other national politician for 'help'. As one man who had voted for Aquino told me:

'Na. [Aquino] is not here. If you had stood for elections instead, I would have voted for you, because you are always here. [But Aquino] is there in Manila.'

This foregrounds the local relevance of presence, understood as the political inverse of distance. I recall one man who became enthusiastic about voting for KATRIBU, a party-list candidate representing indigenous peoples, because he had seen their nominees during their campaign-visit to San Luis. He was particularly impressed by how the nominees had eaten their lunch

with their hands 'like Banwaon'. However, Precioso was less impressed with KATRIBU, saying he had only seen their nominees twice in San Luis. He suggested that candidates from groups like KATRIBU should first live among the people they claimed to represent. The point is that actual presence is seen as a necessary aspect of the being *makatabang*. If one is not near, how can people come to you and how can you help? Or—to interpret Precioso's commentary on KATRIBU—how can you understand the needs of the people you seek to represent? Thus, the continuing local relevance of the standard of *mado-olan*, in a context where national-level politicians did not have any presence in the area, made national elections seem irrelevant for most Banwaon. This helps explain the almost trivial reasons for their choice of president, or the treatment of the national elections as something peripheral or tangential to local elections. Put another way, national-level politicians are simply not *mado-olan*. Those who justified their vote for Aquino by saying he was *makatabang* were unable to articulate how this could be so, the reality of distance and absence defeating their ability to connect national and local politics in any meaningful way.

In contrast, local elections were taken very seriously by everybody. Indeed, quite a few Banwaon said that they participate in elections *only* because of the consequences that local politics can have for them. Thus, when I asked local leader Emil Tugay what she thought of the elections, she said:

Emil: 'I cannot choose from among [the candidates]. I am [even] considering a boycott [of the elections]. After all, whichever of them gets to sit [in office], our situation will remain the same.'

AG: [So elections are useless?]

Emil: Ah, not the local [elections]. As for the higher [offices] ...
(She shrugs.)

Not surprisingly, her basis for choosing her candidates for local elections was still whether they were *makatabang*.

Former U.S. Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill is generally credited with the saying, 'all politics is local'. In the Philippines, this truism has usually been articulated by examining the rent-seeking behaviour of local vis-à-vis national politicians (see, for example, the essays in McCoy, ed. 1993; see also Quimpo 2009, Abinales 2008, Sidel 1999). I would suggest that Banwaon electoral politics is also local, though in two somewhat different senses. First, they are literally focused on local elections and politics, at times almost to the exclusion of national politics. Secondly, national elections are seen through the prism of the local. Candidates for the presidency are assessed by the same standards as town-councillors; i.e., in terms of their approachability and generosity. And precisely because national politicians are distant and thus absent from the local, national elections are seen as irrelevant, or as something of a footnote to the local elections. It does not help that national politics itself are seen as disconnected from local affairs, as Emil Tugay implied. The way Jovencia Rocero spoke of the Liberal Party's election slate as the 'line-up' of Aver Precioso, Barangay Captain of Balit, rather than of Senator Benigno Cojuanco Aquino III reflects quite well this tendency to view national politics through the lens of the local.

Beyond 'Mado-olan'?

We have seen the continuing relevance of the *mado-olan* or *maka-tabang* standard in evaluating electoral candidates. Indeed, Precioso's older brother, Oto, struggled with the problem of whether to vote for Aver's party-mate Jinny Minlana, when from personal experience, he knew that his opponent Corvera was *mado-olan*. It happened that Minlana's brother, the local civil-registrar, refused for some reason to enter two of Oto's children into the registry of births. Oto appealed to Jinny Minlana, a municipal councillor then, to no avail. I presume that Oto's evaluation of Corvera as *mado-olan* had to do with logging, in which they were both involved. In the end, Oto Precioso voted for Aver's party-mates out of family loyalty, but we see here how being *mado-olan* factors into voters' decision-making; even for people like Oto Precioso, who is even more discerning and politically radical

than his brother Aver. But even as being *mado-olan* remained a relevant standard for evaluating candidates, people were beginning to realize the limits of leadership premised on this narrow qualification.

For one thing, the nature of the ‘help’ that people need or demand was changing. The people of Balit were confronted with a constant threat of violence from a death-squad, whose presence also constricted the scope of the people’s industry, exacerbating their immiseration. Chua’s approachability and solicitousness are simply inadequate responses to such problems. This was underscored for many by the case of Bagutot Badbaran, whose murder I discussed in another chapter. Mimi his widow said that Chua had donated money to their family during the wake, but for months afterward, she complained about municipal and police officials’ complete inaction on the case. Their eldest daughter even threatened, at one point, to join the NPA, so profound was their sense of frustration and injustice. But even before the killing of Bagutot Badbaran, Balit’s leaders had already been complaining to Chua about the insecurity their people lived under, and here we recall Aver Precioso’s fierce argument with the mayor. The Banwaon of Balit still wanted to have officials who were *makatabang* in case of need, but they were beginning to see this was not enough, and that officials can and should be something more.

For another thing, the Banwaons’ involvement in illegal logging meant longer and more frequent stays at various points along the timber-transport circuit beyond San Luis, such as Talacogon, Bayugan, Butuan, and even Malaybalay in Bukidnon province. This has widened their perspective, and many Banwaon can now compare life in San Luis with that in other places; and wonder how towns like Bayugan could grow into cities. In particular, many Banwaon saw how Talacogon—which had a fraction of the land-area, resources and Internal Revenue Allocation of San Luis—had prospered while the latter seemed unchanged. This recalls Precioso’s critique of Chua’s tenure as mayor, and his call for leadership with vision and energy. People were beginning to realise that Chua’s occasional acts of charity were a poor substitute for energy or vision. In a sense, Chua’s leadership style belongs

to a simpler, more forgiving time, and is now increasingly irrelevant in the face of the violence and expectations of modernity.

Aver Precioso's candidacy articulates an alternative vision of local politics and governance to that represented by Chua. He stressed the need for a holistic understanding of the Banwaons' situation, and offered a concrete development-project. This is a far cry from the vague promises of progress local politicians usually resort to. Precioso took this idea a step further however, and campaigned for a seat on the town-council, and represent his people there. This is, of course, an approach to elections that readers will recognize as the dominant, global notion of electoral politics, where candidates are chosen by voters on the basis of their capacity to represent their interests. That this idea represents the alternative here in San Luis is a mark of the marginality of this place.

In standing for elections, Precioso was exploring the possibility of eschewing the 'occasional politics' of the *mado-olan*, and represent his people and their interests in town-hall, a political institution seen as controlled by the Bisaya. I believe that most people in Balit were invested in Precioso's project. He was considered *mado-olan*, but many Banwaon saw him as something more. As can be seen from the cited reactions to Precioso's candidacy, Balit residents applied a different standard of evaluation to him; he was imagined as their voice in the town's legislative council, someone who can speak about the Banwaons' situation and engage in debate on their behalf. The enthusiastic participation in the electoral exercise; the anxiety over voided ballots; the large number of votes Precioso garnered; the gloom that came over the community when Precioso's numbers faltered; and the sense of solidarity Dongdong Andreca invoked all suggest that many residents supported Precioso's campaign to be chosen as their representative. Indeed, I find it hard to believe that people who did not feel strongly about their votes would have reacted with the spontaneous sense of outrage with which they confronted the gunfire directed at them. While people had different reasons for voting for Precioso, he was seen and understood as something more than *makatabang*.

The Banwaon of Balit—through Precioso’s candidacy—were thus trying to bring their world and its concerns and demands, into San Luis town-hall, and the Bisaya world of which it is a part. That people understood this is evident from the following remarks, made by ‘Nay Melania, among other informants:

‘There is talk that [we should allow] only indigenous people to sit in town-hall. From the start, only the Bisaya have sat there, and our situation is only thus. Only a very few of [us] have been able to sit there. If we do not enter [town-hall] now, maybe we will be shut out permanently. It would be good if [Aver Precioso] wins.’

These sentiments describe a Banwaon entry into the Bisaya realm of town-hall. They imply a perspective where the Banwaon constitute one domain, and the world of the Bisaya, another. These two spheres generally go about their affairs independently of each other; with the Banwaon exercising their political or legal autonomy, leaving the Bisaya to their own affairs. This minimises local government interference in local affairs, but also allows officials to ignore their constituencies and duties, and if they are so inclined, engage in corruption. Hitherto, these spheres intersect in time, at the onset of some crisis that forces individual Banwaon to seek outside help; and in space, through the person of *mado-olan* official. This relative separation of domains is reflected by the very words used to describe these mediatory politicians. *Mado-olan* or ‘someone you can go to’ suggests a distance between politician and petitioner the latter has to cross. Similarly, *maka-istorya* or ‘someone you can talk to’ implies social distance; there would have been no need to explain one’s situation to a family-member. Precioso’s vision and project seeks to obliterate this distance, to bring the Banwaon and their interests into town-hall, and—it could be argued—into the political structure of the Philippine state.

As ‘Nay Melania hinted, there have been Manobo and one Banwaon who have won seats on the town-council before, such as the mayoral candidates Minlana and Cullantes. Setting aside how they were beholden to Chua for their seats, as Precioso suggested, these politicians were from low-lying

communities, not hinterland villages like Balit. They are thus seen as 'influenced' (*impluwensyado*) by Bisaya culture, with the implication that they cannot truly represent the Banwaon. Precioso, by comparison, speaks his people's language; he lives simply and with an open hand; has a good record of public service; and unlike Minlana, he can participate in indigenous rituals. He can thus better represent the Banwaon in town-hall, even as he retained the qualities of *mado-olan*. These qualifications, wedded to a political project people saw as a possible response to their collective plight, generated wide support among many, though not all, Balit residents.

Even if Balit had not been divided, the village would not have enough votes to carry him into town-hall. Perhaps this is why he joined the Liberal Party instead of running as an independent candidate; to tap the latter's resources, and reach other Banwaon voters. Sadly, the local party branch had limited means. He also probably had to deal with the militarisation of San Luis. Some informants believed Precioso would get few votes in Mahagsay and Binicalan villages, where many paramilitaries resided, making them less inclined to vote for someone critical of the counter-insurgency program they were part of. On the other hand, the military's presence could also handicap 'administration' candidates: Almost all Banwaon I talked to rejected Arroyo's presidential candidate, Gilberto Teodoro, dismissing him outright as '*bata ng military*' (the military's boy).

Conclusion

My material illustrates the dynamism and growth of the Banwaon 'culture of voting' (Bertrand et al., 2007). The exploration of local words used in the local engagement with electoral processes reveals that there are now 'multiple' (i.e., two) Banwaon perspectives on electoral politics. There is the older *mado-olan* framework, which remains dominant. Then there is the attempt to represent the Banwaon in town-hall, a project cast in terms of voice and debate. This latter emerged in the 2010 elections; it is unclear if it will be revived in future elections. Both attitudes have a clear

'instrumentalist' character (Banerjee 2008: 66), orientated towards the local: One, to ensure they have someone to turn to during personal or family crises; the other, to tap the authority of local offices in the struggle against militarisation and immiseration. These two approaches are not necessarily irreconcilable with each other; Precioso qualifies as *mado-olan* and as representative of the Banwaon. Rather than a 'vernacularisation of democracy' (Michelutti 2007), one can better speak here of a democratisation of the political vernacular. By this I mean that a more mainstream notion of democracy has entered Banwaon discourses on elections, so that elections became—for one moment, at least—something more than the anticipation of the inevitable emergency. That this mainstream notion represents the 'new' or 'alternative' for the Banwaon marks their political marginality, and their political autonomy.

The campaign of Aver Precioso and its critique of *mado-olan* politics represents a case of 'democratization', understood as the assertion of rights based on principles of popular sovereignty (Nugent 2008: 23). This process was driven here by an interest in protecting a community from a death-squad and the counter-insurgency program that spawned it. Balit did not try to do this through national politics, to elect candidates who could rein in the military, or ensure its operations do not hurt civilians like themselves. As we saw, national elections were seen as irrelevant to the local context, precisely because it was 'national'. The Banwaon harboured no illusions about being able to approach national officials or agencies in the capital, or of influencing policy at that level. Rather, they attempted to place someone who could fight for them in town-hall, in the hope that from there, he could expose the abuses suffered by his people, or push the local government to act on those abuses. For them, this seemed a more realistic response to their situation.

Clearly, the Banwaon here are not trying to 'escape' the state *contra* Scott (2009; see also Claestres 1989); they were in fact experimenting with the state's system of government. Precioso's project asserts that the community has a right to be represented within the political structure of the state, that it has a place within it. It represents a movement into the

Philippine state. To note, this political initiative was Precioso's, later taken up by his village-mates in Balit; it was not something the Tagdumahan's leaders planned or anticipated. It raises questions about how the idea of Banwaon autonomy would articulate with political representation in local government. What would be the role of Banwaon politicians in the realisation of local aspirations for autonomy? Could this become a parallel to the way the Munda 'keep the state away' by electing officials chosen for their perceived ability to protect them from the state (Shah 2007: 140, also Shah 2010)? Or will Banwaon autonomy—vague as it is—be seen as incompatible with representation and participation in local politics? Is the 'new' local politics a relinquishment of autonomy, and a tentative step towards fuller political integration with the state? Unfortunately, Precioso's electoral defeat foreclosed the exploration of these questions.

