

Philippines: A Review of the Traditional Conflict Resolution Practices Among Indigenous Cultural Communities

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Abstract. *This paper reviews the previous studies related to traditional conflict resolution practices of different indigenous cultural communities in the Philippines. Arranged according to tribes from three major island groups of the Philippines (i.e., Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao), it includes discussion on the system of conflict resolution among tribes, traditional means of conflict resolution among indigenous peoples, and forms and nature of punishments employed.*

Keywords: *traditional, conflict resolution, indigenous, elders, mediation, negotiation.*

Luzon, Northern Philippines

The Democratic Progress Institute (2012) revealed that the most preferred and popular form of settling disputes among the cultural communities in the Philippines is mediation. This is because of the small number of cultural communities, in turn making it the most effective and fastest way of addressing disputes (Rio, 2016). According to the renowned anthropologist Felipe Landa Jocano (1968), the people who are chosen as mediators or arbiters are those who are regarded by the community with utmost respect and credibility. This situation is general for most of the traditional practices around the globe, from the traditional Gypsies in Eastern Europe (Sandu, 2018) to the elders from Africa or the Chechens in the Caucasus

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region. Their effectiveness is realized when they are able to address the disputes in their early stages, thereby preventing their escalation to a more violent phase (Jocano, 1968). Durante (2005) added that “they functioned to examine the evidence, evaluate testimonies, render judgment and define the penalty for the offense to preserve or restore community relationships”.

In the book *Creating the Third Force: Indigenous Processes of Peacemaking*, one of the chapters which was contributed by Barnes and Magdalena (2016) was dedicated on exploring the traditional peacemaking processes among indigenous populations in the Northern and Southern Philippines. The *Kalinga* people of the Cordillera region in Luzon, they wrote, “originated the *Bodong*, a political institution that facilitates the resolution of intervillage or inter-regional conflicts”. In English, the term translates into “a ‘peace pact’ which in practice defines the behavior of two neighboring village populations while members of each are in the territory of the other”. Again, this is very resembling with other parts of the world. For example, the Gypsies all around the world use the word *Kris* for the Gypsy court and *krisinitor* for the judge. In their language this means “making peace” and “the one who makes the pace” (Sandu, 2018). The peace pact holders, which are the host villages, are responsible for making sure that the boundaries are properly policed so that no one is killed or seriously injured within their territory (p. 210).

Another group is the *Ifugao*, which means “people of the hills”. Barnes and Magdalena (2016) observed that the *Ifugaos* employ different means of conflict resolution depending on the nature of the conflict. Generally, this group has an institution of a “go-between” named the *monkalun* to carry out negotiations. This mediator is “selected for his prestige, high ‘face’, and wisdom as perceived by the community” (p. 211). In particular, one cause of conflict among the *Ifugaos* is the *muyong*, “an untilled slope covered mainly with timber, fruit trees, climbing rattan, bamboo, palms, and other natural vegetation” (Serrano and Cadaweng, as cited by Barnes and Magdalena, 2016). These small-forested areas play a critical role in the sustenance of the people. It stores the rainfall while slowly releasing it throughout the year to irrigate the rice terraces. It also provides 171 fuel wood species, 112 wood species used in construction, 70 species that provide food, and 10 varieties of rattan. Given these benefits, they have developed a system of punishment for anyone who will try to destroy it. If a person is caught stealing from the *muyong*, s/he must go before the tribal elders to be severely reprimanded. They are required to compensate the owner of the *muyong* for the loss. If there is a second offense, the owner can demand restitution through a third party negotiator (possibly a *monkalun*). A third offense indicates that the perpetrator may lack appropriate respect for the owners and elders, and so the issue could end in violence (Barnes and Magdalena, 2016, p. 212).

