

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Palm Politics: Warfare, Folklore and Architecture

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture

by

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2021

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2021

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Palm Politics: Warfare, Folklore and Architecture

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Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

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The reorganization of pastoral life in the twentieth century was inextricably bound to the rise of industrial agriculture and the forms of resource extraction that accompanied it. The places that witnessed the most sweeping ecological changes, from labor-intensive plantation agriculture to industrial monocropping and extractive industries, were also the places that experienced a form of fast-paced developmentalism in the latter half of the century. This dissertation follows how architecture mediated the perception of these rural ecological changes in the Philippine archipelago and wider Southeast Asia. In its materiality—concrete, stone, earth, and plant materials—architecture provided form for the rise of capitalism in rural tropical places in the shape of hydroelectric dams, agribusinesses, and their resulting resettlement villages. Cold War environmental change and Third World land struggles that developmentalism provoked are often presented as separate narratives. This dissertation examines their simultaneity by drawing together several actors involved in these processes: architects, engineers, counterinsurgency

responses and resistance against developmentalism created alternative conceptions of architecture and landscape. I follow this process with nipa palm, a ubiquitous species in island Southeast Asia, used as a construction material woven into roof shingles and wall panels attached to a bamboo framework. As a tectonic material, celebrated for its lightweight, rhizomatic characteristics, reading nipa palm with and beyond its material use-value illustrates its political economy as an integral aspect of displacement, where the implicit movement and mobility of lightweight dwellings was crucial to developmentalism and the counterinsurgency operations that accompanied it.

The dissertation of William Michael Davis is approved.

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2021

Dedicated to my parents, and their parents.

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Index of Abbreviations

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ARPA	Advanced Research Projects Agency (RAND Corporation)
BLISS	Bagong Lipunan Integrated Sites and Services
CDCP	Construction Development Corporation of the Philippines
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CORDS	Civil Operations and Rural Development Support
CPA	Cordillera Peoples Alliance
DAR	Department of Agrarian Reform
DPWTC	Department of Public Works, Transportation and Communication
ECTF / ECIP	Episcopal Commission for Tribal Filipinos / Indigenous Peoples
EDCOR	Economic Development Corporation
FPIC	Free Prior Informed Consent
GVN	Government of Vietnam
HES	Hamlet Evaluation System
HUK	Hukbalahap / Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon
IBRD	International Bank of Reconstruction and Development
ICOLD	International Commission on Large Dams
IMF	International Monetary Foundation
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NASSA	National Secretariat for Social Action
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
NLF	National Liberation Front (<i>Giai Phong Quan</i> , Army of Liberation, Vietnam)
NIA	National Irrigation Administration
NPA	New People's Army
NPC	National Power Corporation
PANAMIN	Presidential Assistant on National Minorities
PC	Philippine Constabulary
PHILCAG	Philippine Civic Action Group (Vietnam)
PIA	Philippine Institute of Architects
PKP	Communist Party of the Philippines (<i>Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas</i>)
PKM	National Peasants Union (<i>Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid</i>)
SEATO	Southeast Asian Treaty Organization
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
UPRIIS	Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System
UPRP	Upper Pampanga River Project
USAFFE	United States Armed Forces Far East
USAID	United States Agency of Aid and International Development
USBR	United States Bureau of Reclamation
USOM	US Operations Mission (country office of USAID)
WFP	United Nations World Food Program
WGIP	UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations

Archives

AHC	American Historical Collection, Ateneo University
BHL	Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan
BNMB	Bantayog ng mga Bayani
CBCP	Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines
DOA	Department of Agriculture
ECIP	Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples
IISG	International Institute for Social History (Amsterdam)
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore/Penang)
NAA/SI	National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution
TL	Truman Library
UPCTWS	University of the Philippines Center for Third World Studies

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Acknowledgements

Writing this dissertation was a solitary way to bring closure to a project built out of sociality. It gives me great pleasure to pause and recollect all the people that influenced, guided, and supported me in the process. To say that I am humbled to have encountered, let alone be supported by those mentioned here is an understatement.

My advisor, Dana Cuff, supported the project and my time at UCLA in innumerable ways. Dana went beyond the mandate of a PhD advisor, making sure I was thriving intellectually and surviving financially, conversing through untold many office hours, and working together on research and design jobs at cityLAB. In addition, Dana was a portal to the Urban Humanities Institute, profoundly shaping my intellectual experience as a graduate student at UCLA by connecting me to the wider campus community and exposing me to methodologies that shaped the present work. Courses taken with my committee members, Ananya Roy, Sylvia Lavin and Michael Osman, gave me my first real education. Office hours with Ananya and work with her at the Institute for Inequality and Democracy were instructive in showing me how the university can be a space for alterity and abolition. Seminars taken with Sylvia transformed the way I thought about architecture and history. I am forever grateful to have sat around the tables of a darkened 1220 on Monday mornings and listen to her teach. Michael continues to be a welcome sparring partner with whom early ideas on the project found expression through workshops, seminars and office hours.