'Democratization' in this case was a response to militarisation; it could also, as I pointed out, prefigure the erosion of Banwaon autonomy. The instant case reiterates the need to problematize the link between the violence of the state, and its electoral and political processes (Tambiah 1996; Aretxaga 2000). Rather than emphasizing violence, on one hand (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Li 1999), or the quotidian processes by which the idea of the state is made real (Mitchell 1999; Nagengast 1994; Ferguson and Gupta 2002), on the other, the Banwaon challenge us to reflect on the relationship between these two aspects of the state-making project, and how hinterland communities navigate the uncharted political spaces in-between.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

Summary

At this point, I will summarise the ethnographic data from the previous chapters. I began by introducing the Banwaon, a small ethnic minority group occupying a remote section of the Agusan Region, in the interior of Mindanao Island, in the southern Philippines. They have not previously been described in the ethnographic literature. Traditionally, the Banwaon are swidden-farming animists, which with other practices distinguish them from the surrounding Bisaya or lowland populations. Within their territory are NPA units, carrying on their Communist insurgency. In response, the state has deployed military and paramilitary troops in the area since the 1980s. Many Banwaon suffered from abuses occasioned by these counter-insurgency operations. Their leaders organised the Tagdumahan, an inter-village association, in the 1990s to better protect their rights and assert a claim to self-determination. In 1999, the military was able to recruit the Banwaon *katangkawan*—a traditional specialist in conflict-resolution—and his kin and allies into its paramilitary forces. Since then, counter-insurgency operations in the area have intensified.

In Chapter 2, I examined the major ritual most often practised in Balit village, and argued that it reflected a tradition of autonomy centred on the family, rather than the village, or the Banwaon as a polity. Like other swidden-farming groups in Mindanao and elsewhere in the Philippines, the Banwaon have never looked to the Philippine state—whether in its colonial or post-colonial guise—as a source of political authority or legitimacy for their leaders. Instead, there is a tendency to look inward, to assert indigenous values and practices and reject those of the lowlands. On the other hand, the experiences of the Banwaon have convinced them of the importance of education. Banwaon leaders see education as a key tool for protecting their

people's rights, organising a unified polity, and enabling them to practice the arts of self-determination. Many Banwaon families meanwhile see it as a means of alleviating their poverty. They thus rely on the government to provide high-school education, and are investing in college-level education for their children.

This interest in education partly explains the Banwaons' active involvement in an illicit regional trade in timber, which I describe in Chapter 3. Their initial contact with the timber industry was in the late 1950s or early 1960s, when logging companies began operations within their territory, with permission from their leaders. The Banwaon did not resist, but negotiated financial and employment arrangements with the companies. Over time, they evolved a tenure system where families or individuals were recognised as owners of their landholdings, along with the commercially-valuable timber standing there. When the logging companies left because of the violent counter-insurgency operations in the 1980s, the Banwaon began supplying the market for logs on their own. Initially, this was an occasional activity conducted to secure cash for purchasing lowland goods. During my fieldwork, it had become a sustained, capital-driven enterprise-for-profit meant to finance their children's education. My material presents documentation of indigenous participation in illicit small-scale logging that is rare in the Philippine literature. In 2011 however the President of the Philippines suspended all logging in the country, and the national government has since interdicted logging operations in the region more regularly, with dire economic consequences for the Banwaon.

The Banwaons' rights to land and timber were threatened when the *katangkawan* proposed to have the entire Banwaon territory covered by a single title through the IPRA, a state law that allows for the titling of ancestral lands. I describe the various positions Tagdumahan leaders took in addressing this problem in Chapter 4. They considered the titling project as a scheme for seizing control of all the land and resources in the territory, and as an attempt to consolidate the *katangkawan's* disputed claim to paramount leadership. They responded by announcing their own intention of applying

for a title over their consolidated landholdings, thereby excluding them from the *katangkawan's* project while appearing to respect state law. They did this, knowing and anticipating the negative reaction of the *katangkawan*. I argued that the differential positions of the Tagdumahan and the *katangkawan* took in the dispute reflect differing visions of state-minority group relations. I also argued that the *katangkawan's* involvement in counter-insurgency shaped the Tagdumahan's response to the project, and to the law itself.

I then traced some of the consequences of the events described in Chapter 4. In particular, I examined Banwaon responses to the military occupation of Tabon-tabon village, which was understood as part of the *katangkawan's* adverse response to the rejection of his project. As I recounted in Chapter 5, the soldiers called on the villagers to cooperate with the government's counter-insurgency operations. The villagers, on the other hand, managed to deflect most of these demands, but were unable to persuade the soldiers to leave the community. The soldiers' sustained presence in the village underscored the progressive circumscription of the Banwaon. In the 1980s, the forest had been their refuge. In the 1990s, the emerging villages became their place of refuge. The occupation of Tabon-tabon confronted the villagers with the question of what to do when even the village came under the military's control. The general response has been to insist on their identity as civilians who lived in villages, as opposed to the NPA who lived in the forests. Yet, even as they drew a distinction between themselves and the NPA, they resisted the soldier's calls, which would have meant closer integration into the Philippine state.

When a Tagdumahan leader in Balit was killed, allegedly by a death squad controlled by the *katangkawan*, the people of Balit similarly turned their village into a refuge from the threat of further violence. As with the occupation of Tabon-tabon, the murder was understood as retaliation for the earlier killing of the *katangkawan's* brother, as well as for the Tagdumahan's rejection of his titling-project. In Chapter 6, I considered the *katangkawan's* deployment of the idiom of vendetta in structuring his actions. The people of

Balit understood that he was doing so, but several features of his performance of vendetta underlined how the *katangkawan* was melding personal or private justice with the government's counter-insurgency program. The *katangkawan*'s ambiguous position between Philippine state and Banwaon society confused the leaders of the Tagdumahan, raising questions they could not answer.

Among the responses explored by the Banwaon was entry into local government politics. I discuss this attempt in Chapter 7, providing a rare glimpse into electoral politics in a highland frontier in Mindanao. Until then, elections were seen merely as a means of ensuring that someone they could turn to for emergency assistance held one of various electoral offices in town-hall. Now however the Banwaon began to speak of electoral representation and parliamentary debate, as a means of addressing their political insecurity and economic immiseration. Unfortunately, the Banwaon candidate espousing this 'new' approach towards local politics lost his race for a seat in the town-council. Still, the exercise raises questions about how Banwaon visions of autonomy are to articulate with their right to participation in local and national government, calling attention to the larger question of the terms of the relations between the state and the Banwaon.

The Banwaon and the State

Scott's framework for the analysis of relations between states and hinterland ethnic groups, outlined in *The Art of Not Being Governed* (2009) captures a key dynamic in Banwaon negotiations with the Philippine state. He describes hinterland ethnic groups as being engaged in 'evading state incorporation while availing themselves of the economic and cultural opportunities its proximity afforded' (id.: 329, also at 8, 200-201), setting a broad 'pattern of paired symbiosis and opposition' (id.: 29). While laying a pedagogical emphasis on hinterland ethnic groups' preference for autonomy from the state (id.: 30-31), Scott acknowledges that no hinterland ethnic group can be self-sufficient (id.: 200) and thus has to rely on external trade

for necessary or desirable commercial or symbolic goods. He adduces that the opportunity for trade could modulate the impetus to ‘escape’ the reach of the state (id.: 77). For the Banwaon, the key trade item is timber. These are forest products, lending support to Scott’s view that upland and lowland are, in ecological terms, natural trading partners (id.: 87). We saw how the Banwaon became part of a regional trade network as hinterland suppliers of timber to lowland sawmills, particularly those in the coastal city of Butuan. Local and regional government officials not only tolerated this illicit trade, but were complicit to the extent that they levy ‘informal taxes’ on the trade. It is through logging that many Banwaon make their claim on development, seeing it as their most viable source of livelihood. In a sense, the lowland ‘product’ for which the Banwaon exchange their timber is cash or currency, which they need for the education of their children. Indeed, the opportunity for education is itself a very real lowland attraction for the Banwaon, for reasons already given. This desire for literacy and education however, means that Scott’s sweeping assertion that hinterland ethnic groups tend towards a strategic non- or post-literacy finds little purchase here, although in fairness, he did concede that this was the most tentative of his arguments (id.: 220). I would rather emphasise his notion of hinterland ethnicity as plural, fluid and reversible, allowing for the deployment of any of an array of identities elicited by a particular context (id.: 255), and argue that in the contemporary setting, hinterland groups perceive a need to shift towards literacy.

Scott correctly ‘predicts’ that the Banwaon would seek to assert their autonomy from the state, and we witnessed—particularly in Chapters 4 and 5—how they sought to maintain this in the face of the tensions and terrors of counter-insurgency. We also saw how the *katangkawan* has been authorised by the government not only to *speak for* the state to the Banwaon (calling for closer relations to the state) but also to *speak to* the state (identifying its allies and enemies among the Banwaon). This authorisation supports Scott’s view that states require someone to serve as ‘a fulcrum for indirect rule, a negotiating partner, or someone who might be held responsible’ for government relations with hinterland peoples (id.: 113, also

114, 209). This need of the state is met by the ‘political entrepreneurship’ (id.: 209) of ‘leaders’ (following Tsing 1993: 71) like the *katangkawan*. Partly because of his alignment with the Philippine state, the Tagdumahan viewed the *katangkawan*’s titling project with suspicion. But where the Tagdumahan had responded to the titling project effectively, it was less successful in addressing the vendetta he waged against those he blamed for his brother’s killing. To a large extent, this failure stems from the way the *katangkawan* blurs the lines between the Philippine state and Banwaon society, making it difficult to decide if they should respond to him—a paramilitary leader engaged in avenging his kin—as fellow-Banwaon or an agent of the state. They were saved, perhaps paradoxically, by the onset of preparations for the 2010 elections, which offered a respite from continued threats. Understandably, Scott does not go into the details of dynamics between lowland-based states, their designated ‘leader’, and hinterland peoples, as his apparent concern was to sketch broad historical patterns rather than ethnographic description. Still, his framework does account for the value accorded by the Banwaon to the idea of autonomy, and the *katangkawan*’s claim to an official intermediary position between the state and his people. I argue—following Scott—that the Banwaon resist the *katangkawan* and his cadastral and political projects because he represents the state from which they wish to maintain their autonomy. Otherwise phrased, if the Banwaon want to maintain their autonomy from the state, they would have to oppose its principal agent and embodiment in their hinterland region; i.e., the *katangkawan*.

Between State and Society

Even as we acknowledge the broad applicability of Scott’s framework for understanding contemporary state-ethnic group relations in this case, my material also reveals its limitations. We have already noted how paramilitaries like the *katangkawan*, to use Hedman and Sidel’s apt words, ‘blur the lines between state/society, civil/military, military/paramilitary, and legal/illegal’ (2000: 58). This calls into question Scott’s use of a dichotomy

between the state, elided with lowland society, on one hand; and highland ethnic groups, on the other. Indeed, by repeatedly asserting that highland cultures are ‘self-consciously’ the ‘mirror images’ (id.: 216, also 21, 100) of lowland society, he emphasises the distance and difference between these two sets of actors. In this, he echoes other scholars who have similarly depicted processes of ‘territorialization’ (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995) or state-indigenous people’s relations (Duncan 2004) in similarly binary terms. This approach is useful in outlining general historical and sociological patterns, especially across relatively large spaces and over long periods of time. Ethnographic study of specific cases allows us to fill in the details of Scott’s broad processes, providing a clearer understanding of precisely how state rule is established or accomplished (following Li 1999). My material suggests that a dichotomy between state and society cannot be maintained, given the crucial ambiguity of the *katangkawan*’s figure in the dynamics of Banwaon-state relations. In this light, criticisms that Scott depicts states as rather generic, unified entities with uniform interests (Randeria 2010: 467, also Tannenbaum 2011: 838), while hinterland groups are romanticised as representatives of a more democratic, egalitarian ideal (Clunan 2011: 101) become difficult to deny.

As I stated in my introduction, I draw on Rosaldo’s notion of ‘cultural citizenship’ (2003) as a corrective to the tendency of such dichotomies to simplify or obscure nuances in political dynamics. To repeat, I understand this term to refer to the claims hinterland minorities make on the state, as they negotiate the terms of their belonging in the national polity (id.: 3). He calls for scholarly attention to the expectations that states and hinterland ethnic minorities have of each other, and how these are negotiated between them (id.: 2) through what may be described—to borrow another scholar’s felicitous phrase—as a ‘politics of cosmology’ (Corlin 2000). This lends due weight to the ways minorities may embrace, challenge or transform the definitions of citizenship states seek to impose upon them (Rosaldo 2003: 14), and so responds to the expressed need to understand relations of power from the perspective of those on its margins (Tsing 1993, Das and Poole 2004, also Chua, et al. 2012).

In following Rosaldo's call for ethnographic attention to the dynamics of specific cases, this essay reiterates the contentious, even violent character of the margins of the state (following Das and Poole 2004). We have already noted the *katangkawan's* ability to combine in his person both state and traditional authority (Poole 2004: 43, also Das and Poole 2004: 9), to embody in fact, the blurred margin of the Philippine state. I would add that the Tagdumahan's quest for political autonomy from a state they still expect will recognize and respect their rights as citizens also raises questions about precisely how the 'inside' and 'outside' of the state is to be defined and understood. The recourse to local elections similarly points to the unresolved issue of how Banwaon autonomy is imagined as articulating with their civil and political rights as citizens of the Philippines. In both cases, the Banwaon are claiming inclusion in the state by exercising or asserting their civil and political rights as citizens, even as they seek exclusion from that same state in their pursuit of autonomy. This is not necessarily a contradiction, as the rights of the Banwaon, as members of a hoped-for autonomous polity, can be negotiated with the state. Unfortunately, Tagdumahan leaders have no clear notion yet of how they plan to exercise their right to self-determination—how they would govern themselves, how that system of governance relates to local and national government, what laws apply to them under what circumstances, etc.—which was frustrating for me. The point, at any rate, is that the character of the political space between state and society, expressed as autonomy, is unclear because still largely undefined. This is not to say that a state-society distinction can be fixed definitively, merely that it can be given more (or less) shape in the course of negotiations between the actors. In this case, negotiations at this level have simply not occurred. In the specific sense of being undefined, the Tagdumahan and its ideal of autonomy occupy a place that—like the *katangkawan*—blurs the line between society and state.

