

Ibaloy “Reclaiming” Baguio: The Role of Intellectuals

Jimmy Balud Fong

The recognition of the United States Supreme Court of “native title” in 1909 has been recognized as a landmark decision for indigenous peoples all over the world. Also called the *Cariño doctrine*, the ruling honors a Baguio Ibaloy whose ancestral land would eventually be expropriated for the construction of Baguio as an American hill station, later as the Philippines’ unofficial summer capital.

Fast-forward to 2014. Descendants of an Ibaloy family reclaim the land on which Casa Vallejo stands. Built in 1909, the building was originally Dormitory 4 for American soldiers. Salvador Vallejo converted it into a hotel in 1923. Persons with fond memories of the hotel claim the refurbished building is a ‘national heritage’ and should not be the subject of ancestral land claims.

The year 2014 also saw the largest turnout of Ibaloy in and around Baguio for the celebration on February 23 of Ibaloi Day, at the government-designated Ibaloi Heritage Garden in Burnham Park. Products of colonial and national educational systems, Ibaloy professionals and intellectuals played key roles in the institutionalization and implementation of such activities.

Despite their breakthroughs for recognition nationally through certain constitutional provisions, and internationally, are indigenous peoples now trapped in the discourse of nation?

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Baguio as home

The home and the past are two concepts that modernity, history and development have pushed to the foreground. Modernity and the awareness of history have made it possible to talk about the past, the present and the future. National development projects such as the construction of roads through mountains have made travel more convenient, including moving to another place for the purpose of making a living. The need to move somewhere in order to improve one’s lot in life has made people conscious of home, “the quintessential representation of a morally ordered social universe...a world of tradition, custom, domestic cohesion, and political allegiance” (Erlmann, 1996, p. 131). Projects undertaken by the Philippine nation-state in the name of development have also caused displacements and relocations that have impacted the Ibaloy notions of home and the past (Pungayan, 1991).

An Ibaloy newspaper columnist, Eufronio Pungayan (1991), points out that the Ibaloy people had a series of experiences on displacements and

relocation in the name of development. The first in the series could be the construction of Baguio as a city, and then came the mines, dams, the Marcos Highway, and the Baguio Export Processing Zone. He says these painful experiences made the Ibaloy project a “stolid, silent, and weather-beaten stance” (Pungayan, 1991, p. 342).

Ili is the Ibaloy and Cordillera word for hometown. One’s house, parents, kin and relatives (*khait, agi*), friends, consociates (*kaidian*) are found in the *ili*. It is where one’s childhood memories and one’s past are located, the physical embodiment of one’s roots.

Who are the Ibaloy?

The Ibaloy (also spelled Ibaloi, Ibaluy, Ibadoy, and Ivadoy; here both Ibaloy and Ibaloi are used: Ibaloi as used in legal documents and titles, and in literature cited; the author prefers Ibaloy) are the ethno-linguistic group traditionally occupying Baguio and the areas around it (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985). Baguio must have been the American spelling of the Ibaloy word *bagiw*, or moss, Baguio being part of a mossy mountain range.

In Ibaloy and other Cordillera languages, “i” indicates origin or place, and Baloy is a specific place in the area. So Ibaloy may also mean people who moved upstream from Baloy (in Itogon, Benguet) (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985).

In 1905, Otto Scheerer (1905) estimated the Ibaloy population at around 15,000. In 2000, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported that there are 131,916 Ibaloy in the entire Philippines, 95,586 of them in the province of Benguet (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016).

Today, other Ibaloy live in the municipalities of Kabayan, Bokod, Sablan, Tublay, La Trinidad, Tuba, Itogon, and the southern parts of Kapangan and Atok, all in the southeastern side of Benguet. Most of the residents of Kayapa in Nueva Vizcaya are also Ibaloy as are other migrants in other Nueva Vizcaya towns. Tracing of genealogies indicate the Ibaloy have common ancestors (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985).

Ibaloy is now an ethnic identity that refers to a subgroup of indigenous peoples often lumped together as Igorots in the northern Philippine Cordillera. Ibaloy also refers to the language that they speak, although colonial literature has popularized *Nabaloi* as the name of the language (Scheerer, 1905; Moss, 1924). As an ethno-linguistic group, the Ibaloy assume themselves to be different from other Cordillera and Philippine ethno-linguistic groups. The traditional geographical domain of the Ibaloy is the southern part of Benguet province. But the Ibaloy have also participated in migration processes through intermarriage, industrialization and the