Another form of conflict resolution among the *Ifugaos* is an ordeal called *haddaccan* (derived from the word *ihadac*, which means “to rectify a mistake” or to “put right a

wrongdoing”) used to settle boundary conflicts which are usually considered as more serious issues. These conflicts involve two different individuals claiming the same *uma* (fallow swidden land) while that land is naturally regenerating. The two parties, working through a mediator, would typically decide whether the *I bultong* or *I uggub* is used. *I bultong* involves a wrestling match between the two contending parties. Each party may either choose to wrestle himself or to select one of his relatives to fight, with a rule that the opposing wrestlers must be evenly matched. In *I uggub*, the combatants throw *runo* (reeds) fronds and eggs at one another. After the performance of either ordeal, a peacemaking rite called *hidit* is conducted to thank and assure the gods that both parties will peacefully abide by it (Serrano and Cadaweng, as cited by Barnes & Magdalena, 2016, p. 213).

The *Tinggians* are another indigenous group in the Cordillera Region of Luzon. The all-male *lalakay* (the word *lakay* is an Ilokano term for “old male”) council of elders settles misbehavior and misdemeanors in the *Tinggian* society. Wrongdoers are fined or ordered to provide food for the elders settling the case. If for some reason an offender cannot be located, the community resorts to *sapata* that tries an offender *in absentia* via an elder who is an authority on the practice of *bagawas*. The *bagawas* is a ritual done at sunrise in which the elder conducting the *sapata* prays that something tragic such as a bloated stomach or swollen feet will befall the violator (Barnes & Magdalena, 2016, p. 214).

According to Aro, as cited by Banaag (2015), the traditional way of conflict resolution in Benguet which is still practiced today is called the *Tongtongan*. A council of elders which were chosen based on their knowledge and wisdom, led by its oldest member, mediates the process. It starts on finding out the root cause of the dispute, then negotiating a settlement followed by the elders giving their advice. When a decision is reached, the offender is punished by butchering pig, dog, chicken, or whatever the winning party demands. The weight of the penalty increases depending on the intensity of the crime. In rare occasions, disputes are resolved through a “toss coin” (pp. 13-14).

In their study concerning indigenous governance practices in the Philippines, Buendia, Brillantes, Mendoza, Guiam, and Sambeli (2006) created an inventory of the justice and conflict system of some indigenous groups. In Northern Luzon, the *Ivatans* penalized whoever stirred up trouble in the community. Grave crimes such as homicide, witchcraft, and murder by poison were punishable by death while less serious crimes like robbery, theft, and adultery were reprimanded by fine. The *Ivatans* consider burying alive as their severest punishment (Hornedo, as cited by Buendia *et al.*, 2006).

Visayas, Central Philippines

In his study entitled “Indigenous Dispute Settlement: Learning from the *Panay Bukidnon* Tribe,” Professor Irving Domingo L. Rio (2016) discovered that vengeance is the underlying principle of the justice system of the *Panay-Bukidnon* culture in the Visayan

region. For most members of the tribe, the penalty of incarceration cannot compensate for the loss of a family member. The bereaved family considers vengeance as a shared community obligation rather than a personal pursuit. Failure to avenge can create an impression of the crime committed as just and predisposes a family to abuse by other members of the community. Retaliation that results to death of members of the other tribe or family provides a counterbalance for the loss (Rio, 2016, p. 76). Specifically, this custom is called the *Kantang*. *Kantang* is the practice of leaving the dead unburied and placing the dead body, without the coffin, on a bamboo bed outside the aggrieved family's house. The decomposing body is left in the open until there is a *durog* or partner dead body from the assailant or anyone from the assailant's family or clan. As such, *Kantang* aims to dramatize the extent of grief that family members have as a result of the murder (Rio, 2016, p.78).

Mindanao, Southern Philippines

A study conducted by Pailig Development Foundation, Inc. (2007) on *rido* in Mindanao reveal that the most common prevailing measure, especially with *Maranaos*, to bring a *rido* to an end is an initiated or forced wedding in order to ensure a strong and lasting good relationship between two rivaling families. Traditional tribal leaders such as a *Sultan, Datu*, or council of elders (as part of the *barangay* government), would be responsible in the first instance for the settlement of disputes in their area of jurisdiction. However, if a *rido* cannot be nipped in the bud through the early intervention of the traditional leaders, the traditional procedure of conflict resolution will be applied.