It is clear from the data that Banwaon society is divided, between the *katangkawan* and his supporters on one hand, and the Tagdumahan leaders and their followers on the other. Each side has its own vision of how their

people are to relate to the state. For the Tagdumahan, this vision is encapsulated in the yet-to-be-refined idea of autonomy, based on local understandings of global discourses of indigenous peoples' right to self-determination (following Tsing 2007: 39). On the other hand, the *katangkawan* seems to be arguing for closer political integration with the state, presumably with himself as intermediary between the government and his people. If anything, this vision is even vaguer than that of the Tagdumahan: Are the Banwaon to be governed through a paramilitary structure? If so, how would this relate to national, municipal and traditional laws and authorities? If not, what institutions of governance are proposed? How is the autocratic, hierarchical structure of paramilitarised relations to be reconciled with Banwaon ideals of autonomy and egalitarianism? At any rate, these two broad political visions underscore how Banwaon society *contra* Scott is not a unified social entity confronting the Philippine state. Indeed, there are probably other Banwaon who for various reasons do not engage in the 'politics of cosmology' playing out between Tagdumahan and the *katangkawan*, and/or have still other ideas about Banwaon-state relations. If I have privileged the two political cosmologies, it is because these were dominant at the time of my fieldwork, drawing considerable energy and support from their respective advocates despite their vagueness.

As for the 'state', my material suggests that a distinction should be drawn between the national government on one hand, and the regional or local governments on the other. These two sets of government actors have differing political and economic agendas. The national government's adverse stance on the logging issue operates to exclude the Banwaon from what they see as their principal route to economic survival or development. Thus, while the Banwaon are cognizant and desirous of the benefits of modernity—in the particular form of public education—they want the freedom to pursue it on their own terms; i.e., in a *laissez faire* setting. Their case questions Geertz's assertion (2000 [1973]: 258) that the politics of state-building revolves around the tension between peoples' desire that the state guarantee, among other things, modernity and material well-being; and their desire that it recognize their identities and respect their aspirations. Here,

the Banwaon do not see the state as a necessary actor in the quest for modernity. More precisely, what they need from the national government is that it refrains from interfering in their pursuit of profit. The present case also points to the dialectic between inclusion and exclusion (Hall, et al. 2011: 4). In this case, inclusion within the state's administrative ambit spells exclusion from the possibility of economic development that logging represents; the Banwaon *qua* loggers argue in effect for exclusion from state law. The regional and local governments' stance on logging differs from the national governments'. They are implicated in the region-wide illegal timber trade. At the local level, they have links to Banwaon in the Tagdumahan, as well as the *katangkawan*, whose family is notorious for their logging operations. While many Banwaon resent the 'collusive corruption' (Smith et al. 2003: 294) by which politicians, military and police officials, and DENR personnel prey on loggers, they accept this as an unavoidable part of the business, as taxpayers everywhere do.

Politically, the national government's principal and overriding concern in the area is defeating the Communist insurgency. Its military and paramilitary agents demand that the Banwaon demonstrate their allegiance to the state by more closely coordinating with them, and participating in their projects. Regional and local governments are less involved in the state's counter-insurgency program. This explains why, once it was clear that the troops arriving in Balit on the eve of Election Day were police rather than military forces, residents showed no more concern about their security. Unlike soldiers, the police are seen as linked to the inept but less aggressive local government; and as concerned with criminality rather than the more problematic counter-insurgency. There is of course coordination between national and local governments in implementing counter-insurgency programs, but the military's chain-of-command extends upward from the front-line troops to the Philippine President, seated in Manila; the DND which provides civilian oversight of the military is a line-agency similarly based in Manila. The soldiers in the area—officered by non-locals, and constantly referring and deferring to their hierarchy of command—are thus seen as representatives of the national government. Finally, the reference to

elections highlights another difference between national and local politicians: Where parties and candidates vying for national posts virtually ignored vote-poor San Luis, local politicians were as expected, deeply invested in local elections.

In sum, a dichotomy between state and society cannot be maintained in this case, given how the Banwaon are divided in terms of political cosmology, one seeking to keep the state at a distance, the other apparently presenting himself as the local embodiment of the state. The *katangkawan* occupies a space between state and society, just as the Tagdumahan's vision of autonomy also raises questions about how, or where, or when to draw the line between society and the state. Finally, the state itself is not a monolithic entity, being divided into national and local governments, each with different positions on the issue of logging, counter-insurgency, and the Banwaons' relevance in electoral politics.

Affect and State-Making

Rosaldo also calls for due attention to how ethnic groups are subjectively affected by their relations with the state. He speaks particularly of the 'humiliation' and 'degradation' suffered by ethnic minorities as states seek to impose authorised notions of identity and belonging upon them, and of their desire for a 'respect' and 'dignity' not accorded them (2003: 3, 7). This approach emphasises how negotiations with the state over issues of belonging are not abstract, 'cerebral exercises', but fraught interactions where survival may well be at stake (Horvatich 2003: 38).

In this case, we witnessed not humiliation but the anxiety and terror that the Philippine state's military and paramilitary agents inspired in the Banwaon. To be sure, they do not live in a state of war similar to that described, for example, by Daniel in Sri Lanka (1996) or Nordstrom in Mozambique (1995). Rather, they find themselves in a state of 'not-war-not-peace' (Sluka 2009: 279, see also Taussig 2005), where violence is comparatively less constant

and intense—making recourse to the jaded Philippine media difficult—but fear and confusion are nonetheless real.

This window into the Banwaons' subjective experience of counter-insurgency and state-building is important not only because it completes and humanises this ethnographic account, but also because it underlines the value they attach to what is at stake for them. Their survival as individuals, families, villages, and as an 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006 [1983]) is, of course, on the line here. But the fact that they very carefully calibrated their responses to the pressures upon them suggests that beyond survival, the ideals of autonomy and self-determination they aspire to have a deep and abiding appeal and value for them, such that they are willing to assert these ideals in the face of considerable physical and political insecurity. Otherwise, they could simply have submitted to the demands of the state for survival's sake, and perhaps consoled themselves with the thought that they were left no choice. Instead, they formulated responses intended to win themselves space for manoeuvre or escape, as when they deflected the *katangkawan's* titling project by saying they planned to apply for their own title. Such manoeuvres would be unnecessary if the Tagdumahan leaders did not deeply value their autonomy over and above 'mere' survival. In sum, an ethnographic attention to the subjective in this case alerted us to the depth of Banwaon commitment to maintaining their autonomy, which they continued to assert or insinuate in spite of the anxiety and terror posed by armed agents of the state.

Rosaldo's regard for affect contrasts with Scott, whose historical account tends to present the choices hinterland groups make in dealing with states as products of a pragmatic calculus of the relative gains and losses of staying or leaving, devoid of emotional or subjective impact or import. If a state becomes too demanding or threatening, hill people simply move further beyond its reach. In other words, Scott underplays the subjective experience and impact of the state-making process. By doing so, he loses a fuller sense of what is at stake for hinterland actors, and how meaningful and valuable those stakes are for them, as I have just argued. Moreover, he generalises

or simplifies the manner that people actually go about deciding on their responses to the state, and how subjective considerations factor into this process.

One such consideration is the emotional bond or attachment between people and their lands. I would argue that there are situations where such attachments are an important variable hinterland people consider in forming their response to pressure from an encroaching state. If we examine the letters of 19th century Jesuits working in the Agusan region, we find hinterland people expressing an attachment to their respective landholdings (Arcilla, trans. 2003: 222), though they lived in a context where the currency of such practices as slavery, polygyny, bride-service and uxorilocal post-marriage residence all indicate that labour was a more critical economic factor than landownership (see Reid 1988). These missionaries thus found it difficult to resettle converts from different locales in the villages they were establishing. My material, also from the Agusan region, indicates the continuing importance of this subjective attachment to land. As we saw in Balit and Tabon-tabon villages, those Banwaon who considered the area around the community their homeland refused to abandon these villages, despite their terror over their neighbours' murders. On the other hand, some neighbours not originally from these villages did leave, or attempted to do so, often seeking to return to their own homelands. This does not only reflect the importance of land in farming or logging; there is a sense that people belonged to their homelands, and that there is no other place for them. To note, there are still lands further west, up the Pantaron mountain range, to which the Banwaon could 'escape' if they wished. But the Banwaon remained in their lands and villages, despite the killings and abuses they have endured since the 1980s. Scott thus undervalues the importance such attachments have, and how they help shape people's responses to the state; imagining instead that they could easily leave, as if *banwa*—that Southeast Asian sense of place, land, home, people, community and belonging (Waterson 1990: 92-93)—meant nothing to them.

Beyond Assimilation

Through its attention to how marginalized groups like the Banwaon—encompassing the Tagdumahan, the *katangkawan*, and the majority arrayed between or around them—articulate ideas about their relations with the state, Rosaldo's approach allows for a more nuanced perspective on the processes of state-building in a 'tribal zone' (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992: 3). In the process, ideologies and interests, allegiances and strategies emerge to complicate what Scott would present as a tug-of-war between monolithic state and undifferentiated highland society. On the other hand, Rosaldo seems to overstate the 'cultural': In his view, what drives the state is its 'broadly assimilationist' agenda (2003: 14), in pursuit of which it will 'demand that ... ethnic groups stop being who they are as the price of admission to the national community' (2003: 1, 14). While this has the benefit of calling attention to an important facet of state-minority relations, I would suggest that his focus on assimilation could have benefitted from being linked to other aspects of state-building, such as the establishment of state monopoly on force, or the articulation and enforcement of government-backed property regimes.

In this case, military and paramilitary agents did set a price for admission into the community of citizens deserving of the respect and protection of the state, and not its violence. For the soldiers, it was collaboration in the national government's counter-insurgency program. For the *katangkawan*, it was participation in his titling project, and recognition of his authority. To say that the state demands political allegiance—however defined—is one thing; it is quite another to speak here of cultural assimilation. My material shows that state agents had no interest in assimilation: It did not matter to them what religious beliefs the Banwaon held, or that few could speak Filipino or English, the two national languages, or that village leaders did not draw their authority or legitimacy from the state; nor was there a government policy calling for resettlement. Indeed, the *katangkawan* himself, as symbol of the state, is not particularly assimilated. The national government's focus was almost entirely on whether or not the Banwaon supported the Communist

insurgency. If the Banwaon were politically suspect, it was not because of their ethnicity or cultural distinctiveness as such, but their residence in an area where insurgents operate, and with whom they presumably come into contact. In short, a sweeping reference to assimilation cannot account for the particularities of this case. Of course, political integration of the Banwaon through the counter-insurgency program could ultimately have the effect of assimilation, but to say that assimilation is the driving interest of the state here is to seriously misrepresent the situation.

This non-assimilationist stance is in contrast to Thailand (cf. Jonsson 2005) or Indonesia (cf. Tsing 1993, Li 2000), for example. The Philippines has no express political policy for ‘the creation of a culturally homogenous citizenry’ (Rosaldo 2003: 6). This is not to say that the Philippine state is not engaged in the reproduction of governable citizens (following Althusser 2006 [1971]), but to suggest rather that it does so without recourse to the policies and programs that explicitly call on the state to transform ethnic minorities into homogenised, hence trustworthy citizens. The Philippines has even promulgated the IPRA, a law that among other things requires state respect for indigenous cultures (secs. 29, 31). There are, of course, necessary questions about how the IPRA is implemented (Eder and McKenna 2004: 78-79, also Yang 2012, Gatmaytan 2007); in this case, we even saw how its provisions on titling could be used as an instrument of dispossession. Still, the non-assimilationist policy stance symbolised by the IPRA marks the country out as a ‘relative bright spot’ in Southeast Asia, in terms of its treatment of ethnic minorities (Eder and McKenna 2004: 56).

The inadequacy of ‘assimilation’ to describe the motivation of the state in this case underlines the need to look beyond broad characterisations of policy to more specific governmental interests. We have already noted the national government’s stand on illegal logging, and its pursuit of its counter-insurgency program. What I would like to outline at this point is how such interests, over time, have helped shape the very autonomy the Tagdumahan Banwaon enjoyed and seek to maintain. To this end, I draw on what Graeber—meditating on the tenuous presence of the state in parts of

Madagascar—calls ‘provisional autonomous zones’, areas where the state is ‘either uninterested in, or incapable of, carrying out many of what we consider to be a state’s most elementary, definitional functions’ (2007: 162). The ‘state form’ is there, but mainly as petty bureaucratic impositions people endure to forestall much closer attention from an alien, coercive state (id.: 169). The state is most real, however, in the people’s memory of its colonial violence (id.: 171). Graeber links the weakness of the state in areas of Madagascar to disastrous post-independence economic policies, which have forced the insolvent state to focus on areas with the potential to produce foreign exchange (id. 170-171); elsewhere, government fades to a ‘ghost-state’. This is not the situation in the Philippines, but what Graeber does is to stress the salience of a national government’s specific interests, considered over time.