Verlena Johnson, the orchid whisperer, patiently guided me through the bureaucratic maze of spending six years as an international student. The administrative staff at the Department of Architecture and Urban Design, Jim Kies, Jacquelin Montes, Morgan Montelius,

Linda Holmes, Shay Lorsevedi, Giovanni Garcia, and Susan Oh at the International Center all deserve thanks for putting up with my constantly hassling them.

The community of the Critical Studies in Architecture PhD program have been wonderful comrades. I am lucky to have spent six years with them on campus and driving around Los Angeles: Gary Riichirō Fox, Maura Lucking, Simon Pennec, Kyle Stover, Jia Gu, Aaron Cayer, Yang Yang, Marko Icev, Giulia Amoresano, Henry Yang, Megan Meulemanns, Iman Ansari, Shota Vashakmadze, Brigid Boyle, Jacqueline Meyer, Dexter Walcott, Joy Zhu, Sohun Kang, Luke Fiederer, Hou Chi Chia, Melissa Rovner, Kate Taylor-Hasty, Rebecca Svelha, Carrie Gammell, Sarah Hearne, and Adam Boggs. Other members of the wider AUD community from whom conversations and support for the project came are Carla Salehian, Cristobal Amunetegui, Ayala Levin, Juliana Maxim, Kian Goh, Heather Roberge. Can Bilsel's kindness and scholarly responsivity have been a wellspring of sustenance throughout my time as a graduate student.

I benefited immeasurably from being connected with several years of Urban Humanities Institute cohorts. Antagonists of note are Gus Wendel, Kenton Card, Chantiri Ramirez, Kendy Rivera, Max Greenberg, Josh Nelson, Gaby Barrios, Kaelyn Rodriguez, Teo Wickland, Grace Ko, Devin Koba, Ben Kolder, Alejandro Ramirez Mendez, LeighAnna Hidalgo, Maricela Becerra, Heidi Alexander, not to mention the teaching staff of Todd Presner, Jonathan Jae-an Crisman, Jonathan Banfill, Ben Leclair, Gustavo Leclerc, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Maite Zubiaurre. Various other campus constellations made my time at UCLA special: Voidlab group, especially Symrin Chawla; Lolly Lim, Victor Ansley and the Abolitionist Planning group members; Sayantan Mukhopadhyay; Barbara Gaerlan from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies; Nenita Domingo in Asian Languages and Cultures. Young Research Library staff, in particular David Poepoe to whom special thanks is due in helping me gather materials remotely.

Several grants and funding sources provided much needed time and space for work on the project. The Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, the EPIC Mellon Initiative, fellowships and travel grants from the International Institute at UCLA, the Anne Greenwald Memorial Travel Grant, the Robert Webster Scholarship and the Urban Humanities Institute all provided funding for different stages of the project. A Dissertation Year Fellowship from UCLA Graduate Division allowed the final year of writing to be immersive and productive.

Different parts of the project were presented at conferences and symposia. At the Society for Architectural Historians annual conference in 2018 and 2021, I am grateful to Claire Zimmerman, Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, Mina Rajagopalan, and Shundana Yusaf for stimulating discussion and feedback. At UC Berkeley, the After Effects symposium organized by Trude Renwick, Eric Peterson, Stathis Gerostathopoulos, and other PhD students of the architecture program was a joy to be involved in and receive plenty of useful feedback from. At the 7th International Conference of Tropical Architecture held in Brisbane, Vandana Baweja, Tom Avermaete, Deborah Van der Plaat convened an exciting panel to be a part of. I am lucky to have met new colleagues Patricia Green and Nancy Demerdash who provided critical feedback on a draft of the fourth chapter.

I spent a year as a lecturer at the paradisiacal Department of Art History at Occidental College thanks to Kelema Moses, to whom I am tremendously grateful for the experience. Amy Lyford, Yurika Wakamatsu, Viola Lasmana and Philip Bloom all made me feel welcome in the department. Students in my courses Turbines and Seashells, and A City is a World provided thoughtful reflections and unknowingly contributed to the development of the present work, Isabel Sung, Ian Zunt, Nate Sachs, Tyler Ivy, Rae Hirschfeld-Smith were part of this idyllic intellectual environment.