Sumaguina (2000) conducted a similar study entitled "Autonomous Authority of *Maranao* Indigenous Institutions on Conflict Resolution". In his findings, Sumaguina stressed that conflicts which are committed by *Maranaos* who are related to each other by blood are customarily settled through the *Maranao* kinship system of *kokoman-a-kambetabata'a*¹ (kinship system of social justice). However, *Maranao* conflicts which are classified as of "higher intensity and gravity" are submitted to a sophisticated and strategic mediator or team of arbitrators for a peaceful method of settlement.

"The resolution of conflicts," according to Sumaguina (2000) "is not easy, it is not merely ritualistic; it is difficult and its process is very dynamic. Its dynamism lies in the *Maranao* system of mediation". In fact, Sumaguina (2000) found out that the mediation process is very crucial; it likely determines the success or failure of the peaceful management of *Maranao* conflicts. The more strategic the chosen mediator or team of mediators, the easier the *Maranao* conflict is to be put under control (Sumaguina, 2000).

Moreover, Sumaguina (2000) mentioned that there are two kinds of *Maranao* conflicts which are easier for the *Maranaos* to resolve by peaceful means. The first kind is called

1 *Kokoman* means justice, while *kambetabata'a* implies relationship by blood.

rido-o-totonganaya or conflict arising between *Maranaos* who belong to one and the same kinship group. In this kind of conflict, the *Maranaos* just resolve it through the system of *kokoman-a-kambetabata'a*. This system has an advantage over the due process of law or any other *Maranao* indigenous methods of dispute settlement. This is on the grounds that such a system is more efficient, more economical, a faster method of dispute settlement to the element of kinship or blood ties. The conflicting parties to the dispute tend to be easily reconciled to keep their blood ties from being broken. Because of kinship consideration, the punishments or damages to be imposed are very minimal.

The second kind *Maranao* conflict of lesser gravity and intensity is the *rido-o-sesal-kawa-a-tao a damakamaolika*.² In this kind of *Maranao* conflict, an informally organized traditional court or committee in the community where the conflict arose may intervene to put the dispute under control for the sake of peace and order in the community (Sumaguina, 2000).

Furthermore, Sumaguina (2000) found out that when a conflict occurs in the community, the relatives of the disputants would close ranks to provide some moral, financial, physical or human support to their relatives who are involved in the conflict or dispute. It was found out also that when a conflict finally breaks out into factional violence through revenge and counter-revenge, the legal and the traditional authorities tend to become helpless to take authoritative actions. Even the law enforcers would not dare to exercise their governmental authority to control the warring factions who are usually heavily armed and strongly supported on both sides by their respective kinsmen (Sumaguina, 2000).

The Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation and Development of Southern Philippines or PCRDSP (1980: 67) revealed that in the act of maintaining peace and order in the community, *pangalawat*³ is practiced among the *Bukidnons*⁴ and *Manobos*.⁵

2 It refers to conflicts between *Maranaos* who are not related to each other by blood, but it does not inflict moral, physical and material damages.

3 *Pangalawat* is one of the economic and ethical anchors of Bukidnon and Manuvu society. Anyone in need of any object or item can go to any person who has it and request for it. The person in possession of the said item or object requested is then under obligation to relinquish the item. If one needed a pig, for example, all that is needed is to have a rope to tie it, go to someone who has a pig and the owner is ethically bound to give it up. On such an occasion, however, the recipient of the pig or some other item is under obligation to invite the owner to pay a visit within a month or two so that a reciprocal favor can be given.

4 *Bukidnon* comes from two words, "*bukid*" (mountain) and "*non*" (people), thus, "mountain people." They are located in northern Bukidnon Province, western Agusan, and southern Misamis Oriental. Their language is called "*binukid*."