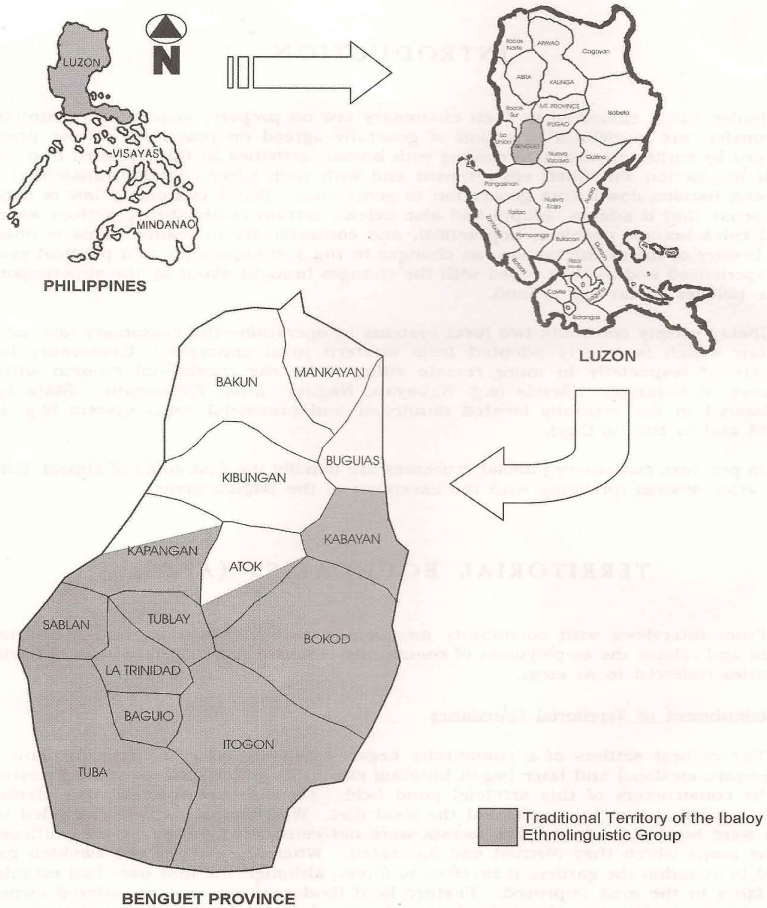


Figure 1. Map of the province of Benguet indicating the traditional domain of the Ibaloy. Ibaloy-speaking communities can also be found in the adjacent provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Pangasinan (Tolentino, 2015).

global diaspora of people caused by various, but mainly economic, factors (Fong, 2011).

The Ibaloy have their own set of traditions and cosmology manifested in rites and rituals. But because of a series of different degrees of colonization, it may no longer be possible to speak of a pure Ibaloy culture. Now Ibaloy is both an ascribed label and a self-identification (Fong, 2011). Thus it is possible for a person to claim to be an Ibaloy based on ancestry or bloodline despite the inability to speak or understand the language, or the non-performance of practices that are traditionally considered Ibaloy. In such a case, Ibaloy is something one comes back to only when tracing one's "roots."

Among the various ethno-linguistic groups in the Cordillera, the Ibaloy have no qualms or hang-ups about being called, or calling themselves, Igudut, the Ibaloy word for Igorot (Rood, 1991). This was long before it became fashionable to do so. Today, it has become common to see people with “*Igorotak*” (I am an Igorot), or “*Ibaloi-ak*,” splashed on their shirts. This came about as a result of a long struggle for recognition by the Igorot and other indigenous peoples in the Philippines, and which has recently been given a boost by the rise to celebrity status of some showbiz wannabes (Fong, 2011).

The “shy” Ibaloy stereotype may be founded on observations that the Ibaloy, instead of asserting their right as the original occupants of Baguio, either left or allowed foreigners (Americans and others) and Filipinos from other places, mostly lowlanders, to expropriate their lands for themselves (Prill-Brett, 2015). Today, the Ibaloy are a minority in Baguio, which was once their domicile and pastureland. As of the 2000 Census, only 3.9 percent of the Baguio population consider themselves Ibaloy. Meanwhile, 44.5 percent consider themselves Ilocano, 20.4 Tagalog, 11 percent Kankanaï/Kankaney/Kankanaey, and 4.8 percent Pangasinan (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016).

Aside from speaking a distinct language, which Scheerer (1905) called Nabaloi, the Ibaloy are known to have engaged in raising cattle, mining gold and agriculture. In times past, they have also perfected the art and science of mummification.

The Ibaloy have their distinct architecture, crafts, clothes, music, dances and rituals. The Ibaloy music and dance is collectively called the *tayaw*, and the traditional corporate chant is the *ba-diw*.

The American colonial government built several schools in Baguio and Benguet to emphasize the high priority they were giving to education. Patricia Afable (2011) says education “was embraced by the Ibaloy for their children, although with some initial resistance. Ibaloy came to see the schools as the one hope for their children to participate in the new economy” (n.p.).

Several contemporary Ibaloy pop songs extoll the value of formal education. Education (*iskwida*) is sung about as very important. For poor families, it is the only inheritance that can be given to children (*Kaninin eh arem, eskuweda nin nemnemen* [“Courting can wait, think of school first”] by Aguilar Matsi, n.d.). Education is perceived as good for one’s wellbeing (*pansigshan*), and to security. Therefore it should be earnestly pursued with utmost patience (*singsingpeten*) and must not be bungled (*Nanang, si-kak gayam i nankamali* [Mother, it is I that made a mistake], in Raul Beray’s (n.d.) album *Eskueda*).

The song *Kaninin i arem, iskwida nin i nemnemen* (“courtship can wait, think of school first”) starts with the narrator-son recalling his father’s advice about persevering in school (Fong, 2011). The father says education will be his only legacy to his son because he has no property to pass on as inheritance. The son does not say if he also failed his dad but he advises his siblings to take their father’s advice to heart. He says education is more than wealth or gold because it can, in fact, produce wealth. Part of the song also advises that one should pay his parents back for their sacrifices for his education. The song’s title points out that education should take priority over courtship. In general, the Ibaloy songs admit the importance of formal education because it may lead to a better life. They also say vices and rushing to enter into a romantic relationship, or early marriage, could hinder a person from getting an education.

Higher education is pursued mostly in the city (Baguio), which means that such pursuit can be hindered by some aspects of city life (e.g., alcohol, women, *barkada* peers) that compete for a student’s attention, allowance and tuition money (Fong, 2011). In the pop songs, perceptions of the city are ambivalent: It can nurture the mind but it can also corrupt one’s character, it can comfort the broken-hearted but it can also destroy commitments (Fong, 2011). The singers point to the city as the place where one can go to get an education but it also a place where one can be distracted from the goal to be educated by the attractions of vices and pleasures. The city is also seen as a place where one can go to forget being rejected, but there are also songs that say it is in the city that a boyfriend or girlfriend can easily find another person to replace the one left behind in the village.

Breaking away from being stereotyped as a shy people, many Ibaloy are now educated. Aside from joining government, the professions and other forms of employment, Ibaloy have also joined the Filipino diaspora all over the world. They have also taken on introduced religions, which some observers say have been instrumental in eroding certain cultural practices (Prill-Brett, 2015).