My dear writing group of the past two years diligently read every word in this dissertation thrice over. Thank you Jingqiu Guan, Sunkyoo Lee and Yeohoon Choi. Thanks also goes to the extensive commentary from the SAHGB Architecture and Empire Writing Group, Sben Korsh, Sonali Dhanpal, Y.L. Lucy Wang, Robin Hartanto Honggare, Sylvie Dominique, Émélie Desrochers-Turgeon, Lukas Pauer, Ian Tan and Maura Lucking, who in the final months provided valuable feedback. Other chapters were read by Oona Paredes, Brigid Boyle, and my brother Jonathan, all of whom offered sound advice and expertise. Conversations with colleagues and friends helped instruct my thinking along the way: Denise Ferreira da Silva, Sascha Roesler, Megan Eardley, Manuel Shvartzberg Carrió, Lucia Allais, Irina Davidovici, Laila Seewang, Diana Martinez, Rachel Lee, Jiat-Hwee Chang, Datuk Lim Chong Keat, Swati Chattopadhyay, Zeynep Kezer, Cole Roskam, Maria Hellström Reimer, Orvar Löfgren.

It was through conversations with friends in Hong Kong and the Philippines that this project found its genesis seven years ago. The patron saint of this dissertation is Eisa Jocson, whose friendship and questions, hospitality and joy, whether in Disneyland or at Subic Navy Base (not entirely unrelated), were an inspiration throughout. The Sipat Lawin household and wider community at Magiting in Manila provided laughter and tropical warmth: Ralph Cabinta Lumbres, JK Anicoche, Claudia Monette Enriquez, Brandon Relucio, Leeroy New, Sarah Salazar-Alonson, Alyx Guer, Zenta Nishio and Joee Mejias. Thank you to Ness Roque-Lumbres who patiently taught me the rudiments of Tagalog. Joshua Serafin continues to inspire, and he nursed me back to health after a terrible sickness in Bacolod. Fellow Bruin, Bradley Cardozo, provided leisurely and thoughtful downtime in Manila. A special thank you goes to the Aurora Artist Residency and Program Space in Dingalan, in particular Roselle Pineda, Jen Gamboa, Loujaye Sonido, Rye Tipay, Pol Torrente. Alysa Curioso and the Dumagat community at Umiray

hosted us and switched houses with our group during a rainstorm, a testament to the flexibility of living that kaingin land use affords. Colleagues at Ateneo de Manila and the University of the Philippines (Diliman and Siliman) were supportive and instructive interlocutors in the early stages. Thanks goes to Fernando Zialcita and a debt of gratitude to Liza Lim, who told me to seriously consider the role of the church, a pointer that I took up and was assiduously helped with by Carrie Manglinong at Bantayog ng mga Bayani. Thank you to the staff of the American Historical Library at Ateneo. Merv Espina and the Green Papaya family provided another familial community in Quezon City. Other interlocutors in Manila are Moira Lang and Clara Balaguer, whose cynical and constructive approach are necessary ingredients to survive the colonial necropolitics of the past and present. I am grateful to Stephanie Comilang for telling me “it’s research!” Archivists at the National Library of the Philippines, Blesila Velasco and Xenia Romero, and Abigail Altoveros at the library of the Department of Agriculture helped to track down original reports of the UPRP. Thank you also goes to Susan Tamondong for conversation on the UPRP during the later stages of writing. JV Nakpil, who shared memories of his family’s architecture practice. The Center for Third World Studies at UP Diliman was instrumental, thank you especially to Joel Ariate, Ricardo José, Miguel Paolo P. Reyes, and the Episcopal Commission for Indigenous Peoples at the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, where I was helped by Tony Abuso. The project wouldn’t exist without the resources that these institutions graciously shared with me. My utang na loob to Vener Macaspac, whose friendship on bus rides in Los Angeles and bus rides in the Cordillera, and who is therefore responsible for the route that the project took, is a debt that is impossible to quantify.

Friends scattered all around that supported me all along are Korbinian Kainz, Arne Fehmel, Felix Rundel, Melek Abiska. Rainer Hehl gave me my start as a budding anthropologist

of architectural studies. Ludwig Engel, Julian Schubert, Elena Schutz, Leo Streich, Fernando Ocaña, Beny Wagner, Sasha Litvintseva, Elvia Wilk, Bennett Williams, Jacqueline Bao, Kenny Wong, Ming Lin, Jacqueline Barrios, Peter Wilday, Chantal Wong, Nuria Krämer, Viola Bao, Leah Whitman-Salkin, Yanki Lee, Gary Riichirō Fox, Zakarias Thorin, Benedikt Boucsein, James Brooks, Emilia Thorin, Ruqayyah Albaari, Albert Tsang, Troyese Robinson, Nevin Kallepalli, Aarynn Jones, Man-Yan Lam, Alistair Stokes, Andres Saenz de Sicilia, and Achariyar Rojanapirom, who showed me the silent beauty of palm. Luke Casey. Sean Fabi. The final half year of this dissertation was written alone in Zurich during lockdown, and I am extremely grateful to Axel Humpert, Leila Peacock, Lesley Braun and the Schindler sisters for their friendship during those months.