5 *Manobo* or "*Manuvu*" or "*Minuvu*" literally means "person or people." They belong to the original stock of proto-Philippine or proto- Austronesian people who came from South China Sea, earlier than the Ifugao and other terrace-building people of northern Luzon.

The consequence of the *pangalawat*, however, is on the architectural form of the houses. It was noted that the house of a certain Datu Namnam was originally so open that even his family room is completely accessible to any intruder. As a result of acculturation, only it was when he built a new house did he become aware of privacy: he carefully enclosed his new family room and even provided a system of locks outside and inside his doorway—a most unusual act because normally, every bit of property was available to everyone to borrow or use.

A similar study was conducted by Humpa (2002) entitled, “The System of Conflict Resolution of the *Thimuays*⁶ in the Three Barangays of Lapuyan, Zamboanga del Sur”. In this study, the researcher found out that no common steps are followed by the *Thimuays* in resolving conflicts. By calling the conflicting parties, the *Thimuays* assume jurisdiction in the resolution of complaints. Yet, there are no formalities required in filing the complaint. However, it was found also that the decisions of the *Thimuays* about those conflicts were final.

Among the *Aetas*⁷ living at the foot of Mt. Pinatubo, trouble between families may arise due to the failure of the husband’s family to pay the *bandi*⁸. Another cause of conflict was elopement with someone to whom one is not engaged. Also, that divorce is rare but can be arranged through mutual consent. Grounds for divorce may be laziness, cruelty, unfaithfulness and the like. The issue is decided by a council from both the kin groups. The guilty spouse loses custody of the children. Both parties are free to remarry after divorce. If the woman is the guilty party, she must return the *bandi*.

Moreover, the society of Agusan Provinces in Caraga region is said to be a warrior society in which revenge was considered a religious act. Therefore, customary law is based on the right of revenge, usually committed as a ritual act. Revenge by killing is allowed for the following crimes: adultery, fornication, rape and homicide. If one cannot avenge himself on the culprit, he has the right to declare as vendetta on a culprit’s relative. All other crimes are settled by an imposition of fines. Customary law upholds respect to a person’s property. For crimes like theft or nonpayment of debts, testimony and arbitration are combined with a trial by ordeal. Examples are the plunging of the suspect’s hands into boiling water, diving in water or placing one’s hand under a candle. Innocence is proven if one of the suspects passed the ordeal unscathed (CCP, 1994).

6 *Thimuays* (or heads) composed the tribal leaders in a *Subanen* tribe.

7 They were also known as “*baluga*,” especially those of the Pampanga side of Mt. Pinatubo. They are part of bands residing in mountainous, forested areas of the archipelago from Luzon to Mindanao.

8 A bride-price given by the groom to the family of the woman, which can be bows, bolo, cloth, homemade shotguns, and money.

Miller (1905, as cited by CCP) revealed that in the past, divorce was unknown in *Batak*⁹ society, and not even adultery could dissolve a marriage. In lieu of divorce, adultery is punishable by public whipping. Nevertheless, should the husband consent, his wife could go to the offending man upon payment by the latter of a certain amount of fines. Or, both men can live with the woman, with the second husband acting as no more as servant for the first husband, who will exercise all authority and has the right not to work. At present, the practice is that if a man wants to divorce his wife, he calls for a *surigiden*¹⁰ to hear the case. Before this body, he lays down the reasons why he seeks a divorce. If the body rules in his favor and he is granted the divorce, he is required to pay the woman a certain amount of money in exchange for the separation. On the other hand, when a woman takes a second husband, the latter supports not only the woman but also her first husband, and all his children by her. Aside from deciding cases involving relations between men and women, the *surigiden* is also expected to be present at all ritual activities usually observed for the curing of illness. In these rituals, there is a *babaylan*¹¹ (shaman or healer) who presides.