For the Banwaon, the national government’s economic interest in their area was virtually non-existent until the logging industry—riding Japan’s post-war reindustrialization—gained importance in the 1950s and 1960s. Even then, its interest was limited to allocating timber rights to logging firms (Ross 2001: 65 et seq., Vitug 1998: 124-125); it did not provide financial, security or infrastructural support to these companies. Perhaps it was because they were on their own on the frontier that logging companies began their operations as they did; i.e., by securing the permission and cooperation of key local leaders. Presumably, the state collected taxes and fees on their operations, but that was between the companies and the government. Up in the Banwaon hills, the state had no regulatory presence. And this is still the situation today. When the national government interdicts illegal logging—as we saw at the beginning of Chapter 3—it does so by seizing logs on the open Agusan River, and not in its tributary streams or the hills they flow from, where actual felling and yarding occurs. Absent any foreign investment, it is fair to say the state will probably continue to have limited economic interest in the area.

As we saw, this remote frontier is not a vote-rich constituency of electoral interest to the national government. The appalling neglect of the area and its

residents by the state argues as much. Neither is the area a reliable source of taxes: The vast majority of the Banwaon do not pay income taxes. They are simply too poor to do so; and local tax assessors accept this. In Balit village, where there has been a cadastral survey, people are supposed to pay real estate taxes, but this obligation is so difficult, many are in arrears. The municipal government thus relies mainly on its share of national tax revenues, and on levies on tree plantations operating within its territory, for its finances. Finally, there was and is no systematic program for producing 'culturally homogenous citizenry' here. State investment in education was extremely limited, for example. In my fieldwork area, there is only one stable public grade-school, and there was no high school until 2008. In short, there was nothing here to draw the interest of the national government.

Governmentality may indeed be the operational framework and logic of the modern nation-state (cf. Li 2007a, citing Foucault), but it does not necessarily follow that it is constantly and consistently operationalised across space and time. As Graeber (2007) suggests, the constraints on states compel them to prioritise some regions and projects over others. In our case, the national government's narrow, short-sighted focus on rents from logging operations in the 1960s and 1970s, and the fact that the area had nothing else of interest to the state meant that for many decades, its presence in this area was minimal, and largely limited to lowland parts. It was this relative 'void' that allowed the Banwaon to enjoy a state of unchallenged autonomy until the 1980s, when the Communist insurgency expanded from elsewhere on Mindanao into their territory. It was only then that the area finally caught and held the political attention of the Philippine state.

'Assimilation' thus has limited utility in helping us understand frontier dynamics in the fieldsite. More useful is Graeber's attention to the state's specific political and economic interests—or lack thereof—and how these modulate its ability to transform its entire territory into state-space, no matter how strongly it may desire to do so in the abstract. Indeed, he opens up discussion of the reality and significance of state neglect, as opposed to the usual emphasis on processes of territorialisation (Vandergeest and Peluso

1995, see also Li 2007b and 2005, Hansen and Stepputat 2001). This warns us against overstating the capacity of post-colonial states to conduct projects of governmentality.

Autonomy amid Counter-Insurgency

Following Graeber, we find that the national government has shown limited economic interest in Banwaon territory during the logging boom around the 1960s, after which it has contented itself with occasionally confiscating illegally-felled logs. On the other hand, it has shown a narrow but intense political interest in the prosecution of its counter-insurgency program since the 1980s. I argue that this counter-insurgency program—much more than the logging issue—has profoundly shaped the assertion of cultural citizenship by the Banwaon. Many of them carry memories, some dating back to the 1980s, of fear or actual violence at the hands of government troops, which have conditioned their perception of the state. They thus see the state as a hostile force, bent on imposing its authority through violence and terror. Hence the disaffection many Banwaon have for the *katangkawan*, who by joining the paramilitary, now represents the encroaching state more aptly than the ineffectual town mayor. Indeed, I believe the Tagdumahan's politicised aspiration for autonomy expresses the rejection of a state that for the most part, they have only experienced through the terror of counter-insurgency operations, outside of inutile local elections and predatory corruption in the logging trade.

Unfortunately for the Tagdumahan, laying claim to autonomy has become complicated, even dangerous. The Philippine state is committed to its state-building counter-insurgency program. If the Banwaon must resist state control and claim autonomy, they must do so without being mistaken for the Communist insurgents who claim to represent their interests. This task is made more difficult by two factors: First, there are similarities between indigenous peoples' and the insurgents' political agendas, particularly the

centrality of the right to self-determination.⁵⁴ In Chapter 4, indigenous and Marxist critiques of the titling project brought the Banwaon to the same fateful conclusion. This fact makes it easy to obscure the difference between groups seeking autonomy from those seeking revolution. Second is the *katangkawan*'s influence on the government's understanding of local political dynamics, allowing him to represent his private rivals as public enemies. This was hinted at in Chapter 5, when very shortly after the visit of the *katangkawan*'s paramilitaries to Tabon-tabon, the local leader was summoned before the military officers, as if the latter had been named by the visiting paramilitaries as an NPA supporter. Later, we heard the leader's plea that the soldiers regard information from the *katangkawan* and his followers more objectively. In Chapter 7, the ambiguity of the *katangkawan*'s position defeated a community's ability to formulate a coherent response to his threat of violence. These instances highlight the difficulties of asserting autonomy in the midst of counter-insurgency. They underscore how the dynamics of state-hinterland group relations are far more fraught and complex than Scott seems to imply. Rather than a simple balancing of costs and benefits, people struggle over their positioning vis-à-vis the state and its minions. The confluence of three political movements of particular historic relevance to Southeast Asia—state-building, Communist insurgency, and indigenous self-determination—creates a context of considerable complexity, the ethnographic exploration of which the Philippines is in a unique position to contribute to, with its active insurgencies. More studies are needed to explore the practice of cultural citizenship in contexts of counter-insurgency, which shed light on local understandings of ethnic identity, citizenship, and state-making (for example, Horvatic 2003), and of the political space—between dissent and insurgency, autonomy and secession—where these discourses are deployed.

In this case, the sense of the existence of a (hostile) state existing in opposition to society—the 'state effect' (Mitchell 2006 [1999])—is achieved

⁵⁴ See the 1978 *A Ten Point Programme for a National Democratic Revolution*, the central policy document of the National Democratic Front, the united front supporting the Communist insurgency, cited in Anti-Slavery Society (1983: 163-164). It affirms the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination and autonomy.

principally through the experience and memory of terror rather than by 'mundane processes of spatial organization, temporal arrangement, functional specification, supervision and surveillance, and representation' (id.: 185). If the census list is the elementary form of statecraft (Scott 2009: 228), it is not exclusively so. As the experience of Balit shows, it is also in the form of the death-list. The infrastructure for 'ideological state apparatuses' (Althusser 2006 [1971]) is not yet in place. The 'institutions of power' (Anderson 2006 [1983]: 163-164) by which states imagine their dominion are not fully realised here: Maps of the area have blank spaces to be filled in; the census is so strange and unsettling that people still ask me if they should participate; and the one state museum in the region has very little to say about the Banwaon. Rather than the Malagasy putting up with bureaucratic requirements depicted by Graeber, the Banwaon experience of the state is closer to that of the Buid (Gibson 1986), Meratus Dayak (Tsing 1993), and Wana (Atkinson 1989), for whom contact with government and other outsiders are occasions of anxiety. Like them, the Banwaon experience is of a literal instance of the foundational violence of the state. And if the quest for autonomy—like village-formation and clustered rice-fields—is a response to state violence, then it, too is a 'state effect'.

My material tends to support Sidel's thesis on the political strongman (1999), but recast in a frontier setting. Addressing a literature that tends to view Philippine politics in terms of patronage, he argues against the view that political strongmen 'captured' public offices and resources, thereby producing a 'weak state' (Migdal 1988). Rather, he asserts that the state itself plays a decisive role in the emergence of local strongmen (1999: 4), leading to the evolution of contemporary 'bossism' (id.: 6, 19) or 'gangsterism' (1998: 58). In the instant case, the *katangkawan* was just one among many other *datu* until he joined the paramilitary; now he is a veritable warlord, with power even over life and death. Indeed, it is through him the state partly achieves a monopoly on violence. The idea of the *katangkawan* as a sort of 'supreme datu' (compare Paredes 1997: 142-143, Wenk Bruehlmann 2012: 197) was made possible by the state's need for an ally in the hinterlands. In this sense, he too is a creature of the state.

The question now is whether the *katangkawan* can parlay his position into a more mainstream political platform and perhaps become a ‘boss’ in Sidel’s sense. Wenk Bruehlmann, for example, describes a Philippine case where a datu took up arms against the government, only to surrender and become part of the counter-state’s counter-insurgency apparatus, and later win electoral office (2012: 202-203). In the case of the Manpatilan family, mentioned in Chapter 1, a Higaunon datu rebelled against the government; he later surrendered, and his son became a paramilitary leader and mayor; in his turn, his grandson also became mayor of their town. A template for mainstreaming his power, in other words, is available for the *katangkawan*. Unfortunately for him, elections are not an option, given his lack of popular support. Perhaps the titling project was his bid for mainstream political legitimacy; if so, it was unsuccessful. Further study of indigenous leaders as political strongman and would-be broker (Abinales 1998: 93, also 2000), a pattern evident from a review of Mindanao’s history, is recommended.

For their part, Tagdumahan leaders do not reject the idea of the Philippine state as such, despite all that they have endured at the hands of its agents. There is no interest in separatism; autonomy truly is their ideal. The few who appreciate the insurgents’ ideology see revolution as the overthrow of a ruling class or elite; the Philippines as a national polity and the Banwaons’ place within it are not disputed. As noted, they rely on state education, especially for their children’s high-school studies, and participate in local elections. These then are not people avoiding ‘legibility’ or ‘escaping’ the state (Scott 1998, 2009); they are people who demand to be seen and cognized as citizens of the Philippine republic, even as they aspire to live (and log) freely, without a ‘supreme datu’ they neither want nor need.

The Politics of Titling

Neither Scott nor Rosaldo refer to state laws as a factor in the negotiation of relations between states and minority ethnic groups. This case suggests the

relevance of laws on land ownership and resource tenure in the articulation of cultural citizenship. Indeed, when understood as a system of symbolic communication through which people act and negotiate social and political relations (Busse and Strang 2011: 4, citing Rose 1994), ownership—and the contests over how it is to be defined and recognized inherent in the titling process (Hall, et al. 2011: 35-36)—becomes a very useful lens for viewing wider social and political relations and struggles. I have demonstrated that the opposing views of the Tagdumahan and the *katangkawan* on the titling of Banwaon territory through the IPRA (1997) reflect differing notions of state-Banwaon relations. For the *katangkawan*, the project would bring the Banwaon closer to the state and development. For some Tagdumahan leaders, titling as a practice is alien to Banwaon culture and tradition, and thus ought not to be undertaken. A few others argue from the vantage of the radical-left critique of the state, which rejects all government authority, including over lands through the titling process. Alongside these leaders' reasoned positions is a profound subjective distrust of the *katangkawan*, which led them to suspect that the project was merely an attempt to seize control of Banwaon territory or extend his authority.

My material demonstrates first that contra Eder and McKenna (2004), the notion of titling can be deeply problematic for some indigenous groups or communities. Here, it was seen as something alien, or contrary to adherence to *Kiyala ha Batasan*, the body of Banwaon indigenous laws. Instead of foisting its law on the Banwaon, the proper attitude for the government, it followed, was to allow them to continue practicing their own culture, and its rules, laws and traditions. In presenting the Banwaon case, I call attention to the need to critique laws like the IPRA not only in terms of political will or implementation, as Eder and McKenna would have it, but also in terms of its nature or character. Perhaps because of the particular experience of Philippine indigenous groups, titling and the sense of security it imparts are often regarded as a benefit. Much less attention is paid to its costs: Homogenization of tenure, commoditization of land and resources, bureaucratization of life, and ultimately, integration into the apparatus of the state (see Gatmaytan 2007). Li usefully points to how laws are

‘assemblages’ drawing material and perspectives from different sources (2007: 264-265). This is apposite in the case of the IPRA, which represents a compromise of sorts between the neoliberal drive for privatisation, and long-standing indigenous demands for recognition of their rights to ancestral lands and resources (following Hierro 2005). Yet because it is state law, the IPRA’s titling procedures come at the cost of integration into the state, a price the Banwaon hesitate to pay in light of their regard for their autonomy.

Second, it was shown that the IPRA, a statute originally intended to respond to the historic demands of Philippine indigenous peoples and communities, was seen in this case as an instrument for land-grabbing. Application of the framework for the analysis of dispossession advocated by Hall, et al. (2011) shows that the Banwaon were acutely aware of the element of force, which the *katangkawan* controlled. It was this factor that, in their eyes, would turn what on its face was an inclusive process of communal titling into a process of consolidating control over lands and people under the powerful *katangkawan*, setting the stage for possible or probable exclusion later on. Hall, et al.’s framework is thus useful, but as presented, seems to be narrowly focused on the political economy of land or property disputes. What is underplayed are the larger frames of references which set the context of such disputes. In this case, the brute fact of militarisation and the *katangkawan*’s implication in its projects shaped the Tagdumahan’s response to the law and its invocation by the *katangkawan*. Because of its association with the *katangkawan*, the IPRA came to be seen as another aspect of counter-insurgency. More specifically, it was an attempt to bring the Banwaon and their lands under his authority—as revealed by our analysis of the case as an attempt at dispossession—and by extension, under the control of the state. The titling project, like the *katangkawan* himself, combined the public and the private; a personal interest in seizing lands and resources, and the state goal of counter-insurgency through political consolidation of a hitherto autonomous people under the authority or command of a paramilitary proxy of the state.