My parents, siblings and extended family continue to delight. They provide endless support and endless walks in rainy places, for which I am ever grateful. Of course, the final thank you is to Rebecca, who already knew.

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“Leto’s Curse: Xanthos, Tomatoes and the Economy of Ancient Soil” *Thresholds* 45: Myth. MIT Press. 2017: 40—50.

Other Publications

“Foreign Arms and the Economic Body” in *CCA Montreal/Aggregate Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration*, edited by Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi and Rachel Lee, September 2021.

“Loneliness and Disappearance: Dorothy Pelzer, Imelda Marcos and the Category of Culture,” *PLATFORM*, www.platformspace.net, July 2020.

“Contingency,” Edited volume, with Dana Cuff, *ARDETH* no. 6. Rosenberg & Sellier: Turin, June 2020.

“Civil Measures,” *LA Forum for Architecture and Urbanism*. 2017: 10—12.

“From Homeless to Self-Built.” In *Hong Kong’s Self-Built Communities*. edited by Louise Wong, Yanki Lee et al. Hong Kong Design Institute. 2017: 38—47.

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“Prism of Difference,” Society of Architectural Historians 74th Annual Conference, Montreal, April 2021.

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Palm Politics

The reorganization of pastoral life in the twentieth century was inextricably bound to the rise of industrial agriculture and the forms of resource extraction that accompanied it. The geographies that witnessed a radical shift, from labor-intensive plantation agriculture to large-scale monocropping and extractive industry, were also the places that experienced a form of fast-paced developmentalism in the latter half of the century. Nowhere were these changes more pronounced than the so-called Third World countries, places loosely defined by four characteristics: their geographic location in the global south; their being the former colonies of European sovereigns and governments; a gross domestic product marked by reliance on export of cash-crops and the extraction of raw materials; and by political allyship with either the Soviet bloc or NATO countries.¹ Though other determinants exist, in this dissertation these four factors—geography, colonialism, extraction, and geopolitical turmoil against the wider context of Cold War-era Southeast Asia—are seen in their combination in the Philippine archipelago. In alliance with developmentalism, architecture operated in two principal modes. First, by providing the physical structure and symbolic language of technocratic advancement, and second, as a catalyst for displacement as the haphazard container for the refugees of development schemes.²

¹ B. R. Tomlinson, “What Was the Third World?,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 2 (2003): 307–21.

² Developmentalism is, following Arturo Escobar’s formulation, the study of development as a discursive field that pays attention to the deployment of discourse, that is, words, through practices. Here, Escobar’s formulation is pertinent, that “as Western experts and politicians started to see certain conditions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America as a problem—mostly what was perceived as poverty and backwardness—a new domain of thought and experience, namely, development, came into being, resulting in a new strategy for dealing with alleged problems.” In this regard developmentalism was both a prognosis and remedy for what western experts perceived as problems

Despite their being historicized as all-encompassing technocratic programs, modernization schemes, in the form of large dams and the irrigation programs examined here, were not met unchallenged. Indeed, the conceptual transformation of the environment, from limitless resource to finite reserve, happened in large part due to the resistance movements that were mounted against development projects later in the 1970s. The representation of development processes in the media—in the form of agricultural mechanization, scientific manipulation of crops, or the unsophisticated extraction of timber and raw minerals—prompted people around the world to reconsider what the environment was and their relationship to it.³ Catalyzed by alarmist interpretations of population growth, finitude itself became lodged in western consciousness.⁴

At this historical conjuncture, architecture provided the mediating formula for several of these processes. Already by the 1950s, dam structures of poured concrete were heralded as the feats of a modernity that would level the global playing field for nations emerging from colonialism. Providing supposedly cheap, clean energy by transforming the seemingly infinite

in the Third World. Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 11, 6.

³ When signing-in the National Environment Program Act in 1973, President Nixon used the language of an economic fund to describe the environment: “We hold the Earth-its environment and its resources in trust for future generations.” The analysis of this speech, and the act in context of architectural thinking at the time is analyzed in detail by Reinhold Martin in, “Environment, c. 1973,” *Grey Room*, 2004, 94; Richard M. Nixon, “Statement about Signing the United Nations Environment Program Participation Act of 1973,” 17 December 1973, RNLBA.