I also emphasize here the minority status, cultural and now economic, of the Ibaloy ethno-linguistic group in relation to Philippine nation-state formation and policies. During the Ramos administration, the province of Benguet, peopled mostly by the Kankanaëy and Ibaloy, was among the country’s poorest provinces, including the five other Cordillera provinces (Ifugao, Mountain Province, Abra, Apayao and Kalinga) (Fong, 2014). Such provinces were euphemistically referred to as belonging to Club 20, a list of the 20 poorest provinces in the Philippines, part of the anti-poverty program of the Ramos administration in 1995 (Dumlao, 2013).

Today, in the context of diaspora and cyberspace, the community of the Ibaloy is now transgressive of geographic boundaries. In 2000, the National Statistics Office, now Philippine Statistics Authority, found that there are 131,916 Ibaloy in Benguet province and around the country. Just as there would be a Filipino in all corners of this world, the Ibaloy is not far behind. There are also several Ibaloy e-groups on the Internet (Fong, 2014).

The Ibaloy share the province of Benguet with Kankanaëy-speaking people who occupy mostly the northern parts of the province. In many instances both Ibaloy and Kankanaëy-speaking people live together in the same communities. The Philippine Statistics Authority counted 95,586 Ibaloy in 2000 and 141,134 Kankanaëy out of the 329,216 residents of Benguet province. Except for the difference in language and therefore terminologies for certain activities, there are not many major differences in the cultures and traditions of the two ethno-linguistic groups (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985). Yet the need to create boundaries for geopolitical units has led to an insistence on differences that sometimes lead to suspicion against each other. Still, there have been no reports of violent conflicts arising from differences in culture between the two groups in Benguet. Both Kankanaëy- and Ibaloy-speaking people also interact with another smaller group who speak Kalanguya and whose lands are found in the villages between Benguet and Ifugao province.

An Ibaloy community life: the case of a barangay

Located about 3,000 feet above sea level, Taba-ao barangay is generally warm during the day (at a high of 24 degrees Celsius) and cold at night. With a land area of 475 hectares, the barangay is the second smallest in Kapangan town, province of Benguet. Of this area, 90 percent (430,485 hectares) is devoted to farming, with 85 percent of the total labor force involved, based on a 2000 Barangay Profile. Rice, which is mainly for home consumption, is the barangay's major crop from July to December. Root crops and legumes are also mixed in the *uma* (swidden farm on mountain slopes). The rest of the year is spent on growing vegetables for the home or the market (Fong, 2011).

The development of La Trinidad and Baguio as urban and educational centers resulted in the growth of markets for vegetables like beans, cucumber, peas and other temperate vegetables, which were also brought down to Manila. Afable (2011) says experiments on the growing of such vegetables were introduced by the Spaniards in La Trinidad, Benguet at around 1874, and the Americans took over the supervision of this vegetable agriculture when they put up the Trinidad Farm School in 1916.

Gradually, when the La Trinidad farms could no longer supply the growing national demand for vegetables, adjacent towns like Kapangan also started growing these same vegetables. In Taba-ao, most of the households have been growing various kinds of vegetables on terraced fields whose sizes would range from 100 to 500 square meters. Because of the limited arable lands in the community, none of these vegetable farms, which also double as rice fields during the rainy season, can be measured in terms of hectares. A few persons and families in Taba-ao played key roles serving as *ahente*, agents or middlemen and consolidators of the produce of the farmers in the barangay and marketing these in Baguio (Fong, 2011).

With the importation and smuggling of vegetables from Taiwan, China and Australia now seriously affecting the Benguet vegetable industry, plus the growing global movement for organic farming, the farmers are now being slowly introduced to the idea and practice of pesticide-free farming—a technology which they are now realizing can be considered as something traditional, or which their forebears also practiced even before store-bought fertilizers and insecticides were widely advertised and distributed (Fong, 2011).

Some of the farmers have now shifted to government-introduced rice varieties which require some commercial, inorganic fertilizers, and the use of threshers and mills (Fong, 2011). The traditional rice varieties are at least waist-high at harvest time. Harvesting is done with the person standing and cutting the rice stalks one by one with a hand blade called *dahëm*. The shorter modern varieties are harvested by stooping or squatting and cutting the base of the whole plant with a sickle. While the harvested traditional rice varieties are brought home with the seeds still on their stalks and dried at home above the hearth or ceiling, or sundried at the yard or roof, the new varieties are threshed in the field, dried under the sun and brought to the mill. The threshed rice may also be brought and pounded at home. For many homes, the new rice varieties are practical because the hearths over which newly harvested rice were once hung to dry have long been replaced by the more convenient and cleaner gas stove. The so-called dirty kitchen, where firewood was used, is now mostly used for cooking pig food, or when one runs out of gas.

For most of the farmer-residents, a day starts early at about 4 a.m., or when the cocks crow. After a cup of hot brewed coffee, the farmers go and feed one or two carabaos and/or a few cows. This is done either by cutting fodder grass (*sahate*) and bringing it to the animals, or by transferring the animals from one grazing area to another. If it is the vegetable-growing season, the early morning is spent watering the plants. Then the farmer goes home for breakfast which could be from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. The periods

between breakfast and lunch and between lunch and supper are usually spent on major farm tasks such as land preparation, planting, and caring for crops by weeding, fertilizing, spraying, and harvesting at the terraced farms. Others go to the swidden or *uma*, another farm usually farther away on mountain slopes, to plant, weed or harvest root crops. In general, a household would maintain terraced farms for rice and vegetables and a swidden for root crops such as sweet potato, cassava, *ube* and some corn and legumes. When gas stoves were not yet popular, going to the forest to gather firewood was also a regular activity. Now the people joke about going to the store to get some firewood.

The other residents are engaged in some form of business and in the professions. One by one, the teaching slots in the community schools are being occupied by qualified residents, but a former elementary school principal laments the fact that the school has not produced many professionals compared to the other barangays in the town. Household incomes are augmented by salaries earned by members of the community who work in other places such as La Trinidad, the capital town of Benguet, or Baguio, or Metro Manila or even overseas. Most of those who leave for other towns in Benguet and nearby provinces usually engage in the same farm work, but on a larger, commercial scale.