Cultural Citizenship on the Banwaon Frontier

The Banwaon aligned with the Tagdumahan assert, through their responses to crises, a sense of autonomy vis-à-vis the Philippine state. This ideal draws in part from a cultural tradition that valorises the autonomy of individuals and families, and relations of relative egalitarianism. The other part comes from an internalization of the notion of the indigenous right to self-determination, which sees the necessity of organizing the Banwaon people into a cohesive polity, the better to protect and assert their interests, and practice the arts of self-determination. This is the political program of the Tagdumahan. While this vision has not crystallised into a coherent program, it is nevertheless evident in their defence of their *sektor*, their insistence on a distinction between themselves and the NPA as well as the state; and their critique of the *katangkawan*, wherein they assert opposition to him but not the state, even as he obscures that distinction. There is, however, some distinction to be drawn between Banwaon leaders of the Tagdumahan and Barog Balit, and non-leaders. Whereas leaders tend towards the politicised version of autonomy, and of education's role in that project, non-leaders tend towards the more traditional notions of autonomy, centred on individuals and families. Their attitude towards education is similarly focused on its hoped-for beneficial impact on their family's welfare, rather than the Banwaon as an imagined community. There are, in other words, different varieties of autonomy.

To that end, the Tagdumahan Banwaon are beginning to draw a distinction between themselves and the NPA, as well as the state. This is seen in the encounter between soldiers and villagers at the meeting in Tabon-tabon; while they insisted they were civilians different from the 'people of the forest', they still fended off the soldiers' demands for closer cooperation with the state's counter-insurgency projects. I read this as the nascency of a Banwaon political identity distinct from, but not opposed to the state, and separate from the NPA (following Horvatic 2003). Asserting this position is, to say the least, difficult in the polarised political context of an on-going counter-insurgency program in a contested hinterland.

These visions of autonomy contrast with the political project of the *katangkawan* and his supporters. As seen in the former's speech in the meeting at Mahagsay, their vision is of closer integration with the state, as a path towards peace and development. The titling project was envisioned as a mechanism for achieving this closer relationship with the state. It is unfortunate that I was unable to access the *katangkawan*'s perspectives with any more depth. It would have been interesting, for example, to explore how he reconciled his political cosmology with that of Banwaon indigenous laws or *Kiyala ha Batasan*, especially as my informants interpret the latter as requiring them to reject titling, and by extension the Philippine state. More broadly, it would have been interesting as well to see how he justifies his current role and activities vis-à-vis his own people. Whereas the literature on resistance is vast, there is insufficient interest in its opposite, collaboration with that which calls in others a spirit of resistance.

What the Tagdumahan and the *katangkawan* share is their engagement in small-scale logging, and an interest in seeing it continued. Almost all Banwaon, regardless of their politics, are involved in this important but illicit trade. The trade, we have noted, is tolerated at the local and regional level, but prohibited at the national level. I believe that in this case, the Banwaon are together in the process of making a claim on development through logging, which they see as their only viable economic option. This suggests a vision of the Philippine state that ideally also respects economic autonomy, in the sense that it does not intervene in regional trades mutually beneficial—if not equally so—to urban capitalists and hinterland loggers and landowners. It is a vision of a state, in other words, that follows a less regulatory and more liberal economic orientation. There is here a harkening to an economic freedom that they enjoyed during the years of the logging boom, or that their ancestors enjoyed. My data strongly indicates that the Banwaon, for all their moral or existential anxieties about their involvement in logging, are not the creatures of a 'green development fantasy' (Tsing 1999), but have at some level pragmatically accepted their economic dependence on logging. Whether the national state is able to better enforce its ban on logging, or

deforestation persists at the unsustainable rate I witnessed, the economic consequences for the Banwaon are dire indeed.

The Tagdumahan Banwaon regard the state as a violent entity, symbolised by the soldier, paramilitary, assassin, and the *katangkawan*. Here we note how the rumour about snakes seeded across the hinterland was critiqued in terms of its logic; the alleged intention of killing off the Banwaon elicited no comment. Similarly, the people of Tabon-tabon expected to be massacred by the soldiers occupying their village; they were saved only by the presence of the RGS schoolteachers. Finally, the state's resort to a death-squad in its counter-insurgency work was not commented on. To a large extent, this perspective is rooted in the fact that the state's overriding interest in San Luis is the prosecution of its counter-insurgency program; the state has very little other presence or activity, particularly in its hinterland. I believe that it is in response to this historical pattern of near-continuous counter-insurgency operations that autonomy as envisioned by the Tagdumahan has evolved; its leaders wish to keep at a distance an entity that they have only ever experienced through its violence. Of course, there are other venues for interaction with the state, such as elections and public education. These avenues are marginalised however by the dominance of the counter-insurgency agenda, such that state investments in public education, for instance, are extremely inadequate. And then there is the proscription by the national government, by way of a logging ban, of the Banwaons' main source of cash, needed not only for subsistence needs, but also for their own investment in education. This could only reinforce the seemingly antagonistic stance of the state towards the Banwaon.

Note that the Banwaon do not reject the state, or their inclusion therein. Indeed, they claimed state-protection as civilians in Tabon-tabon, and invoked their rights as voters in the May 2010 elections. Despite the temptation of retaliating against the *katangkawan* for the deaths of the two Badbaran men, as could be expected in vendetta, they refrained from the use of traditional, extra-legal measures in responding to the threat posed by the death-squad. What they are interested in, it emerges, is not the

revolution the NPA are committed to, but a refinement of their relations with the state, as to allow them a greater degree of political, cultural and economic autonomy. The election-bid of a Balit leader could have, had it been successful, provided an opportunity to address the question of how Banwaon autonomy would articulate with the structure of the state.

It is impossible to overstate the impact of the state's counter-insurgency program in setting the context within which cultural citizenship is practised in this area. On the one hand, it coloured local perceptions of state law, even one designed to address the Banwaons' desire to protect their territory. On the other, it virtually authorised the *katangkawan* to represent the state, allowing him to inscribe his own private interests and justice into the state's counter-insurgency work, and to obscure the distinction between opposition to him and to the state. This last is a crucial point because it constrains the Tagdumahan's room to manoeuvre, as its efforts to critique the *katangkawan*'s performance of counter-insurgency become translated into opposition to the state. Indeed, the very scope for negotiation of the Banwaons' belonging in the national community is strictly defined by the state's narrow focus on counter-insurgency. It is through the terms and idiom of counter-insurgency that the Banwaon must negotiate with the state. And to be truly counted as citizens rather than outlaws, the Tagdumahan Banwaon must—as the sergeant stated in Tabon-tabon village—show their participation in this program. Unfortunately, the terms of participation also mean a loss of the autonomy the Banwaon value so deeply.

Conclusion

To return to a question I raised in the first chapter: The Banwaon experience provides one example of how a centrist-archipelago hill-tribe (Errington 1987, 1989) deals with the contemporary and violent post-colonial nation-state. The Banwaon are a people traditionally centred on their separate families but trying to constitute themselves as their own centre, even as the state demands to be recognised as their political centre. Rather than the static

portrayal of societies that one gets from reading Errington, this negotiation is fraught and fluid, with no pre-destined or inevitable outcomes. More, there were competing notions of how to relate to the state within Banwaon society, one of which is internally-orientated to a vision of autonomy, and another outward-orientated, towards a nation-state beyond their borders. Still another, which I have been unable to address during my fieldwork, looks to the utopia promised by revolution. This unsettles the image of each society having its one shared vision of its location in the centre of its own cosmos or on the periphery of someone else's. Political entrepreneurship, traditionalism, radicalization, pragmatism, affect and the ambiguities of silence all play a part in the production and reproduction of political cosmologies, and the messy politics of would-be centres and ambivalent peripheries. The literature on 'mandala-politics' must more actively address our translocal, complex and violent modernity.

What impresses about the situation of the Banwaon associated with the Tagdumahan are the constraints under which they operate. Economically, they consider small-scale logging as their best option for survival or development, but it is subject to interdiction by the national government. Politically, they seek autonomy within the narrow, nuance-intolerant, with-us-or-against-us context of an on-going counter-insurgency program. Another way of putting this is that their experience of the state has been both very limited, and rather negative. Viewed from the Banwaon periphery, the state is an external, all too often violent force that constrains traditional and valued freedoms, and imposes unwanted regimentation and hierarchies. Moving occasionally between my home in Davao City and the hinterlands of San Luis during my research-period, it is striking how other Filipinos' experience and image of the state differs markedly from that of the Banwaon, although both Banwaon and non-Banwaon are dealing with the very same state. To be sure, many Filipinos are cynical about their government, but for most of them, it is still a far cry from the hostile entity that many Banwaon see.

This is not to say that the Banwaon are unaware of this other face of the Philippine state. It was this other side of the state they tried to invoke when

they claimed its protection as civilians in Tabon-tabon, and when they tested the possibilities of electoral politics. Even the rumour about the military seeding snakes across the landscape points to the media as a doorway into a world where such a plan, if it were true, would be both illegal and immoral rather than a fact of hinterland life. But again, there were constraints on their ability to access this other Philippine state from their location in a remote, embattled hinterland. What is at stake for them—the wide and complex range of cultural, economic and legal issues that their notion of autonomy addresses—is difficult to translate into terms an outsider can easily appreciate. Instead, their struggles are narrowed into the constricted and controversial category of ‘human rights’ which, even when it draws outside attention to their plight, does not quite capture the complexity of their situation or their aspirations. As the unsuccessful political candidate Aver Precioso suggested, an evacuee is more than a humanitarian problem, but a living sign of larger political forces at work.

In a sense, this thesis explores the confrontation between local autonomy and the state-building project. But rather than a faceless bureaucracy, the Banwaon aligned with the Tagdumahan see the state in the figure of the *katangkawan*, a figure which con-fuses traditional authority and state power. We have seen how, as an agent of the state—and his own ambitions—he inspires fear and suspicion in many of his own people. But I would like to consider him now as a figure of fear in another sense. The *katangkawan* also represents what the Tagdumahan leaders fear would happen to them if they cannot assert their autonomy: A person reduced to a political instrument or follower of another. As Julito Otacan’s words in Chapter 2 assert, by failing to hold true to their tradition of autonomy, by allowing himself to come under the influence of the state, the *katangkawan* lost his independence of mind or will, his self-determination. Worse, the *katangkawan* allows himself to be used against his own people, leading Otacan to conclude that the *katangkawan*’s failure to stay true to their culture lead to the unfortunate political division of the Banwaon people. In sum, the *katangkawan* also symbolises what it is they fear closer relations with a state they have mainly known through its counter-insurgency work might reduce

them to. The Banwaon case asks us to problematize our everyday dependence upon the state, asking us to consider its possible cost on our own self-determination, individually or as a community.

It should be noted that the *katangkawan* is only one of a number of violent figures that represent the state, though for the Tagdumahan he is a particularly significant one. The state thus manifests itself in various forms, though because of its concern for counter-insurgency in this frontier, these forms tend to be figures that inspire anxiety and caution. In other places, the Philippine state, indeed even its armed forces (Horvatic 2003), may appear in more benign guise. Indeed, the Banwaon, in a sense, appealed to one of its other manifestations when they explored the possibilities of electoral politics. The state, indeed, must be seen as a multi-faceted entity, presenting any of a range of aspects in various settings. The tragedy of the Tagdumahan Banwaon is that they are constrained to deal with a very narrow range of the state's much greater complexity. This narrow range is dictated by its overwhelming concern with political security, which only underscores the underlying insecurity of the modern nation-state.

The Banwaon experience brings us back to Graeber's insight (2007), that despite the state-building, governmentalizing imperative, the state's presence may actually be uneven across time and space, and its interests limited. It invites contemplation of conditions in the tribal zone as states of exception (Agamben 2005) within the state, distinct from the system known to cities and lowland towns, and how it is realised under conditions of political and legal pluralism. It points to a need for further inquiry into the nature of sovereignty, and the shades of attraction and repulsion it inspires among people of the hinterlands.

Postscript

Sometime in mid-2011, news reached me that some form of peace-agreement had been celebrated between the *katangkawan* and Banwaon

leaders associated with the Tagdumahan. I have been unable to determine what the scope or terms of the agreement were, or whether and to what degree it is upheld by the local people. It is quite possible that it marks the ‘surrender’ of Tagdumahan and what it represents to the *katangkawan*, after more than twenty-five years of pressure from the military and the paramilitary. If so, then the answer to the question of how rule is accomplished is through threats and violence. This suggests that the political and social conditions I described in this thesis—particularly the inactivity of the Tagdumahan for many months—may have been part of the transition to this possible surrender, and may have changed by now. At least I had the opportunity to glimpse that time before state authority was a given, when there was no need for the myth of the rule of law, and people contended over mighty ideas in and through their humble daily lives.

APPENDIX:
Photographs

Note: All photographs were taken by the thesis author. The original images were in color, but have been rendered here in grayscale.



Fig. 1. Offerings are laid out for the spirits of the earth. The row of plates rest on the *binangko* altar. The carved upright pole on the left is the *ladawan*, with a lighted candle and another plate near its top.