Among the *Bukidnons*, a hierarchy of datuship, with the chief *datu* holding the symbol of authority, the *giling*¹², remains the paramount anchor of social organization as well as the keeper of traditional values which are still essentially intact. *Bukidnon* is the name given to the people inhabiting the inland parts of Misamis Oriental, Western Agusan and Northern Bukidnon in Mindanao. The *Higaunon* tribe is one of the many tribes that can be found in Bukidnon. Northern Mindanao is a medley of cultural encounters. To the settlers from the Visayas who are attracted by the rich resources of Mindanao, it is a new frontier. For the indigenous society, each encounter is a test of will as well as their capacity to adapt. Historically, the hill peoples of Bukidnon, together with the *Manobos* and *Subanons*, have been pushed into the interior parts of the region by the more advanced and aggressive cultural groups. First of these groups are the Muslim raiders, and then by the Christians who settled the lowlands, coming from the Visayas during the Spanish period up to the American regime, with the greatest number of them coming in during the Commonwealth government. As has been noted, the setting is a natural one for conflict. Spanish colonization failed to bring about a synthesis of cultures in the region (PCRDSP,1980). Culturally and linguistically, the *Bukidnons* are

9 The word *Batak* means "mountain people." Because of their physical characteristics, they are classified as Philippine Aetas. They live mainly in small settlements near Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

10 A council of male arbitrators composed of all resident adult males in a large local group of *Batak* society.

11 Shaman, healer or priest. It is believed that he establishes the relationship between Deities and men.

12 It is a black scepter possessed by the *datu*, symbolizing the position of "the highest *datu* of Bukidnon."

related to the *Manobos*. Among the *Bukidnons*, the term “*manobo*” carries a pejorative note because it means “people without law.” Indeed, it is the strict observance of traditional laws (or *batassan*) and the land which shaped their culture.

Therefore, the *lumads* have their own way of conflict resolution among the problems arising within the tribe. In most cases, conflicts involve relationships between husband and wife in the tribe. Common crimes such as stealing and murder are also seen as roots of conflict. This system of conflict resolution among the *lumads* is an obvious manifestation of their traditional culture that they have preserved through the years. Apparently, their system of conflict resolution is approved and respected by the members of the tribe.

Based on the data above, it can be inferred that indigenous cultural communities were governed by their own traditional political system. Contrary to what the early colonizers claimed, the indigenous people have their own system that governs the relationship of the members of the tribe. It can be noted also that they were able to preserve and pass the tradition to their sons and daughters. More so, the researches imply that this political system conforms to their cultures and traditions. Also, paganism is but a noticeable feature among many indigenous cultural communities; it is manifested in their ways of living.

In his book *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, Mercado (1993) held that the concept of retribution comes under various names. One aspect comes under that of debt and its payment. Payment is not only in terms of financial debt but also of moral debt. This is implied in the expression ‘*magbayad ka sa imong pag-insulto kanako*’ (You’ll pay for insulting me). In *Tagalog*, *pagbabayad* is expiation for a fault and *pagbabayad-puri* is expiation or atonement. To kill someone is to borrow life: *humiram ng buhay* in *Tagalog* or *utang sa hari* (literary ‘debt to the king’) in *Visayan*. ‘*Bayad*’ *sa utang* in *Visayan* means daughter.¹³ Another form of retribution is *gaba/busong/lunod* (curse).¹⁴

Mercado (1993) continued that Filipinos are also realistic. *Gaba* alone is not sufficient, because some men will continue to do evil. Hence, rural Filipinos use sorcery as a form of sanction. In his study of Cebuano sorcery, Lieban (as cited by Mercado) concluded that legitimate social sanctions are inadequate to prevent serious social discords such as land disputes, courtship and marital cases. Among the *Thimuays* of Lapuyan, Zamboanga del Sur, penalties and sanctions are also imposed. These penalties include collection of damages, death penalty, public contempt, and supernatural sanctions. Such penalties

13 The explanation is this: a man who impregnates woman other than his wife has to pay for his adulteries by allowing his daughter/s in turn to be impregnated by others.