⁴ A succinct literature review of these currents is summarized by Adam Rome, in: “Sustainability: The Launch of Spaceship Earth,” *Nature* 527, no. 7579 (November 2015), 443–45. *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome’s Project on the Predicament of Mankind*. Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jørgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III. Universe, 1972; Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology*, 1st edition (New York: Random House Inc, 1971); R. Buckminster Fuller, *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*, ed. Jaime Snyder, 1st edition (Baden: Lars Muller, 2008); Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Meaning of the 20th Century: The Great Transition*, 1st edition (Harper & Row, 1965); Barbara Ward, *Spaceship Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968); Barbara Ward, René J Dubos, and United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, *Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet* (New York: Norton, 1983).

power of rivers, hydroelectricity was the source for an optimistic energy politics that thoroughly transformed the inventions of the previous century. This architecture was the profoundly immobile block, the wedge in a landscape that mediated and distributed the flow of water, transforming everything upstream and downstream to human use and manipulation. They were an infrastructure that created more infrastructure in turn, powering paper mills, steelworks, and other heavy industries, while providing irrigable lands and flood control.⁵ However, they also prompted displacement. At the other end of the development spectrum were the migrants moving from countryside to city in search of work, as *Architectural Record* put it in 1976, “many squatters and slum dwellers leave picturesque villages and neat homes to move to the city [...] upon arrival in the city, migrants use whatever materials they can lay their hands on to build shelter” recreating the countryside in the city.⁶ The “nipa hut” of palm leaves and bamboo represented this make-do nomadism, from the country to city, and became a globally recognized type. In both of these visual formula—the dam and the hut—architecture held the responsibility of form and purpose, context and contribution. While neither of these types can be said to have been designed by an architect in terms of a classical sense of authorship, each of them captured the imaginations of architects and many others. It is therefore in the political economy of the dam and the hut, the devices that communicated that ecological transition, that this dissertation takes place.

⁵ Richard P. Tucker, *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 2000); Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River*, First Thus Used edition (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996); John Robert McNeill and Corinna R Unger, *Environmental Histories of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁶ The article was authored by Walter F. Wagner Jr., then editor-in-chief of *Architectural Record*. Special issue on Human Settlements, May 1976, 101–109.

Questions

There are three fundamental questions that motivate the lines of research taken in this project. The first question is how did architecture participate in this shift in ecological relationships? The shift in environmental relationships brought on by developmentalism did not happen in a political vacuum. As others have shown, the changes that occurred in the Third World happened through the lens of violence, indeed, were mediated by the threat, occurrence, or afterlives of warfare.⁷ Warfare permeated matters of development for a variety of reasons: autocratic governments tangled with insurgency; international treaties mediated the ownership of nuclear weapons; proxy wars were funded to counter communism; paramilitary forces warred the occupiers of mineral-rich hinterlands. It would therefore be a challenge to disentangle architecture from the problem of warfare, no matter how innocent it might first appear. To address this question, then, the dissertation takes up the premise that even while developmentalism's innocent, humanitarian face was molded through scientific technique and humanist paternalism, it cannot be disconnected from the larger political swells of the time.

The second question this dissertation attends to is how does architecture help to explain ecological shifts? While the change in perceptions of the environment as a cohesive, finite or renewable resource was changed through developmentalism, the shifts in ecological thinking that influenced this change are attended to in more nuance by architecture's being a physical, material entity. Living and inert things make structures: piles of rock are welded in place by poured concrete to form dams, bamboo and palm are harvested and manipulated to become building materials for houses. The fact that discourse around land and landscapes changed is

⁷ As environmental warfare is concerned, Felicity Scott's *Outlaw Territories* describes several examples in which architecture and environment came together under the auspices of war.

tacitly connected to the stone, timber, fiber, and water that constituted the structures through which human life was supported. More simply put, architecture provided visual evidence of change, and functioned as a device through which to measure it.

The third question builds on and extends these first two inquiries. How does architecture introduce new ways to understand the shift? The scales of this inquiry that I have pointed out, the dam and the hut, require a flexible approach to the study of architectural history, one that both accepts that architecture might not necessarily require architects, yet appreciates that three centuries of European architectural discourse frequently relied on mass to represent the achievements of human societies. Massive heavy structures were invoked to symbolize civilization, lightweight, mobile structures have been rendered to symbolize primitivity and origin stories. Both sit at the core of the discipline, yet by the late twentieth century, had vanished from sight as purely the concern of engineers or anthropologists. To bring these objects together, then, is an opportunity to discuss their materials and histories in circumstances that are not entirely foreign to the discipline, nor entirely at home in the places examined in this dissertation.