Fig. 2. Above her is the *bangkaso* altar, decorated with the long fringe of palm leaves.



Fig. 3. A contestant in the Mrs. Valentines 2010 pageant waves the Philippine flag after successfully defending the 'child' she is cradling from a 'rapacious outsider'.



Fig. 4. This photograph shows the upriver side of the Laminga Bridge, with a mass of logs choking the river. It is early morning, and the people are walking about, looking for the logs bearing their own or their *amo*'s log-marks so they can begin regrouping them.



Fig. 5. A photograph showing the downriver side of Laminga Bridge, taken on a different day. The logs of a buyer have been arranged into two long trains, ready for towing. On the upper right are moored pump-boats, preparing for work.



Fig. 6. The *katangkawan*, standing on the far left, addresses the assembly at Mahagsay village from behind a row of government officials. Note the soldiers and/or militiamen seated on the risers on the right side of the photograph.



Fig. 7. Leaders of the Tagdumahan map out the area they plan to exclude from the claim-area of the *katangkawan*'s titling project.



Fig. 8. Magal Manseliohan, seated on the left, argues with Sgt. Villaganas at the meeting after the arrival of troops at Tabon-tabon.



Fig. 9. A photograph showing details of Bagutot Badbaran's grave. In the foreground is one of the cartridges recovered from the scene of his murder, embedded in the grave's concrete face. Next to it is the bowl for offerings, only partially shown.



Fig. 10. Residents of Balit stand outside the public schoolhouse-turned-polling station, anxious to cast their votes on Election Day.

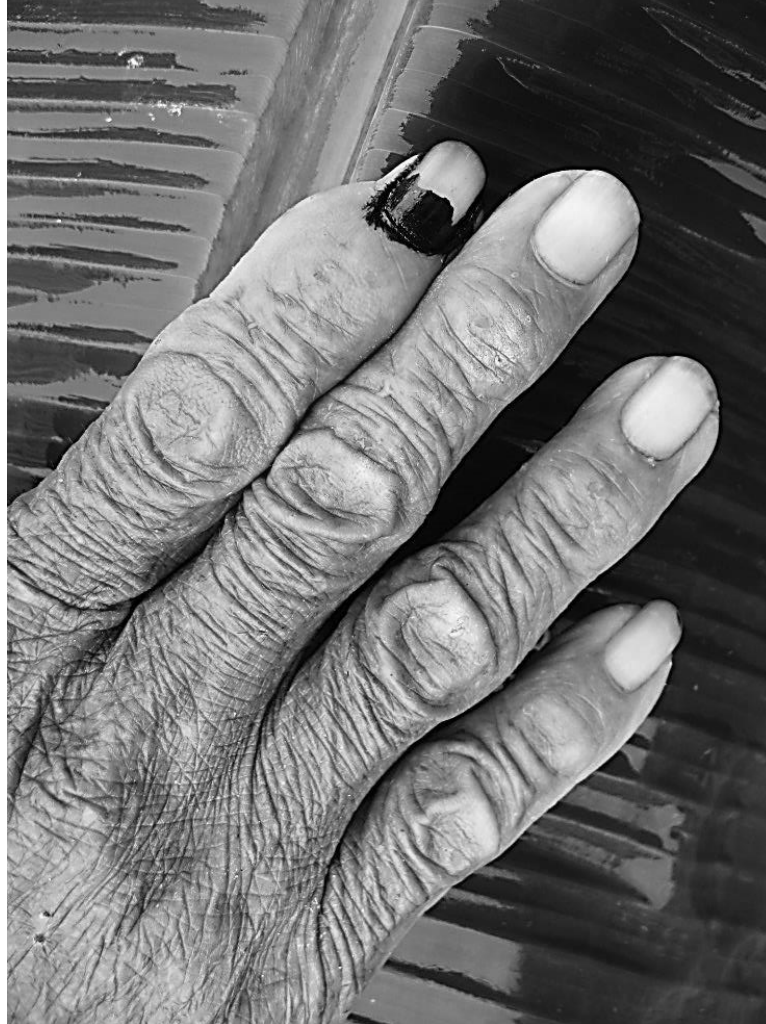


Fig. 11. An elderly voter, his finger stained to show he has voted, walks home in the rain under a banana-leaf.

References

Publications

Abinales, Patricio N. 1998. "'Muslim" Political Brokers and the Philippines Nation-State', in *Gangsters, Democracy, and the State in Southeast Asia*, ed. Carl A. Trocki. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.

_____. 2000a. 'From Orang Besar to Colonial Big Man: Datu Piang of Cotabato and the American Colonial State', in *Lives at the Margin: Biography of Filipinos Obscure, Ordinary, and Heroic*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison.

_____. 2000b. *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation-State*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

_____. 2008. 'The Philippines: Weak State, Resilient President', in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2008*, ed. Daljit Singh and Tin Maung Maung Than. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

_____. 2010. 'The Philippines in 2009: The Blustery Days of August'. *Asian Survey* 50: 1, pp. 218-227.

_____. 2011. 'The Philippines in 2010: Blood, Ballots, and Beyond'. *Asian Survey* 51: 1, pp. 163-172.

Abrams, Philip. 1988. 'Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State'. *Journal of Historical Sociology*. 1 (1), pp. 58-89.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2005. *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Alejo, Albert E. 2000. *Generating Energies in Mount Apo: Cultural Politics in a Contested Environment*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Allerton, Catherine. 2009. 'Introduction: Spiritual Landscapes of Southeast Asia'. *Anthropological Forum: A Journal of Social Anthropology and Comparative Sociology*, 19: 3, 235-251.

Alston, Philip. 2008. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions: Mission to the Philippines*. United Nations Human Rights Council.

Althusser, Louis. 2006 [1971]. 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)', in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, ed. Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Anderson, Benedict. 2006 [1983]. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. London and New York: Verso.

Anti-Slavery Society. 1983. *The Philippines: Authoritarian Government, Multinationals and Ancestral Lands (Report no. 1, 1983)*. London: Anti-Slavery Society.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Arce, Alberto and Norman Long. 2000a. 'Consuming Modernity: Mutational Processes of Change', in *Anthropology, Development and Modernities: Exploring Discourses, Counter-Tendencies and Violence*, eds. Alberto Arce and Norman Long. London and New York: Routledge.

_____. 2000b. 'Reconfiguring Modernity and Development from an Anthropological Perspective', in *Anthropology, Development and Modernities: Exploring Discourses, Counter-Tendencies and Violence*, eds. Alberto Arce and Norman Long. London and New York: Routledge.

Arcilla, Jose S., ed. and trans. 2003. *Jesuit Missionary Letters from Mindanao Vol. 6: The Agusan Mission*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, National Historical Institute, and the Archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus.

Aretxaga, Begonia. 2000. 'A Fictional Reality: Paramilitary Death-Squads and the Construction of State Terror in Spain', in *Death Squads: The Anthropology of State Terror*, ed. Jeffrey A. Sluka. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Armbruster, Heidi. 2008. 'Introduction: The Ethics of Taking Sides', in *Taking Sides: Ethics, Politics, and Fieldwork in Anthropology*, ed. Heidi Armbruster and Anna Laerke. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Atkinson, Jane Monnig. 1989. *The Art and Politics of Wana Shamanism*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press.

Banerjee, Mukulika. 2008. 'Democracy, Sacred and Everyday: An Ethnographic Case from India', in *Democracy: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Julia Paley. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.

Barney, Keith. 2008. 'China and the Production of Forestlands in Lao PDR: A Political Ecology of Transnational Enclosure', in *Taking Southeast Asia to Market: Commodities, Nature, and People in the Neoliberal Age*, ed. Joseph Nevins and Nancy Lee Peluso. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Bayart, Jean-Francois. 2009. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bertrand, Romain, Jean-Louis Briquet and Peter Pels. 2007. 'Introduction: Towards a Historical Ethnography of Voting', in *Cultures of Voting: The Hidden History of the Secret Ballot*, eds. Romain Bertrand, Jean-Louis Briquet and Peter Pels. London: Hurst and Company.

Bottignolo, Bruno. 1995. *Celebrations with the Sun: An Overview of Religious Phenomena among the Badjaos*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Boudreau, Vincent. 2004. *Resisting Dictatorship: Repression and Protest in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bromley, Daniel W. and Michael M. Cernea. 1989. *The Management of Common Property Natural Resources: Some Conceptual and Operational Fallacies*, World Bank Discussion Papers no. 57. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Buenconsejo, Jose S. 2002. *Songs and Gifts at the Frontier: Person and Exchange in the Agusan Manobo Possession Ritual, Philippines*. New York and London: Routledge.

Busse, Mark and Veronica Strang. 2011. 'Introduction: Ownership and Appropriation', in *Ownership and Appropriation*, ed. Veronica Strang and Mark Busse. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Campbell, Bruce B. 2000. 'Death Squads: Definition, Problems, and Historical Context', in *Death Squads in Global Perspective: Murder with Deniability*, ed. Bruce B. Campbell and Arthur D. Brenner. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Cannell, Fenella. 1999. *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Canuday, Jose Jowel. 2007. 'Big War, Small Wars: The Interplay of Large Scale and Community Armed Conflicts in Five Central Mindanao Communities', in *Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao*, ed. Wilfredo Magno Torres III. Makati City: The Asia Foundation.

Carsten, Janet. 1997. *The Heat of the Hearth: The Process of Kinship in a Malay Fishing Community*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Christie, Emerson Brewer. 1909. *The Subanuns of Sindangan Bay*. Manila: Bureau of Science.

Chua, Liana, Joanna Cook, Nicholas Long, and Lee Wilson. 2012. 'Introduction: Power and Orientation in Southeast Asia', in *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Power*, ed. Liana Chua, Joanna Cook, Nicholas Long and Lee Wilson. London and New York: Routledge.

Claestres, Pierre. 1989. 'Society Against the State', in *Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology*, ed. Pierre Claestres, trans. Robert Hurley and Abe Stein. New York: Zone Books.

Clunan, Anne. 2011. (Book review of *The Art of Not Being Governed* by James C. Scott). *Perspectives on Politics*, 9: 1, pp. 99-102.

Coben, Herminia Meñez. 2009. *Verbal Arts in Philippine Indigenous Communities: Poetics, Society, and History*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Cole, Fay-Cooper. 1913. *The Wild Tribes of Davao District, Mindanao*. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History.

_____. 1935. (Book review of *The Manobos of Mindanao* by John M. Garvan). *American Anthropologist*, 37: 1, p. 143.

_____. 1956. *The Bukidnon of Mindanao*. Chicago: Chicago Natural History Museum.

Comaroff, John L. and Jean Comaroff. 2006. 'Law and Disorder in the Postcolony: An Introduction', in *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, ed. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Condominas, Georges. 1977. *We Have Eaten the Forest: The Story of a Montagnard Village in the Central Highlands of Vietnam*, trans. Adrienne Foulke. London: Allen Lane.

Conklin, Harold C. 1957. *Hanunuo Agriculture: A Report on an Integral System of Shifting Cultivation in the Philippines*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization.

Corlin, Claes. 2000. 'The Politics of Cosmology: An Introduction to Millenarianism and Ethnicity among Highland Minorities of Northern Thailand', in *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Tai States*, ed. Andrew Turton. Richmond (Surrey): Curzon Press.

Crais, Clifton. 2005. 'Chiefs and Bureaucrats in the Making of Empire: A Drama from the Transkei, South Africa, October 1880', in *State Formation: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Christian Krohn-Hansen and Knut G. Nustad. London and Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press.

Cullen, Vincent G. 1973. 'Bukidnon Animism and Christianity', in *Bukidnon Politics and Religion*, ed. A. de Guzman II and E.M. Pacheco. Institute of Philippine Culture Papers no. 11. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Cummings, William. 2006. 'Would-Be Centers: The Texture of Historical Discourse in Makassar', in *Centering the Margin: Agency and Narrative in Southeast Asian Borderlands*, ed. Alexander Horstmann and Reed L. Wadley. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Daniel, E. Valentine. 1996. *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropography of Violence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Das, Veena and Deborah Poole. 2004. 'State and its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies', in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, ed. Veena Das and Deborah Poole. Santa Fe, NM and Oxford: School of American Research Press.

De la Cadena and Orin Starn. 2007. 'Introduction', in *Indigenous Experience Today*, ed. Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starn. Oxford, New York: Berg.

Dell, Greg. 1982. 'The Traditional Acehnese House', in *The Malay-Islamic World of Sumatra: Studies in Politics and Culture*, ed. John Maxwell. Clayton (Australia): Monash University Press.

Dentan, Robert Knox. 2008. *Overwhelming Terror: Love, Fear, Peace, and Violence among Semai of Malaysia*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth (UK): Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Dove, Michael R. 1996. 'Rice-Eating Rubber and People-Eating Governments: Peasant versus State Critiques of Rubber Development in Colonial Borneo'. *Ethnohistory*, 43: 1, pp. 33-63.

_____. 2011. *The Banana Tree at the Gate: A History of Marginal Peoples and Global Markets in Borneo*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Duncan, Christopher R. 2004. 'Legislating Modernity among the Marginalized', in *Civilizing the Margins: Southeast Asian Government Policies for the Development of Minorities*, ed. Christopher R. Duncan. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Eder, James F. and Thomas M. McKenna. 2004. 'Minorities in the Philippines: Ancestral Lands and Autonomy in Theory and Practice', in *Civilizing the Margins: Southeast Asian Government Policies for the Development of Minorities*, ed. Christopher R. Duncan. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Edgerton, Ronald K. 1983. 'Social Disintegration on a Contemporary Philippine Frontier: The Case of Bukidnon, Mindanao'. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 13: 2, pp. 151-175.