Guerilla warfare during World War II remains an important historical point in the memory of the villagers. The war-related experiences of the people include moving out of their homes and evacuating to other places, and being conscious of and dealing with foreign people. Many of the present social relations in the village have been shaped by the people's involvement with and experiences during the war. Many of the elders in the community are war veterans, which contributed to their ascendance as civilian leaders. In fact, the former provincial governor (Raul Mencio Molintas), and the former representative (Samuel Dangwa) in the Philippine Congress of Benguet province are sons of the two prominent WWII soldiers in the area (Bagamaspad & Hamada- Pawid, 1985). Pensions have also helped families survive. Help extended during the war to certain persons also continue to be invoked in present interactions, to gain favors, or as a source of social debts (Fong, 2011).

Ibaloys in diaspora

Most of the families in the village are now familiar with overseas migrant laborers and immigrants. The residents have at least one relative in either one or a combination of the following countries: Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, US, Canada, South Korea, Taiwan, England, Israel, Singapore (Fong, 2011). Most of the households in Taba-ao are then either direct or indirect recipients of

cash and goods from relatives who are legal or illegal migrants and workers overseas. Because of this, community folks also have their own personal stories about good and bad adventures of kin and kindred who have sought fortunes abroad. Stories of success, maltreatment, illegal recruitment, and “break contract” have now become part of casual, everyday conversations. A few Taba-ao folks have also been invited by relatives for brief trips abroad and they return with stories of how things are so much different and better there than “here,” at home.

Going out of the village to work seems to have started at the onset of the 20th Century. Toriano Oway (personal communication, July 23, 2000) said that in the late 1920s, he and some other boys would hike to Baguio to serve as caddy boys at the Baguio Country Club during the dry season (October to March). He also remembered working at the Baguio City Camp, center of public works in Baguio. Right after the war, young women from Taba-ao, some against their parents’ wishes, also travelled to La Trinidad and Baguio to work in the kitchens and vegetable gardens of Chinese entrepreneurs; some of them ended up as wives. (My Chinese grandfather first had a Kankanaëy-speaking wife and then later an Ibaloy who went to La Trinidad from Kapangan to work in vegetable farms in La Trinidad. My mother met my father at my grandfather’s farm on Km. 4, La Trinidad in the early 1960s. Other men and women went further north along the Halsema or the Mountain Trail as wage earners in the growing vegetable farms.) My mother used to bring the vegetable produced at La Trinidad to the Baguio market.

Building Baguio

When the city’s “oldtimers” (a label the lowland and Cordillera people who settled in Baguio before WWII like to call themselves) recall how Baguio came to be, they mention two names and a serendipitous encounter. The first name belonged to an employee of the Spanish Forestry Bureau: Domingo Sanchez. The other, Dean Conant Worcester, was that of a young American zoologist gathering specimens in Mindoro.

During a chance meeting in 1892, Sanchez told Worcester of a cool place located in the Philippines’ northern mountains (Gutierrez, 1964). Familiar with the Philippines’ tropical climate, Worcester wondered whether Sanchez’ story had some truth to it. Worcester checked records in the Spanish archives and discovered that some officials of the colonial government had indeed been to a cool place named Benguet. The records showed that these officials took temperature readings of the area during their trip, and that these readings confirmed a place way cooler than the lowlands. While the Spanish were aware of this cool place, the farthest

where they were able to establish a settlement was a valley they named La Trinidad, five kilometers away from Baguio. The Igorots, presumably Ibaloy, had earlier resisted several earlier attempts at Spanish colonization.

By 1898, America acquired the Philippines as part of its Spanish-American War booty (Gutierrez, 1964). Worcester convinced U.S. Secretary of State Elihu Root to order an exploratory expedition to the cool place. Worcester himself headed the exploratory team formed in 1900. From La Union, the team rode up the mountain on horseback, and was taken aback by the cool weather that greeted them just a few meters away from the warmer town of Sablan. Of that discovery, Worcester wrote, “We were literally dumbfounded when within a space of 100 yards we suddenly left the tropics behind us....” (p. 16).

In developing Baguio, the Americans envisioned a place that reminded them of “home.” It would be a “white city” that patterned after the *fin de siècle* architecture of the U.S. exhibition in the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago. (The 1893 Chicago World’s Fair was meant to exhibit all that was the best from the United States and other European countries. The concept of a “white city” was developed by American architect Daniel Burnham. The term white city comes from the white plaster that was painted on the American building in the World’s Fair, [Reed, 1999]).

The Americans hurriedly drew up plans to build a road to the planned resort town. It took them five years to complete that road (now called Kennon Road), and during those five years, the only means of travel through long distances were bull carts and horses (Bagamaspad and Hamada- Pawid, 1985).

The horse was not new to the Igorots because they were already using the animal to traverse the mountains even before the Americans came. What attracted them, however, was the American mount, a large creature which dwarfed its smaller native cousins. At one point, the Igorots even thought the American horses were magical creatures because smoke clouds formed in the foggy air when the animals snorted. Some of the American quarter horses, retired by the U.S. Army, landed in the hands of Igorots. Others were given as reward by some Americans to Igorots who guided them through the mountains (Dizon, 1991).

In the meantime, more work hands were needed for the development of Baguio. More buildings meant more jobs for foreigners, lowlanders and the Igorots (Prill-Brett, 2015). More people also meant more food and supplies. This is where Igorots from places outside Baguio came into the picture. Igorots from as far as Kibungan and Kapangan towns hiked or rode on horseback to reach the city and engage in trade. Together with other people from other surrounding communities, they needed to supply Baguio’s

growing population with vegetables, meat and poultry. In exchange, they also purchased goods from Baguio, to bring home to their hometowns.

