

Editors' Notes

Before western colonizers came to our shores, our nation was largely peopled by numerous indigenous vis-à-vis tribal groups—each with its own distinct style of governance. This special issue of the *Journal* delves on indigenous leadership. Specifically, the articles contained herein are part of a bigger project of the P.A. 329 (Special Problems in Public Administration) class, Second Semester of Academic School Year 2003-2004 at the National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines Diliman, that aims to publish a compendium of papers on the governance of selected indigenous peoples (IPs). Separate studies concentrate on individual IPs highlighting governance areas, not to mention administration of justice, rulemaking, delivery of services, external relations, security and defense, fiscal administration, and the concepts of property and human rights. The papers elucidate on the principles, structures, processes, and individuals or groups involved in governance within a particular indigenous group, and then analyzes the data along the fundamental governance values of transparency, accountability, leadership, gender sensitivity, and people's participation.

Instead of scrutinizing just one indigenous group, the study discusses the concept of leadership among several tribal groups selected for the project—Kalinga, Bontok, Manobo, and Maranaw. More so, the study investigates the various titles used, sources of authority, roles and functions, and, where data are available, the shifts from tradition to current leadership practices, in the milieu of public administration and local governance.

Lastly, the authors present the issues and challenges that the research undertaking has on public administration and governance—both as theory and practice. Understanding traditional Filipino institutions of governance may have interesting consequences for Philippine public administration amid persistent calls for its indigenization.

Indigenous leadership and governance are part of the values and traditions of the IPs. "Indigenous Leadership and Governance" by Ma. Oliva Z. Domingo shows that indigenous leadership structures and practices have been effective in governing the daily lives of the IPs for centuries. Public servants (elected and otherwise) should be aware of their age-old tradition of putting a premium on being an elder as a requirement for leadership. She postulates that political and administrative leaders may well reflect upon the standards of IP leadership wherein merit and fitness always reign supreme.

The Kalingas are among the several ethnolinguistic tribes inhabiting the Cordilleras. Ma. Carmen V. Peñalosa in "Coming to Terms With Indigenous Governance Institutions in the Cordillera Region: A Preliminary Look at the Kalinga Experience" reveals that Kalingas have notably distinct but highly desirable governance practices that existed eons before the genesis of the Philippine nation. Her treatise assesses the repercussions of the Kalinga system of governance to modern day administration of local and national affairs, in light of the IPs' desire for self-governance.

An inimical issue that constantly hounds the Bontok Igorots is how to safeguard, preserve, and in some cases, uphold their traditional governance systems in face of the ever-changing pressures of modern society. Another major contention for them is whether their indigenous values and practices can blend with the formal political systems of the state. "The Bontok Igorot Tribe: An Internal Scanning of its Governance System" authored by Susana Evangelista-Leones relates that their indigenous governance mechanisms must be respected and protected from external influences. Government must recognize indigenous communities by reinforcing their own ethnic governance systems instead of supplanting them with processes and institutions not germane to them.

"Exploring the Indigenous Local Governance of Manobo Tribes in Mindanao" by Ma. Leny E. Felix looks at the Manobos' governance values system and practices in the context of leadership, participatory mechanisms, conflict resolution and transparency, and accountability. The academic community, nongovernment organizations, the state, and even IPs themselves may find this preliminary discourse worth sustaining and inviting further research. This initial exploration on the Manobos' way of life, specifically their indigenous systems and practices of governance captures their past with the meniscus of their own people. Nonetheless, the Manobos of today are beset with issues and challenges threatening their very existence as a cultural group—poverty, marginalization of their indigenous systems, beliefs and practices, and their inalienable right to ancestral lands are but a few of them.

Another exploratory study, "The Traditional Maranaw Governance System: Descriptives, Issues and Imperatives for Philippine Public Administration" by Liberty Ibañez Nolasco seeks to gain an understanding of the different aspects of the traditional Maranaw governance system (TMGS). She pays close attention to the dynamics of the structure, processes and functions of TMGS together with a description of core governance principles. The author also identifies issues and concerns affecting the functionality of TMGS. Towards the end, she advises future researchers and scholars to deepen their awareness of informal institutions of power and authority (IIPA) vis-à-vis how formal institutions of power and authority (FIPA) can go about the concerns of the former.