_____. 2008. *People of the Middle Ground: A Century of Conflict and Accommodation in Central Mindanao, 1880s-1980s*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Ellis, Stephen. 2004. 'Interpreting Violence: Reflections on West African Wars', in *Violence*, ed. Neil L. Whitehead. Santa Fe, N.M. and Oxford: School of American Research Press.

Enloe, Cynthia H. 1980. *Police, Military and Ethnicity: Foundations of State Power*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books.

Errington, Shelly. 1987. 'Incestuous Twins and the House Societies of Insular Southeast Asia'. *Cultural Anthropology* 2: 4, pp. 403-444.

_____. 1989. *Meaning and Power in a Southeast Asian Realm*. Princeton (New Jersey): Princeton University Press.

Ferguson, James and Akhil Gupta. 2002. 'Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality'. *American Ethnologist* 29: 4, pp. 981-1002.

Ferguson, R. Brian and Neil L. Whitehead. 1992. 'The Violent Edge of Empire', in *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, ed. R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead. Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press.

Finin, Gerard A. 2005. *The Making of the Igorot: Contours of Cordillera Consciousness*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

_____. 2008. "Igorotism", Rebellion, and Regional Autonomy in the Cordillera', in *Brokering a Revolution: Cadres in a Philippine Insurgency*, ed. Rosanne Rutten. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Frake, Charles O. 1980. 'The Eastern Subanun of Mindanao', in *Language and Cultural Description: Essays by Charles O. Frake*, (ed.) Anwar S. Dil. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Garvan, John M. 1927. 'A Survey of the Material and Sociological Culture of the Manobo of Eastern Mindanao'. *American Anthropologist*, 29: 4, pp. 367-604.

_____. 1929. *The Manobos of Mindanao*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academy of Sciences.

Gatmaytan, Augusto B. 2004. 'The Hakyadan of Froilan Havana: Ritual Obligation in Manobo Religion'. *Philippine Studies*, 52: 3, pp. 383-426.

_____. 2005. 'Constructions in Conflict: Manobo Tenure as Critique of Law', in *Control and Conflict in the Uplands: Ethnic Communities, Resources, and the State in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam*, ed. Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr. and Ma. Angelina M. Uson. Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture.

_____. 2007. 'Philippine Indigenous Peoples and the Quest for Autonomy: Negotiated or Compromised?', in *Negotiating Autonomy: Case Studies on Philippine Indigenous Peoples' Land Rights*, ed. Augusto B. Gatmaytan. Quezon City, Copenhagen: International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs.

Geertz, Clifford. 1980. *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

_____. 2000 [1973]. 'The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States', in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Gibson, Thomas. 1986. *Sacrifice and Sharing in the Philippine Highlands: Religion and Society among the Buid of Mindoro*. London: Athlone.

_____. 1990. 'Raiding, Trading and Tribal Autonomy in Insular Southeast Asia', in *The Anthropology of War*, (ed.) Jonathan Haas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Graeber, David. 2007. 'Provisional Autonomous Zone: Or, the Ghost-State in Madagascar', in *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire*. Oakland (CA) and Edinburgh: AK Press.

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. 1997a. 'Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era', in *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

_____. 1997b. 'Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference', in *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Hall, Derek, Philip Hirsch and Tania Murray Li. 2011. *Powers of Exclusion: Land Dilemmas in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: NUS Press.

Hanks, Lucien M. 1992 (1972). *Rice and Man: Agricultural Ecology of Southeast Asia*. Chicago: Aldine.

Hansen, Thomas Blom and Finn Stepputat. 2001. 'Introduction: States of Imagination', in *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, ed. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, pp. 1-38. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Hedman, Eva-Lotta. 2000. 'State of Siege: Political Violence and Vigilante Mobilization in the Philippines', in *Death Squads in Global Perspective: Murder with Deniability*, ed. Bruce B. Campbell and Arthur D. Brenner. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Hedman, Eva-Lotta E. and John T. Sidel. 2000. 'Morbid Symptoms and Political Violence in the Philippines', in *Philippine Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century: Colonial Legacies, Post-Colonial Trajectories*, ed. Eva-Lotta E. Hedman and John T. Sidel, pp. 36-64. London and New York: Routledge.

Hicken, Allen. 2008. 'The Philippines in 2007: Ballots, Budgets, and Bribes'. *Asian Survey* 48: 1, pp. 75-81.

Hierro, Pedro Garcia. 2005. 'Indigenous Territories: Knocking at the Gates of Law', in *The Land Within: Indigenous Territory and the Perception of the Environment*, ed. Alexandre Suralles and Pedro Garcia Hierro. Copenhagen: IWGIA.

Hinton, Alex. 2004. 'The Poetics of Genocidal Practice: Violence under the Khmer Rouge', in *Violence*, ed. Neil L. Whitehead. Santa Fe, N.M. and Oxford: School of American Research Press.

Horstmann, Alexander and Reed L. Wadley, eds. 2006. *Centering the Margin: Agency and Narrative in Southeast Asian Borderlands*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Horvatic, Patricia. 2003. 'The Martyr and the Mayor: On the Politics of Identity in the Southern Philippines', in *Cultural Citizenship in Island Southeast Asia: Nation and Belonging in the Hinterlands*, ed. Renato Rosaldo. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Howell, Signe. 1984. *Society and Cosmos: Chewong of Peninsular Malaysia*. Singapore, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Human Rights Watch/Asia. 1992. *Bad Blood: Militia Abuses in Mindanao, the Philippines*. New York, Washington, Los Angeles, London: Human Rights Watch.

Ishikawa, Noboru. 2010. *Between Frontiers: Nation and Identity in a Southeast Asian Borderland*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.

Jaganathan, Pradeep. 2000. 'On the Anticipation of Violence: Modernity and Identity in Southern Sri Lanka', in *Anthropology, Development and Modernities: Exploring Discourses, Counter-Tendencies and Violence*, ed. Alberto Arce and Norman Long. London and New York: Routledge.

Janowski, Monica. 1995. 'The Hearth-Group, the Conjugal Couple and the Symbolism of the Rice Meal Among the Kelabit of Sarawak', in *About the House: Levi-Strauss and Beyond*, ed. Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 2007. 'Introduction: Feeding the Right Food: The Flow of Life and the Construction of Kinship in Southeast Asia', in *Kinship and Food in South East Asia*, (ed.) Monica Janowski and Fiona Kerlogue. Copenhagen: Nias Press.

Johnson, Mark. 1997. *Beauty and Power: Transgendering and Cultural Transformation in the Southern Philippines*. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Jonsson, Hjorleifur. 2004. 'Mien Alter-Natives in Thai Modernity'. *Anthropological Quarterly* 77: 4, pp. 673-704.

_____. 2005. *Mien Relations: Mountain People and State Control in Thailand*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Kahn, Joel S. 1999. 'Culturalising the Indonesian Uplands', in *Transforming the Indonesian Uplands: Marginality, Power and Production*, ed. Tania Murray Li. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Kiefer, Thomas M. 1968. 'Institutionalized Friendship and Warfare among the Tausug of Jolo'. *Ethnology*, 7: 3, pp. 225-244.

Kopytoff, Igor. 1987. "The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture", in *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, ed. Igor Kopytoff. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Kowalewski, David. 1991. 'Cultism, Insurgency, and Vigilantism in the Philippines'. *Sociological Analysis*, 52: 3, pp. 241-253.

Kwiatkowski, Lynn. 2008. 'Fear and Empathy in Revolutionary Conflict: Views of NPA Soldiers among Ifugao Civilians', in *Brokering a Revolution: Cadres in a Philippine Insurgency*, ed. Rosanne Rutten. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. 1990. *Out of Control: Militia Abuses in the Philippines*. New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

Leach, Edmund R. 1970 [1954]. *The Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*. London: University of London.

Li, Tania Murray. 1996. 'Images of Community: Discourse and Strategy in Property Relations'. *Development and Change*, 27, pp. 501-527.

_____. 1999. 'Compromising Power: Development, Culture, and Rule in Indonesia'. *Cultural Anthropology* 14: 3, pp. 295-322.

_____. 1999. 'Marginality, Power and Production: Analysing Upland Transformations', in *Transforming the Indonesian Uplands: Marginality, Power and Production*, ed. Tania Murray Li. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

_____. 2000. 'Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42: 1, pp. 149-179.

_____. 2005. 'Marginality, Power and Production: Analysing Upland Transformations', in *Transforming the Indonesian Uplands: Marginality, Power and Production*, ed. Tania Murray Li, pp. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

_____. 2007. *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

_____. 2010. 'Indigeneity, Capitalism, and the Management of Dispossession'. *Current Anthropology*, 51: 3, pp. 385-414.

Malkki, Liisa H. 1995. 'Refugees and Exile: From "Refugee Studies" to the National Order of Things'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, pp. 495-523.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. 1973. *Manuvu' Social Organization*. Quezon City: Community Development Research Council, University of the Philippines.

Maquiso, Elena G. 1977. *Ulahingan: An Epic of the Southern Philippines*. Dumaguete City (Philippines): Silliman University Press.

May, R.J. 1992a. 'The Wild West in the South: A Recent Political History of Mindanao', in *Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promise*, ed. Mark Turner, R.J. May and Lulu Respall Turner. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.

_____. 1992b. *Vigilantes in the Philippines: From Fanatical Cults to Citizens' Organizations*. Manoa (HI): University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

Mazzei, Julie. 2009. *Death Squad or Self-Defense Forces? How Paramilitary Groups Emerge and Challenge Democracy in Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Mbembe, Achille. 1992. 'Provisional Notes on the Postcolony'. *Africa* 62: 1, pp. 3-37.

McCoy, Alfred W. 1982. 'Baylan: Animist Religion and Philippine Peasant Ideology', in *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 10: 3, pp. 141-194.

_____. 2009b [1993]. *An Anarchy of Families: State and Family in the Philippines*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.

_____. 2009a. *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State*. Madison (WI): University of Wisconsin Press.

McKenna, Thomas M. 1998. *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

_____. 2000. 'Murdered or Martyred?: Popular Evaluations of Violent Death in the Muslim Separatist Movement in the Philippines', in *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror*, ed. Jeffrey A. Sluka. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Melendrez-Cruz, Patricia. 1983. 'Agyu: A Manobo Ulaging', in *Anthology of ASEAN Literatures: Epics of the Philippines*, (ed.) Jovita Ventura Castro, Antolina T. Antonio, Patricia Melendrez-Cruz, Josefina T. Mariano and Rosella Jean Makasiar-Puno. Quezon City: ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information.

Michelutti, Lucia. 2007. 'The Vernacularization of Democracy: Political Participation and Popular Politics in North India'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)* 13, pp. 639-656.

Migdal Joel S. 1988. *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton (NJ), Chichester: Princeton University Press.

Mitchell, Timothy. 1999. 'Society, Economy, and the State Effect', in *State/Culture: State Formation after the Cultural Turn*, ed. G. Steinmetz. Ithaca (NY) and London: Cornell University Press.

Montillo-Burton, Erlinda, Moctar Matuan, Guimba Polongan, and Jay Rey Alovera. 2007. 'Responses to Inter-Kin Group Conflict in Northern Mindanao', in *Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao*, ed. Wilfredo Magno Torres III. Makati City: The Asia Foundation.

Nagengast, Carole. 1994. 'Violence, Terror and the Crisis of the State' in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 23: 109-136.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael. 2002. *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Nordstrom, Carolyn. 1995. 'War on the Front Lines', in *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*, ed. Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Nugent, David. 2001. 'Before History and Prior to Politics: Time, Space, and Territory in the Modern Peruvian State', in *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, ed. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

_____. 2008. 'Democracy Otherwise: Struggles over Popular Rule in the Northern Peruvian Andes', in *Democracy: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Julia Paley. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.

Otterbein, Keith F. 2009. *The Anthropology of War*. Long Grove (IL): Waveland Press.

Paley, Julia. 2008. 'Introduction', in *Democracy: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Julia Paley. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.

_____. 2002. 'Toward an Anthropology of Democracy', in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31, pp. 469-496.

Paredes, Oona Thommes. 1997a. 'Higaunon Resistance and Ethnic Politics in Northern Mindanao'. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 8: 3, pp. 270-290.

_____. 2000. 'Discriminating Native Traditions among the Mindanao Lumad', in *Old Ties and New Solidarities: Studies on Philippine Communities*, ed. Charles J-H MacDonald and Guillermo M. Pesigan. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

_____. 2006. 'True Believers: Higaunon and Manobo Evangelical Protestant Conversion in Historical and Anthropological Perspective', in *Philippine Studies* 54: 4, pp. 521-559.

Peluso, Nancy Lee. 1995. 'Whose Woods are These? Counter-Mapping Forest Territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia'. *Antipode*, 27: 4, pp. 383-406.

Poole, Deborah. 2004. 'Between Threat and Guarantee: Justice and Community in the Margins of the Peruvian State', in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, ed. Veena Das and Deborah Poole. Santa Fe, NM and Oxford: School of American Research Press.

Quimpo, Nathan Gilbert. 2009. 'The Philippines: Predatory Regime, Growing Authoritarian Features'. *The Pacific Review* 22: 3, pp. 335-353.