Baguio attracted American insular government officials, foreign businessmen and workers, miners, lowlander tradesmen. It was not all business in Baguio though. Consistent with the American mission to educate the colonized, the insular government brought in their teachers, whom they called Thomasites.

Among those often mistakenly considered as a Thomasite was a woman named Alice Kelly. People thought Kelly was a Thomasite because she established a school for Igorot girls in the Ibaloy-speaking Itogon town, also a mining area, which was instrumental in teaching natives to speak English the American way (Halsema, 2000).

Alice Kelly came to Baguio in 1901 with her husband James, who was a miner (Gutierrez, 1964). James Kelly died in a cholera epidemic a year later. His widow chose to stay in Baguio, and made it her mission to teach Igorot girls “health and sanitation, homemaking, dressmaking, and the fundamental subjects of American education to the otherwise unlettered Igorot girls” (p. 81). She established the Bua School Dormitory in Tuding, Itogon, six kilometers away from Baguio. The school also came to be known as the Bua School for Girls.

Kelly is best remembered for the phrase “Good morning, Mrs. Kelly,” the first English sentence she taught her pupils (Burke, 1913). This is because young Igorot children greeted every white man, woman or child they met on the mountain trail with their lilting version of “Good morning, Misis Kelly.”

Although mention of Kelly is almost always connected to the teaching of English, she actually imparted more than that to the Ibaloy. It was Kelly who saw the value of weaving, encouraging her pupils to find pride in their costume which to date remains the Ibaloy dress (Afable, 2011). It was Kelly who also formed an all-girls rondalla. Old photographs show pupils of Mrs. Kelly with the musical instruments they played. Kelly, too, taught her girls to dance. She introduced the “sweet dance,” which is still popular among Ibaloy and other Igorots.

The Easter School was opened on Easter Week in 1906 at Guisad valley in Baguio to educate the Igorots, starting with 10 Bontoc boys who hiked all the way from Mountain Province (Cimatu, 2008). The school would later take in girls, including several women from Taba-ao.

(Barangay) Taba-ao figured as a halfway stop for Igorots from villages northwest on their way to Baguio. At that time, it took a day to hike to Baguio. It was convenient for these travelers to spend the night in Taba-ao and resume their journey the following day. In hosting these transient

Igorots, Taba-ao's populace became another party influenced by American culture (Fong, 2011). In time, American missionaries such as Lutherans, Christian Scientists, etc. also reached the place (Fong, 2011).

The City of Baguio is therefore an American construct. Years before 1909 when it was chartered, the Americans engaged in many preliminary construction activities to build the city (Prill-Brett, 2015). They put together an international team that carved the winding road on dangerous mountain slopes. They brought in a famous architect who was part of the City Beautiful Movement to design the city. They established schools to educate the natives (Delos Reyes, 2013).

Section 2 of Act No. 1963, An Act to incorporate the city of Baguio and for other purposes, of the Philippine Commission crafted by George Arthur Malcolm provides the following:

The boundaries and limits of the territory of said city are hereby established and prescribed as follows:

Beginning at point marked "1," being a point on a large rock in the center of the Irisan River in the subprovince of Benguet, at the bridge site over said river on the Baguio-San Fernando Road, thence S. 19° 53' E., 7,332.9 m. to point 2, a tripod on a knoll of the Baguio-Santo Tomas ridge; S. 79° 14' E., 6,880.6 m. to point 3, a tripod on a small wooded mountain west of the Kias trail; N. 10° 42' E., 2, 193.2 m. to point 4, a tripod on a wooded ridge; N. 7° 35' W., 3,920 m. to point 5; N. 1,478 m. to point 6; W. 973 m. to point 7, being Pakdal triangulation station; S. 83° 58' W., 3,022 m. to point 8, on a bridge over a small creek on the Baguio-Trinidad Road; N. 58° 15' W., 1,364 m. to point 9, a tripod at the triangulation station known as "center;" N. 86° 12' W., 4,010.6 m. to the point of beginning. (Baguio Centennial Commission, 2009, p. 108)

Act No. 1963 was enacted by the Philippine Commission on August 9, 1909 and took effect on September 1, 1909 (Baguio Centennial Commission, 2009). By Act No. 1963, the Philippine Commission was claiming indigenous peoples' lands for the state.

This was just six months after the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of Baguio resident Mateo Cariño. The US Supreme Court recognized Cariño's private ownership of his lands by virtue of "native title" within this delineated Baguio boundaries. The US Supreme Court decision reads in

part: “Law and justice require that the applicant should be granted what he seeks, and should not be deprived of what the practice and belief of those among whom he lived, affirm was his property” (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985, p. 257)

This delineation of Baguio’s boundaries was based on the Regalian Doctrine, which the American colonizers sustained after they took over from the Spanish colonizers (Tebtebba Foundation, 2010). Baguio councilor Isabelo Cosalan Jr. (personal communication, February 23, 2014) says that by enacting Act No. 1963, the American administrators in the Philippines were actually reversing and contradicting their own Supreme Court in relation to certain private-lands-by-virtue-of-native-title Baguio lands.

NCIP commissioner Zenaida Hamada-Pawid (2009) describes this disenfranchisement of the Ibaloy and other IP landowners as a stroke of “legal fiction.” As they were systematically pushed out of Baguio through the appropriation of their lands for government use, and the invasion of the city by foreigners and other Filipinos, the Ibaloy would eventually become a minority in their traditional domain.

Before the creation of legal boundaries, Ibaloy considered each other as comrades and relatives as manifested in the invitation of every person and village to participate in their prestige and wealth-sharing feasts. Cooperative work and community activities also characterized traditional Ibaloy life (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985).

Colonization and Philippine nation-state building dispersed and divided them into barangays, towns and provinces, a historical phenomenon that somehow affected how Filipinos in general perceived and related with each other. Unfortunately, nation-state formation processes also resulted in perceptions of irreconcilable differences among lowland and highland dwellers (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985). This situation would become apparent in the dynamic processes involved in the growth of Baguio as a city and secondary national capital.