Context

Four hundred years of Spanish colonialism, which introduced farm tenancy, and four decades of rule by the United States, which perpetuated tenancy relations to serve elites, have rendered significant ecological and agricultural changes in the Philippines. Plantation monocropping, tin, copper and gold mining, logging in hardwood and montane forests, already marked the landscape before the country became independent in 1946. After independence, the frameworks of land relations formed during the colonial periods not only remained in place, but

were extended as access to rural resources through land-grabbing, sanctioned or not, developed through more sophisticated and incipient means.

Private land ownership began under Spanish rule with the creation of royal land grants in the late sixteenth-century. Land ownership was granted to Spanish *conquistadores* and native *principales*, and structured early colonial relations in the provinces surrounding Manila. The rise of the galleon trade provided the opportunity for friar orders to buy up these agricultural lands cheaply, due to their former owners becoming preoccupied in Manila with the more lucrative trade with Imperial China.⁸ The friars developed the tenancy (*kasama*) system to such a degree that agriculture was inseparable from a social contract that governed life through a system of indebtedness.⁹ Commercial agriculture was pioneered through these parishes (encouraged by governor José Basco y Vargas, 1777–87), constituting the first real hacienda system and a thoroughly capitalist set of economic relations in the lowlands. Exploitative as it was, this system structured village life and persisted throughout the nineteenth century in the low and flat provinces of the country (surrounding Manila, and later in the Visayas), leaving the mountainous regions of northern Luzon and the southern island of Mindanao relatively undisturbed. Like Spanish colonization of the New World, Christianization provided a rationale for conquest and method for social control, leaving ninety percent of the country Catholic by the turn of the twentieth century. However, unlike New Spain, this process was carried out through the local

⁸ In order to thrive from the galleon trade, one needed only to be placed in Manila and have political connections and relationships with Chinese traders and artisans who travelled there. In this regard Manila was an entrepôt that connected Iberian trade to Imperial China. Benedict Anderson, “Cacique Democracy and the Philippines: Origins and Dreams,” *New Left Review*, I, no. 169 (1988), 5; William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon: Illustrated with Maps*. (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1959).

⁹ The exploitative setup went beyond the purely economic and included social obligations, expectations in which the “*kasama* ended up as virtual slave and the landlord as master not only of the land but of the lives and happiness of his tenants.” Wilfredo Fabros, *The Church and Its Social Involvement in the Philippines / 1930-1972* (Quezon City, Metro Manila: Ateneo de Manila Univ. Press, 1988), 5.

languages (meaning the colonial language never became a lingua franca), and left the archipelagos Indigenous peoples, who populated the more remote provinces, almost entirely untouched by Spanish colonialism. Indeed, in Mindanao, Islam was the predominant religion (brought in from neighboring Indonesia) and would remain so. By the time the demise of the Spanish empire was officiated with the signing of the treaty of Paris in 1898, the country was divided not only by the waterways between the islands but by topographic differences, lowland populations were Christian while the mountains and remote provinces, Indigenous populations remained intact.

The advent of the American Pacific empire completely reorganized the country. The US colonial project, determined to secularize the nation and establish a government in mirror image of itself, dispossessed the friars of their lands and handed over to existing mestizo elites (caciques) who immediately were transformed into a powerful political class. Energetic programs of resource discovery were begun: a Bureau of Science established to taxonomize the “economic plants” of the country; mineral surveys begun in the Cordillera mountains of Luzon and the Tiruray Highlands of Mindanao; Daniel Burnham, a well-connected Chicago architect, was recruited to overhaul Manila’s urban plan complimented with new government buildings (they echoed those he would design for the National Mall in Washington DC a year later), and designed a “summer capital” built in the cool highlands of Baguio; an English-speaking school system was established, led by the Thomasites and an American university was built outside Manila, the University of the Philippines, whose plan mirrored that of the University of Michigan.¹⁰

¹⁰ Thomas S. Hines, *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner, Second Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2008); Diana Jean Sandoval Martinez, *Concrete Colonialism: Architecture, Urbanism, Infrastructure, and the American Colonial Project in the Philippines*, 2017.