Rafael, Vicente L. 1988. *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

_____. 2005. *The Promise of the Foreign: Nationalism and the Technics of Translation in the Spanish Philippines*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Randeria, Shalini. 2010. 'Opting for Statelessness'. *Archives of European Sociology*, 3, pp. 464-469.

Reid, Anthony. 1988. *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, Vol. 1: The Lands Below the Winds*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Rodil, B. R. 1994. *The Minoritization of the Indigenous Communities of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago*. Davao City: Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao, Inc.

Rosaldo, Michelle Z. 1980. *Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosaldo, Renato. 1980. *Ilongot Head-hunting, 1883-1974: A Study in Society and History*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

_____. 2003. 'Introduction: The Borders of Belonging', in *Cultural Citizenship in Island Southeast Asia: Nation and Belonging in the Hinterlands*, ed. Renato Rosaldo. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Ross, Michael L. 2001. *Timber Booms and Institutional Breakdown in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rutherford, Danilyn. 2003. *Raiding the Land of the Foreigners*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

_____. 2012. *Laughing at Leviathan: Sovereignty and Audience in West Papua*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Sales, Peter M. 1992. 'The Once and Future Insurgency in Northeastern Mindanao', in *Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promise*, ed. Mark Turner, R.J. May and Lulu Respall Turner. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.

Schlegel, Stuart A. 1970. *Tiruray Justice: Traditional Tiruray Law and Morality*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

_____. 1979. *Tiruray Subsistence: From Shifting Cultivation to Plow Agriculture*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

_____. 1994. *Children of Tulus: Essays on the Tiruray People*. Quezon City: Giraffe Books.

Schreurs, Peter. 1989. *Caraga Antigua 1521-1910: The Hispanization and Christianization of Agusan, Surigao and East Davao*. Cebu City: University of San Carlos Publications.

Schroder, Ingo W. and Bettina E. Schmidt. 2001. 'Introduction: Violent Imaginaries and Violent Practices', in *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict*, ed. Bettina E. Schmidt and Ingo W. Schroder. London and New York: Routledge.

Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

_____. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Scott, William Henry. 1985. *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain and Other Essays in Philippine History*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.

Severino, Howie G. 1996. 'The Rise and Fall of a Logger's Political Empire', in *Patrimony: Six Case Studies on Local Politics and the Environment in the Philippines*, ed. Sheila S. Coronel. Pasig City: The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

Shah, Alpa. 2007. 'Keeping the State Away: Democracy, Politics, and the State in India's Jharkhand'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 13, pp. 129-145.

_____. 2010. *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Sidel, John T. 1997. 'Philippine Politics in Town, District, and Province: Bossism in Cavite and Cebu'. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 56: 4, pp. 947-966.

_____. 1998. 'Murder Inc., Cavite: Capitalist Development and Political Gangsterism in a Philippine Province', in *Gangsters, Democracy, and the State in Southeast Asia*, ed. Carl A. Trocki, pp. 55-79. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.

_____. 1999. *Capital, Coercion and Crime: Bossism in the Philippines*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

_____. 2000. 'Filipino Gangsters in Film, Legend, and History: Two Biographical Case Studies from Cebu', in *Lives at the Margin: Biography of Filipinos Obscure, Ordinary, and Heroic*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Sillander, Kenneth. 2012. 'Concentrating People and Endogamous Potency at the Southeast Asian Periphery: The Case of the *Longan* House Altar of the Bentian of Indonesian Borneo', in *The Spirit of Things: Materiality and Religious Diversity in Southeast Asia*, ed. Julius Bautista. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Southeast Asia Program.

Sluka, Jeffrey A. 2009. 'In the Shadow of the Gun: "Not-War-Not-Peace" and the Future of Conflict in Northern Ireland'. *Critique of Anthropology* 29: 3, pp. 279-299.

Smith, J., K. Obidzinski, Subarudi, and I. Suramenggala. 2003. 'Illegal Logging, Collusive Corruption and Fragmented Governments in Kalimantan, Indonesia'. *International Forestry Review*, 5: 3, pp. 293-302.

Spencer, Jonathan. 2007. *Anthropology, Politics, and the State: Democracy and Violence in South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spyer, Patricia. 2000. *The Memory of Trade: Modernity's Entanglements on an Eastern Indonesian Island*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Stepputat, Finn. 2000. 'At the Frontiers of the Modern State in Post-War Guatemala', in *Anthropology, Development and Modernities: Exploring Discourses, Counter-Tendencies and Violence*, ed. Alberto Arce and Norman Long. London and New York: Routledge.

Tambiah, Stanley J. 1969. 'Animals are Good to Think and Good to Prohibit'. *Ethnology*, 8: 4, pp. 423-459.

_____. 1985. 'The Galactic Polity: The Structure of Traditional Kingdoms in Southeast Asia', in *Culture, Thought and Social Action*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.

_____. 1996. *Levelling Crowds: Ethno-Nationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tannenbaum, Nicola. 2011. (Book review of *The Art of Not Being Governed* by James C. Scott). *Journal of Regional Science*, 51: 4, pp. 836-838.

Taussig, Michael. 1998. 'Crossing the Face', in *Border Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Spaces*, ed. Patricia Spyer, pp. 224-243. New York and London: Routledge.

_____. 2003. *Law in a Lawless Land: Diary of a Limpieza in Colombia*. New York and London: The New Press.

Thompson, Mark R. 2010. 'Reformism vs. Populism in the Philippines'. *Journal of Democracy* 21: 4, pp. 154-168.

Tilly, Charles. 1985. 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime', in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tiu, Macario D. 2005. *Davao: Reconstructing History from Text and Memory*. Davao City (Philippines): Ateneo de Davao University.

Tooker, Deborah E. 1996. 'Putting the Mandala in its Place: A Practice-Based Approach to the Spatialization of Power on the Southeast Asian "Periphery"__The Case of the Akha'. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 55: 2, pp. 323-358.

Torres III, Wilfredo Magno, ed. 2007. *Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao*. Makati City: The Asia Foundation.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 1987. 'A Rhetoric of Centers in a Religion of the Periphery', in *Indonesian Religions in Transition*, (ed.) Rita Smith Kipp and Susan Rodgers. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

_____. 1993. *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

_____. 1996. 'Telling Violence in the Meratus Mountains', in *Headhunting and the Social Imagination in Southeast Asia*, ed. Janet Hoskins, pp. 184-215. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press.

_____. 2005. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

_____. 2007. 'Indigenous Voice', in *Indigenous Experience Today*, ed. Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starn, pp. 33-67. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Turner, Mark, R.J. May and Lulu Respall Turner, eds. 1992. *Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promise*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.

Turner, Victor. 1967. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.

Turney-High, Harry Holbert. 1971 [1949]. *Primitive War: Its Practice and Concepts*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press.

Unabia, Carmen Ching. 2000. *Bukidnon Myths and Rituals*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines-Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

Van den Top, Gerhard. 2003. *The Social Dynamics of Deforestation in the Philippines: Actions, Options and Motivations*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Man and Nature in Asia Series, no. 6.

Vandergeest, Peter and Nancy Lee Peluso. 1995. 'Territorialization and State Power in Thailand'. *Theory and Society*, 24: 3, pp. 385-426.

Van der Kroef, Justus M. 1988. 'The Philippine Vigilantes: Devotion and Disarray'. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 10: 2, pp. 163-181.

Van der Ploeg, Jan, Merlijn van Weerd, Andres B. Masipiqueña and Gerard A. Persoon. 2011. 'Illegal Logging in the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, the Philippines'. *Conservation and Society*, 9: 3, 202-215.

Vitug, Marites Danguilan. 1998. 'The Politics of Logging in the Philippines', in *The Politics of Environment in Southeast Asia: Resources and Resistance*, ed. Philip Hirsch and Carol Warren. London and New York: Routledge.

Wallace, Ben J. 2006. *The Changing Village Environment in Southeast Asia: Applied Anthropology and Environmental Reclamation in the northern Philippines*. London and New York: Routledge.

Warren, Carol. 1993. 'Disrupted Death Ceremonies: Popular Culture and the Ethnography of Balit'. *Oceania* 64: 1, pp. 36-56.

Warren, James Francis. 1985. *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.

Waterson, Roxana. 1990. *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Whitehead, Neil L. 2004a. 'Introduction: Cultures, Conflicts, and the Poetics of Violent Practice', in *Violence*, ed. Neil L. Whitehead. Santa Fe, N.M. and Oxford: School of American Research Press.

_____. 2004b. 'On the Poetics of Violence', in *Violence*, ed. Neil L. Whitehead. Santa Fe, N.M. and Oxford: School of American Research Press.

Wilson, Fiona. 2000. 'In the Name of the State?: Schools and Teachers in an Andean Province', in *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, eds. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Weiss, Nerina and Maria Six-Hohenbalken. 2011. 'Introduction', in *Violence Expressed: An Anthropological Approach*, ed. Maria Six-Hohenbalken and Nerina Weiss. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Yang, Shu-Yuan. 2012. 'State Recognition or State Appropriation? Land Rights and Land Disputes among the Bugkalot/Ilongot of Northern Luzon, Philippines'. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 1: 1, pp. 77-108.

Theses or Dissertations

Frake, Charles O. 1955. *Social Organization and Shifting Cultivation among the Sindangan Subanun*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University.

Hilario, Maricel Paz. 2004. *On 'Development': Competing Perspectives and Practices in Northern Bukidnon, Mindanao*. M.A. Thesis, University of the Philippines (Diliman, Quezon City).

Paredes, Oona Thommes. 1997b. *People of the Hinterlands: Higaunon Life in Northern Mindanao, Philippines*. M.A. thesis, Arizona State University.

Trinidad, Ana Raissa T. 2012. *Learning to be Indigenous: Education and Social Change among the Manobo People of the Philippines*. Ph.D. diss., University of Manchester.

Waterson, Roxana. 1990. *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia*. Singapore, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Wenk Bruehlmann, Irina. 2012. *Ancestral Domain: Land Titling and the Conjunction of Government, Rights and Territory in Central Mindanao*. Ph.D. diss., University of Zurich.

Journalistic Materials

Periodico Agsur, 6 August 2009. 'Tenyente, 1 pa sa Tulis, Gikasohan na', p. 2.

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 11 December 2009 (vol. 25, no. 3), 'Gunmen Abduct 75 in Agusan', pp. 1, 19.

Legal Materials

Department of Environment and Natural Resources. 1993. *Administrative Order no. 2 (Rules and Regulations for the Identification, Delineation and Recognition of Ancestral Land and Domain Claims)*.

Office of the President. 1 February 2011. Executive Order No. 23. *Declaring a Moratorium on the Cutting and Harvesting of Timber in the Natural and Residual Forests and Creating the Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force*.

Republic of the Philippines. 1997. *Republic Act No. 8371 (An Act to Recognize, Protect and Promote the Rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples, Creating a National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Establishing Implementing Mechanisms, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes)*.

Internet Sources

<http://202.57.46.78/adis/Public/ApprovedCADTSummary.aspx>, accessed 21 September 2013.

<http://202.57.46.78/adis/Public/ApprovedCADTsRegion.aspx?Region=Region%2013>, accessed 21 September 2013.

<http://davaotoday.com/main/2007/04/17/mindanao-terror-continues-in-san-luis-agusan-del-sur/>. Accessed 9 September 2013.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ph_locator_region_13.png. Accessed 3 September 2013.

<http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article-1G1-250647340/logging-ban-forces-locals.html>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

<http://www.census.gov.ph/sites/default/files/attachments/hsd/pressrelease/Caraga.pdf>. Accessed 5 September 2013.

<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=Elections/2010natloc/2010NatLocCandidates/partylist>, accessed on 17 September 2013.

<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=Elections/2010natloc/Results/cityelec>, accessed on 17 September 2013.

<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=Elections/2010natloc/Results/congelec>, accessed on 17 September 2013.

<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=Elections/2010natloc/Results/provelec>,
accessed on 17 September 2013.

<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=Elections/2010natloc/Results/senrank>,
accessed on 17 September 2013.

<http://www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/UA-057-2006>. Accessed
8 September 2013.

<http://www.interaksyon.com/article/64483/rebels-execute-tribal-leader-4-others-in-agusan-del-sur---police>. Accessed 7 September 2013.

<http://www.mindanews.com/environment/2012/06/07/2000-logs-floating-in-agusan-river-confiscated/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

<http://www.mindanews.com/environment/2012/06/15/groups-laud-robredo-amante-for-seizure-of-illegal-logs-in-butuan/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

<http://www.mindanews.com/environment/2012/07/01/7-police-chiefs-sacked-for-failure-to-stop-illegal-logging-in-agusan-sur/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

<http://www.mindanews.com/human-rights/indigenous-peoples/2012/06/10/lumads-appeal-for-release-of-logs-greens-cry-foul/>.
Accessed 20 September 2013.

<http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2012/06/13/sec-robredo-wants-denr-personnel-in-caraga-probed-relieved/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

<http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2012/06/22/secretary-robredo-wants-denr-caraga-chief-out/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

<http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2013/08/12/denr-caraga-to-use-drones-in-campaign-vs-illegal-logging/>. Accessed 20 September 2013.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/26/world/asia/26phils.html?_r=0. Accessed
20 September 2013.

<http://www.philippinerevolution.net/documents/the-new-people-s-army>.
Accessed 2 September 2013.

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/77/Ph_locator_map_agusan_del_sur.png. Accessed 3 September 2013.

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7f/Ph_locator_agusan_del_sur_san_luis.png. Accessed 3 September 2013.