Asserting presence: the union/unity of Ibaloy

Probably the largest and most publicly visible Ibaloy group in Baguio now is the Onjon ni Ivadoy (Unity/Union of the Ibaloy) Association, organized in 2010 and registered as a non-stock and non-profit association with the Securities and Exchange Commission on 14 January 2011.

The union was established after a series of informal and formal meetings of the leaders and other interested parties in and around Baguio. The incorporators include Ibaloy women and men who have distinguished themselves in their vocations as teachers, government officers, business people, professionals and private individuals and youth.

The purposes of the association are: to unite the Ibaloy tribe of Baguio and Benguet wherever they reside; to perpetuate the cultural customs, traditions and language of their Ibaloy ancestors; to educate the younger members about the history, customs, traditions and language of the Ibaloy; to foster love, fellowship and cooperation among the members and non-members; and to provide mutual assistance to the sick, elderly and indigent Ibaloy (Articles of Incorporation of the Onjon ni Ivadoy Association, 2011, p. 1.).

The late Cecile Cariño Afable, former editor of the *Baguio Midland Courier*, is now recognized by the members to have played a key role in the organization of Ibaloy in Baguio. During the last decades of the 20th Century and the early years of the 21st Century, she often called on the Ibaloy people to take part in informal gatherings for socialization and bonding, and celebrations of traditional feasts at Burnham Park.

Cecile Afable had a Japanese father and an Ibaloy mother, Josefa Cariño, daughter of Mateo Cariño. Her father built them a house on her mother's lot at Apdi, along Kisad Road (Afable, 2004). She studied literature at the University of the Philippines, did some college teaching, and wrote a column for the *Courier* which she had to discontinue during Martial Law. She then opened an art gallery and bookshop on Session Road. She went back to the *Courier* and became its editor until her death on June 12, 2013.

Aside from advocating for keeping Baguio's greenery and order, it could be said that Cecile Afable was the lead lobbyist at the Baguio City Hall for the resolutions and ordinance governing the official activities and privileges of the Ibaloy in Baguio today.

Another Ibaloy woman has also quietly advocated for restoring Baguio's greenery and good governance. Dr. Julie Camdas Cabato is probably among the most respected Ibaloy woman in Baguio today. She was chosen to be part of the Baguio Centennial Commission that planned and implemented programs during Baguio's 100-year anniversary in 2009 (Baguio Centennial Commission, 2010). Dr. Cabato has provided medical services to the needy, but particularly to Cordillerans, who find her simple clinic at the Magsaysay Road area most accessible to them.

At present, the Onjon ni Ivadoy has a membership of at least 3,000 persons from Baguio, Benguet and overseas (Eroll Tagle, personal communication, October 23, 2017). The present leadership and advisers of the Onjon ni Ivadoy Association, Inc. are experienced planners, managers and implementers of projects, being former or incumbent government officials occupying leadership positions, or cultural workers, scholars, businessmen and professionals. Many of these people were probably under government affirmative action and "integration programs" during their

younger days. In many ways, they are the people who have attained some social and cultural capital.

Reclaiming Baguio by celebrating Ibaloi Day

On 28 September 2009, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of the City of Baguio declared February 23 of every year as Ibaloi Day in the City of Baguio (Declaring February 23 of Every Year as Ibaloi Day, 2009). The Sangguniang Panlungsod justified the date as the day “when the US Supreme Court recognized the legitimacy of Mateo Cariño’s struggle for *Native Title* and to give due recognition to the original indigenous inhabitants of the City” (p. 1).

In February 2010, the first Ibaloi Day was celebrated at the Ibaloi Heritage Garden, spearheaded by the Onjon ni Ivadoy Association. The occasion included ritual offerings to the ancestors, traditional prayers, preparation and serving of traditional food and wine, playing of indigenous instruments, and performance of festival dances.

Participants included organized cultural groups and representatives from Ibaloy towns in Benguet, Ibaloy residents in Baguio and Benguet, city, town and provincial officials and some overseas Ibaloy. Sacrificial animals and other materials were contributed by the members and their leaders.

The Ibaloi Day celebrations were then held in 2011 and 2012, with support from Baguio and Benguet provincial and town officials. Despite being held during the Panagbenga Flower Festival season in Baguio, the Ibaloi Day celebration managed to draw its own participants and audience, and to stand on its own.

Because the city government recognized the annual initiative of the Ibaloy community, the city council put out Institutionalizing the Ibaloi Day and Making It a Regular Activity of the City Government of Baguio (Ordinance No. 09, Series of 2013). Since then the City Government of Baguio has been providing financial support to the activity.

The presence of one Ibaloy member in the Baguio city council certainly mattered in these accomplishments. Isabelo Cosalan, Jr. is an engineer educated mostly in Baguio universities (Personal communication, February 23, 2014). He is also a church pastor, and the main author of the two resolutions and one ordinance crafted by the city council. Cosalan was first elected into the city council in 2007 and completed more than nine years of service in the council. He belongs to the large Ibaloy Cosalan family in Baguio and Benguet.

Reclaiming a part of Burnham Park

Also, on 16 August 2010, the City Council would designate “that portion of Burnham Park between the children’s playground and the city orchidarium as site for the Mateo Cariño monument and as an Ibaloi Heritage Garden” (Designating that Portion of Burnham Park Between the Children’s Park and City Orchidarium as Site for the Mateo Cariño Monument and as Ibaloi Heritage Garden, 2010, p. 1). The resolution states that “it is but fitting to allocate a portion of that parcel of land that Mateo Cariño’s family once owned in recognition of his important role in the history of Baguio City and in honor of his heroic deeds” (p. 1)

A native hut has been erected at the park and the Onjon members try to put as much elements of Ibaloy material culture in the area. The Ibaloi Heritage Garden has served as a site for most of the activities of the Ibaloy community. Aside from being the venue of the annual Ibaloi Day celebration, the park also serves as venue for reunions of Ibaloy families, and as a meeting place for smaller Ibaloy associations.