The US administration, when they finally granted independence to the Philippines in 1946, made sure to ratify the fixture of the islands in their Pacific portfolio with hastily drawn-up treaties that secured preferential trade, business, and military conditions for the country forthwith.¹¹ Parity rights were granted US citizens to Philippine natural resources, and the Military Bases Agreement meant that the archipelago hosted the largest overseas US bases in the world “for mutual defense,” though in practicality these provided the Philippine government easy access to military equipment and training, and the US government with a geographically strategic place in the Pacific. The postcolonial relationship to the US, then, was one of the most thoroughly neocolonial relationships between any two countries of the Cold War era. Philippine security issues were American security issues: the Huk insurrection in the 1950s (a legacy of the *kasama* relations in Luzon) was quashed with the help of US counterinsurgency intelligence; a decade later the escalating war in Vietnam meant that Subic Bay Naval Base, lying 700 miles east of Saigon, catered to the “rest and recreation” for soldiers on liberty, establishing a decade-long economic boon for the base-towns and entrenching racialized relations between the countries. When the Maoist-inspired New People’s Army (NPA, the armed wing of the CPP) staged offensives on the Armed Forces of the Philippines in the countryside in the 1970s, it was from second-hand, US-made Bell UH-1 Iroquois helicopters that rocket-fired grenades were launched. By 1980, the second largest employer in the Philippines was the US government, with estimated investment in the country between 3 and 4 billion US dollars.

¹¹ The Bell Trade Act was passed by Philippine Congress just two days prior to official independence, which was granted on July 4, 1946. The act specified preferential tariffs on US products imported into the Philippines; a 2:1 fixed exchange rate between the Philippine peso and the US dollar; unrestricted currency transfers from the Philippines to the US, and “Parity rights,” which granted US citizens and corporations rights to Philippine natural resources. The 1947 Military Bases Agreement gave the US a 99-year lease on several military and naval bases in the Philippines (the largest at Subic Bay and Clark Airfield in Luzon).

The neocolonial coup de grâce, however, came with President Ferdinand Marcos's proclamation of martial law on September 23, 1972. The official justification given for martial law was that Marcos alleged plots against his government, some from the increasingly powerful Communist Party of the Philippines. Martial law was heralded by a wave of arrests of left-wing journalists and political leaders, congress was closed, the media locked down, and all other political parties were essentially abolished. The atmosphere of oppression under martial law created the space for Marcos's *Bagong Lipunan*, the New Society, of which development—infrastructural, economic, social—was the dominant component. Marcos envisioned development to come from the masses, “the great task of economic development involves the energies of the many,” he wrote in *Development for the New Society*, however it was in internationalism that development happened.¹² Securing billions of dollars of loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later renamed the World Bank), Marcos and his cronies set about building the country. New Society development was not simply a return to a colonial mode of state control and authoritarianism, but an aggressive building scheme with the expectation that the public would be on board. Indeed, development projects took on the urgency of military operations: survey teams visiting the Chico River valley in 1972 were provided armed guards; displaced peoples were moved to high security encampments; agribusiness concessions employed their own paramilitary gangs. In addition to its militarization of the country, the New Society called for a return to traditional Filipino values, a concretization found through the adoption of the nation's Indigenous peoples into the national narrative and their integration into the social system through the building of schools, service centers, housing

¹² Marcos, Ferdinand. Philippines and Bureau of National and Foreign Information, *The Philippine Economy in the Mid-Seventies: Development for the New Society* (Manila: Dept. of Public Information, 1976).

and roads. Deterministic dichotomies that became well-founded through the Spanish and American periods—city and country, colonizer and colonized, center and periphery—were both flattened and spun into disarray by the New Society, where wealth and its accumulation at all costs, hidden beneath a carefully coordinated propaganda front, where the orders of the day.

The fourteen years of martial law under Marcos present several challenges in narrating the historical progression of development and the militarization with which it was assisted. Sources within the archipelago are marked by two extremes during this period: on one hand, government propaganda presenting projects and programs that show the Marcos couple in a flattering, if not hallowed light. On the other hand, the perilous challenge of producing materials critical of Marcos's New Society meant that authorship and anonymity, distribution and publicity were fatally important decisions.¹³ This militarized environment made warfare a part of life, the so-called “hot war” of the Cold War. The NPA carried out clandestine guerrilla operations from countryside bases, and while they failed to mount a successful challenge to the government, rural skirmishes provided a constant pretense for overtly militarized responses from the government and rural development. Indeed, exiled academics Joel Rocamora and Walden Bello argued that development and counterinsurgency were implicitly conjoined: counterinsurgency was a goal in rural development programs, just as development projects relied on military protection in order to be carried out.¹⁴ Thus, the government's US-backed anticommunist agenda paved the way for industrial agribusiness to take place.