14 *Gaba* is quite similar to the doctrine of karma in Hinduism and Buddhism. It is also similar to biblical doctrine of reaping what one sows (Mercado, 1993).

are seen as effective means in maintaining the peace and order of the *Subanen* tribe. In settling conflicts, the *Thimuays* of Lapuyan employ oral laws. Moreover, Humpa (2002) stressed that oral traditions and laws of the *Subanen* are passed from generation to generation. In settling these conflicts, however, cases are either solved or remain unsolved (Humpa, 2002).

Moreover, a study by PCRDSP (1980) about the *Bagobos*¹⁵ reveals that there were not so many thefts among the *Bagobos*. It was reported that they had a most efficacious way of ferreting out thieves by means of the *bongat*.¹⁶ This consists of two small containers made from the joints of a bamboo tree. They contain some mysterious powder which was used to discover thieves in this manner: if one had been robbed and wished to find out who did it, he took an egg and make a hole in it. Then a pinch of powder from the *bongat* is put into the egg which was then put into the fire. It is believed that wherever the thief is, he would be compelled to disclose his guilt because of the sharp pains all over his body. He could even be put to death simply by breaking the egg but, since the one performing the *bongat* may not want the thief killed, he could just wait for the thief to confess. Afterwards, as a remedy for the pains caused by the *bongat*, the guilty one is bathed in water mixed with the other powder from the *bongat*.

Furthermore, it is a general principle that, among the *Manobos*, it is considered obligatory to seek redress for all wrongs done. The *tawagan* system permits a *Manobo* to kill or seize anything, provided that he has tried all other means to settle the dispute amicably. Minor offenses such as stealing, slandering, failure to pay debts, deception that causes damage to another person, and disrespect towards another property are punishable. However, when the credibility of the suspect is doubted, it is verified by means of a ritual. This is called *to-tugo*.¹⁷ There are ordeals made to determine the innocence or guilt of a person. The first is the hot water ordeal, where an anklet or an earring is put into boiling water, and the suspects are ordered to submerge their hands to get the item. He who his hands is scalded, is considered as the guilty one. Then there is the diving ordeal, where the suspects are made to stay under water. The one who comes out of the water first is considered the culprit. The third is the candle ordeal where the candles of the same size are given to the suspects. These are lit at the same time and kept away from the wind. The suspects stand holding the candles. The one whose candle is put off first is considered the guilty one.

15 They belong to proto-Malayan race. The *Bagobos* were the first ethnic group in Mindanao encountered by the Spaniards at the end of the 19th century.

16 It is a practice of divination involving mysterious powders inserted into a chicken egg. This was believed to cause so much pain in thieves, that they would be compelled to confess.

17 This is done by burning of the wax, a ceremony that maybe used on witnesses and on those who are required to tell the truth. The accused is made to appear in a public assembly. He is confronted with witnesses, and, if they testify against him, he admits to the guilt.

A study by Pailig Development Foundation, Inc. (2007) on *rido* in Mindanao reveals that the amount of compensation is more or less negotiable but to a certain degree determined through the traditional procedure of conflict settlement. The application of punitive laws would, from a traditional point of view, make the situation worse. The imprisonment of a wrongdoer would not be perceived as a punishment since he would be “better off” than the victim’s family; still alive with ‘regular meals’ and without having paid any kind of compensation. For traditional communities this would be an obvious win-lose situation.

A study conducted by Moner (2015) regarding the inter-ethnic conflict between the *Higaonons* and *Maranaos* showed that in resolving their conflict which is rooted on land, petty crimes, wife-grabbing, and politics; customary laws were relied upon. Both groups have their own set of customary law, which is the *Batasan Adansil* and the *Taritib ago Ijma*, respectively. When settling disputes, either one is used over the other or both can be used depending on the parties involved and the discretion of the mediator- arbiter (pp. 61-62). If the *Batasan Adansil* is to be used, then both or either of the conflicting parties must be a *Higaonon*. Compensations were stipulated based on the nature of the case. If it is a major case, which includes deaths or serious injuries, the offender is required to give a blood money called *Bangon* to the aggrieved party, which is consist of four sacks of rice, one carabao, and P 50, 000. On the other hand, the *Taritib ago Ijma* requires that both the conflicting parties are *Maranaos*. This law specifies that in all cases, the perpetrator should provide a blood money to the aggrieved party comprising four sacks of rice, one carabao, and P 100,000 (Moner, 2015, pp. 63-66).