Asserting presence through the first Ibaloi Festival, February 2014

Despite concerns of being overshadowed by Baguio’s 19-year-old flower festival, the first Ibaloi Festival managed to be the alternative festival at Burnham Park. The opening parade on February 2 had an unexpected respectable turnout of Ibaloy who paraded on Session Road as though they truly owned it. And never mind that there were not many people on the sidewalk. It did not matter. The Ibaloy occupied the center of the city. It was one of the most solemn moments in the heart of the city.

The month-long festival, which was open to the public, featured workshops on Ibaloy crafts, language, genealogies, and music and dance. It also had actual rituals and construction of ritual symbols.

The idea of staging an Ibaloy festival was contributed by Rosella Camte-Bahni, presently the executive director of the Igorota Foundation that advocates Cordillera women’s issues, which she helped set up in 1987 (Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, 2014). She is also now president of the board of the Cordillera Network of Development NGOs.

Camte-Bahni obtained in 2008 an MA degree in cultural anthropology from Brandeis University, through a Ford IFP Fellowship. She did her internship at the Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Museum. She has observed that the museum was initiated and built by the community folks themselves. She claims it was her graduate work that allowed her to look deeper into the plight of her own people (Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, 2014).

She grew up in the Ibaloy community at the Loakan Airport area (also carved out of Ibaloy land) where she conducted her practicum for the Master's degree (Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, 2014). In Loakan, she did an oral history project that involved high school students interviewing their elders about their own history and producing video documentations. As an offshoot of her practicum, she led in the establishment of a Center for Ibaloi Heritage and Loakan History (Chivani Doakan, Inc.). One major project of the center was to open a School of Living Traditions with funding from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. She asked permission from the community elders to allow the children and youth to learn the Ibaloy traditional instruments and dances outside the ritual contexts. The students of the School of Living Traditions have since performed in many Baguio events as part of the drive to inform the public about the Ibaloy beginnings of Baguio.

Reclaiming Ibaloy place in Baguio history during Baguio Day, Sept. 1

The Ibaloy have also participated in other official activities in Baguio, particularly during September 1 when the city celebrates its foundation. In the past, students would represent the Ibaloy part through a historical tableau in the usual street parade. In recent years, the Ibaloy, through the Onjon, have insisted on representing themselves in the event.

When Igorot ancestors refused to submit to the crown and cross, the Spanish called them infidels and independent tribes (Scott, 1993). Because they were unconquerable up in the mountains, they were called *ygollotes*, and considered different from the lowlanders who paid taxes to the Spanish crown and converted to Catholicism. These were the beginnings of making the Igorot different, “othered” from the rest of the Filipinos.

When the Americans took over as colonizers, they called the mountain people, now Igorots, as “non-Christian tribes” (Scott, 1993) In 1904, some Igorots were exhibited in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1908, the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes was established to administer the old Mountain Province (Finin, 2005).

To be called non-Christian designated the Ibaloy's lifestyles and practices as being of the devil, and as something that should then be avoided (Fong, 2014). To be called a tribe means a group of people is animal-like, wild, uncivilized, uncultured. (Today, there is now a public recognition that indigenous peoples are rich in culture. How come?) Like wild animals and infants, the Igorot were viewed as people who needed to be tamed and cleaned, to be educated, to develop good manners and right conduct (Delos Reyes, 2014). This reinforced the view of other Filipinos that the Igorot were

truly different (Finin, 2005). Unfortunately, many ordinary Filipinos still think Igorots have tails.

Another word that the Americans used in reference to Igorots is “headhunters.” Look at the titles of the following books and articles: *The Headhunters of Northern Luzon: From Kalinga to Ifugao: A Ride Through the Mountains of Northern Luzon* (by Cornelis de Witt Willcox, 1912); “Headhunters of Northern Luzon” (by Dean C. Worcester, *National Geographic*, 1912); *The Halfway Sun: Life Among the Headhunters of the Philippines* (by Roy Barton, 1930); and *Taming Philippine Headhunters: A Study of Government and of Cultural Change in Northern Luzon* (by Felix and Marie Keesing, 1934).

This is not to deny that historical past. Many of our present cultural practices and material cultures have connections to a headtaking past. Cordillera anthropologist June Prill-Brett (2006) and the late Jules De Raedt (1993) studied and wrote about headtaking as a traditional practice in olden times. But an important claim in their studies is that headtaking was always in the context of conflicts between villages and it was never done to expand a group’s territory. We also now know that headtaking was really a common practice of many people all over the Philippines and the world (Scott, 1993). It is not exclusive to traditional Igorot life. William Henry Scott (1993) has written extensively on this. Unfortunately, the label stuck only to Igorots.

The Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes was later changed into the Commission on National Integration (CNI) in 1957 (Finin, 2005). The old Mountain Province (1908-1966) was subdivided in 1966. Former president Marcos created the Presidential Assistance for National Minorities (PANAMIN) in 1972.

Note that smaller ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines have now been “minoritized.” Also, many people now see this as the start of the “exotic representations” of ethnic groups (Zapata, 2009).

Later, other agencies were created to implement special laws and programs. Among these were the Commission on National Integration (CNI) and later the Office of Northern Cultural Communities, and programs like the National Integration Study Grant Program and Selected Ethnic Groups Educational Assistance Program. Today, we think that many indigenous peoples have integrated themselves well into mainstream Philippine society. Yet every now and then, racist slurs are hurled against Igorots and other IP groups on mainstream and social media (Zapata, 2009). Perhaps “integration programs” should now be directed to the majority.

In the 1980s, the indigenous peoples’ movement succeeded in impacting the writing of the Freedom Constitution of 1987 (Cariño, 2012). The same Constitution provides for autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao and

in the Cordillera. It has been 29 years and there is still no such region in the Cordillera; instead of an autonomous region, there is an administrative region. This means that the provisions of the 1987 Constitution have yet to be fully enacted in the Cordillera.