Among the *Tedurays* (or *Tirurays*) located in Upi and South Upi in Mindanao, conflict and peacemaking are anchored on *tiyawan* (social relationship) and local arbiters called *kefeduwan*. *Tiyawan* is responsible for handling personal encounters which resulted in death and marriage. The *kefeduwans*, some of which are women, settle disputes peacefully with the intercession of village leaders, both of which have considerable expertise of the *adat* or customary law (Schlegel, as cited by Barnes & Magdalena, 2016).

In a study entitled “Indigenous Administration of Justice and its impact on the Protection of Children: The *Tagabawa-Bagobo* and *Subanen* Experience,” Save the Children (2006) drew on the conflict resolution of both indigenous groups in Mindanao with a highlight on the latter. Among the *Subanens* in Barangay Bag-ong Matalang, Lakewood Municipality, Zamboanga del Sur, a leader named as *Timuay* (from the word *timu* which means “to gather”) and a council of elders is responsible for the administration of justice. They possess a good memory of their unwritten customary laws called *Batad Banwa Subanen* which covers disputes regarding land and property, marriage and extramarital relationship, and crimes against life, to name a few. During the process of resolving conflicts, through the intercession of the *Timuay*, the one who is at fault offers the aggrieved party a *daga* (a ceremony where both parties offer animal sacrifices as a

symbol of their willingness to be reconciled) and pays the necessary penalty to soothe bad feelings and restore good relations (Save the Children UK, 2006).

Buendia *et al.* (2006), quoting Maceda (1975), noted that among the *Mamanaua* found in Northeast Mindanao, a headman presided over problems in the judicial system and rendered punishments. It was reported that ostracism was the most common punishment. Furthermore, unlike other ethnic groups, the *Mamanaua* women had crucial role in their society. Because they were helpful in easing the anger of the headman, the community's problems were oftentimes referred to them first.

Limikid (2002) aptly stated that for the *Mansaka*, an intervention of a *matikadong* in conflicts was necessary in order to prevent the existence of a tribal war. When settling disputes, an unusual festive celebration with food was often prepared during an assembly. This was followed by an investigation of the case, consultation with the leaders and enforcement of penalties.

The *Manobos* celebrate the culture of retaliatory killing as a form of punishment. When a murder is done, an immediate response called *pangayaw* was made. It is a pattern of vengeance wherein a warrior leader (*bagani*) from the offended party retaliates by killing the perpetrator (Montillo-Burton, Matuan, Poingan, & Alovera, as cited by Barnes and Magdalena, 2016).

Save the Children UK (2006) elucidated that among the *Subanens*, a corresponding punishment is made for each crime. Once a perpetrator is found guilty of rape, s/he is ordered to offer as a fine an amount that is almost impossible for him to produce such as a carabao. For theft, if the accused denies the allegation, he would be asked to get a needle placed at the bottom of a pot of boiling water. If he succeeds in getting the needle, this would prove his innocence and the accuser would be punished. If a man refuses to acknowledge responsibility for the pregnancy of a woman, he would be subjected to a test by challenging him to hack the midsection of the pregnant woman's body. If the woman is lying, she would be too scared to go through the procedure. However, this approach is only employed when the *Timuays* are not able to settle the argument after having exhausted all efforts through mediation. In cases of crimes committed against property, fines are based on the value of the property stolen or destroyed (p. 34).

Among the *Isama* of Mindanao, death was the punishment rendered for those who committed grave acts like murder and homicide. Less serious acts like theft and robbery were punishable by cutting off the fingers or hands of the culprit. The number of fingers to be cut depended on the gravity of the offense as judged by *Ruma Bitiara* (Buendia *et al.*, 2006, p. 34).

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