The constitutional provision on an autonomous region in the Cordillera could be attributed to the activism of students and intellectuals in collaboration with ethnic communities. The Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) is probably among the lead organizations that influenced the inclusion of that constitutional provision in 1987 (Cariño, 2012).

A graduate of the University of the Philippines, Joanna K. Cariño, was among the pioneers of the CPA, where she also served as chair. She says she was an activist even before Martial Law when she was "illegally arrested, tortured, and detained without charges for two years, from 1974-76" (Cariño, 2012, n.p.). After her detention at Camp Olivas, she returned to Baguio to discover a "growing people's resistance to Chico and Cellophil" (n.p.). She said it was these two cases, which also resulted in heroic struggles including that of Macliing, that ignited a broad resistance movement which would eventually lead to the formation of the CPA (Cariño, 2012).

Also the result of the work of activist lawyers, the now famous Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) was passed into law (Lynch, 2013). IPRA created the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, which is supposed to champion the rights of those who were once marginalized and discriminated against. The IPRA or Republic Act No. 8371 is called "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."

The passage of the IPRA could be attributed to the relentless legal research of now Supreme Court Justice Marvic Leonen, who is also from Baguio, and his team at the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center-Kasama sa Kalikasan (Lynch, 2013). His group, which was then based at the UP Law Center, began building a body of literature towards the recognition of the "native title" and other related rights of indigenous peoples. This legal project was also spawned by the seminal publication in 1982 by Professor Owen James Lynch, Jr. of an article in the *Philippine Law Journal* called "Native Title, Private Right and Tribal Land Law." Lynch, a visiting professor from the Yale University Law School, had studied the *Cariño vs. Insular Government* case (Lynch, 2012). Through the work of Leonen's group, a body of legal research and publications was created and collated which firmly established that there was a legal doctrine in the Baguio Ibaloy's private land claim. Such landmark legal work was then invoked by the Supreme

Court through Associate Justice Reynato Puno (2000) when he wrote his separate opinion on the constitutionality of the IPRA.

Reclaiming Casa Vallejo

It was in the thick of preparations for the first Ibaloi Festival (February 2014) that the news came out about Casa Vallejo. After years of neglect, it has been rehabilitated by the Manila-based Roebling Corporation, which won a public bidding process (Tupaz, 2014). Aside from the hotel, a restaurant, a bookstore, a spa and the Baguio Cinematheque are now in the house. The DENR's corporate arm, Natural Resources Development Council, is the administrator of the Casa Vallejo property (Tupaz, 2014).

Casa Vallejo was originally Dormitory No. 4 in the Burnham plan built by the Americans for their soldiers (Tupaz, 2014). Salvador Vallejo took over the building and converted it into a hotel in 1935 and named it after himself (Yamsuan, 2014).

The news said the descendants of Kapitan Piraso, another Baguio Ibaloy, were claiming ownership of the land even before the Spaniards and Americans came into the picture (Yamsuan, 2014).

The tenants of the refurbished Casa received an eviction notice served by a Baguio sheriff based on two Certificates of Ancestral Land Titles issued by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples or NCIP (Tupaz, 2014). The NCIP, of course, was created by the 1995 Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act.

There are certainly spurious claims and legitimate claims. For instance, there have been reports of the issuance of "midnight titles" to non-Ibaloy for certain lands in Baguio (Tebtebba Foundation, 2010). Before IPRA, the DENR was tasked to implement the provisions of the 1987 Constitution on recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples. An Ibaloy elder, Vicky Macay, reported that because of DENR Administrative Order No. 2 in 1993, some 757 ancestral claims have been inventoried in Baguio (Tebtebba Foundation, 2010). Such claims were subsequently submitted to the NCIP (Tebtebba Foundation, 2010). Are there now perfect titles? The answer is none.

Have the Ibaloy, historically the "first nation" in Bagiw, come back to reclaim Baguio? Have the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples finally empowered the Ibaloy to correct the injustice inflicted on them by history, with the American colonizers converting their pasture, farm and residential lands into public, government and military lands? Have the Philippine state and local government been perpetuating the injustice by promoting an "open" policy in Baguio?

Tebtebba Foundation (2010) sees it this way: "Whatever the government gave indigenous peoples with one hand through the IPRA, it actually took it

back with the other...The country's laws currently contradict one another” (n.p.).

Anthropologist June Prill-Brett (2006; 2007) calls the phenomenon “legal pluralism” where people choose from any of the current laws to forward their interests. In general, ancestral land claim cases could be seen as signs that indigenous peoples have learned to use for themselves state institutions and laws, instead of simply opposing or ignoring them. The cases also demonstrate that the Philippine nation-state has not really dealt satisfactorily with the plight of the Ibaloy in particular and indigenous peoples in general, despite seemingly pro-IP legislations.

There is now a public petition insisting that Casa Vallejo is a national heritage and should be preserved as such. In the Casa Vallejo case, there is an attempt to pit indigenous peoples' rights against those of the nation. And that is for intellectuals to resolve.

Ibaloy reclamation of Baguio can only happen at the realm of the symbolic. The celebration of Ibaloi Day on February 23 is only a symbolic action. Parading on Session Road is only symbolic of Ibaloy presence in the city. An Ibaloy Festival at Burnham Park is only a sign that the daily nitty-gritty aspects of Ibaloy life are still being lived somewhere else. It is not expected that the Ibaloy will physically take over Baguio in the future. And with intellectuals at the helm of such initiatives, reclamation can only remain at the realm of the symbolic.

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JIMMY BALUD FONG has a Ph.D. in Philippine Studies from the University of the Philippines. He is an associate professor at the Department of Communication, University of the Philippines Baguio. He was part-time commissioner for the northern cultural communities at the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino. He is currently involved in NGO community development work. (Corresponding author: jimmyfon@gmail.com)