¹³ In addition to the material presented on displacement in this dissertation, documentation from Amnesty International and Task Force Detainees of the Philippines estimates over 3,257 known extrajudicial killings, 35,000 documented tortures, 77 disappeared and over 70,000 incarcerations. Amnesty International, *Report of an AI Mission to the Republic of the Philippines, 1975*. September 1, 1976. ASA 35/019/1977

¹⁴ J. Eliseo Rocamora and Corazon Conti Panganiban, *Rural Development Strategies, the Philippine Case: Final Report* (Ateneo de Manila University, Institute of Philippine Culture, 1975), 125. In exile Joel Rocamora contributed to *Southeast Asia Chronicle* based in Berkeley; Walden Bello famously broke into the World Bank and stole over

Rather than see these conditions as frameworks from which the dissertation's narrative is suspended, they can be better understood as a stack of picture frames of transparencies, overlaid on top of one another, each conditioning a view of the narrative beneath. The transformation of the countryside across a century, from Spanish hacienda-style tenancy conditions to the development aggression of the New Society was a shift wherein international forms of colonial control retained footholds in the archipelago.

Argument

The overarching argument of this dissertation is that architecture functioned as a mediating device for rural ecological change. It was both material and mediation: concrete, stone, earth and plant materials mediated ecological politics in tropical, out of the way places, in ways that were instrumental to the rise of capitalism. As a visual counterpart to the modernization of agriculture, architecture functioned as the mode and catalyst for development and displacement. This process is called palm politics because it was not simply the top-down import of large-scale projects, but implies that the battle for resources involved the displacement of other polities and the lightweight dwellings through which their redistribution was mobilized. The use of nipa palm as a building material in island Southeast Asia is, like the distribution of the plant itself, widespread. Despite the introduction of quick-build prefabricated materials like corrugated iron and concrete cinder blocks, nipa palm, attached to a framework of bamboo, remains a popular method of construction, owing to the colloquial names of the “nipa hut” or “bahay kubo” in the Philippines. Using bamboo as a structural framework, nipa palm is thatched

6,000 pages of classified documents, publishing them in: *Development Debacle, the World Bank in the Philippines*, 1982.

into roof shingles or woven to become wall panels. Nipa palm (*nypa fruticans*) is classified as a weed, spreading quickly in the brackish water of estuarine environments. As a tropical plant and building material it fulfills both the metaphor of ecological availability and human manipulation, along with the tangible facts that it is a replaceable, lightweight and thus mobile construction material. Palm politics, therefore, is not simply a catchall term for the imbrication of natural architectural materials in colonial legacies (such as a banana republic), but a specific term that demonstrates how an everyday material such as nipa palm becomes instrumentalized as part of the larger phenomenon of development.

The polemical challenge that this dissertation establishes is that between the hydroelectric dam and the nipa hut, architecture was a device that communicated contrasting aspects of developmentalism. In the Upper Pampanga River Project, the hydroelectric architecture of Pantabangan Dam mediated the physical transition of the Pampanga River watershed and the flood plain below into an industrialized rural place, where measurements such as irrigation throughput and rice yields remapped the region into a zone of calculable capital extraction. At the same time, they mediated the visual impact those changes had into the recognizable form of the earth-fill hydroelectric dam. On the other hand, the implicit movement and mobility of lightweight dwellings was crucial to developmentalism and the counterinsurgency operations that accompanied it. Indeed, “bayanihan,” the traditional Filipino word that describes villagers lifting a house together and moving it to a new location, was coopted as “Oplan Bayanihan,” the name for a counterinsurgency program as recently as the Aquino administration’s Internal Peace and Security Plan in the mid-2000s.¹⁵ As a tectonic material, celebrated for its lightweight,

¹⁵ Until 2016, Oplan Bayanihan was part of the IPSP plan. “Stop ‘Oplan Bayanihan,’” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 24, 2016, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/99477/stop-oplan-bayanihan>; “Oplan Bayanihan Ends as Duterte Orders AFP to Support NDF Talks,” *Rappler*, December 19, 2016, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/oplan-bayanihan-ends>; *OPLAN BAYANIHAN for Beginners*. Karapatan (Alliance for the Advancement of People’s

rhizomatic characteristics, then, reading nipa palm with and beyond its material use-value illustrates its political economy as an integral aspect of displacement. For the architects and anthropologists in this dissertation, the woven palms of the “nipa hut” had a symbolic economy, who regarded them as an example of tropical, inter-generational knowledge systems and a tangible tradition that stood in opposition to developmentalism. In this way, the dam and the hut were architectural devices for communicating the changing state of ecological relationships.

To make sense of the collusion between development and its military escort, I introduce the term “development warfare” as a means to understand the subtle characteristics of militarized rural landscapes, which were far more common to the modern project writ large than their urban counterparts. In the early years of the ASEAN grouping countries of Southeast Asia (formed in 1967), US-backed governments were overtly anti-communist in stance and development projects were perceived as a substantial means to counter the influence of insurgencies that were established in the countryside of those countries.¹⁶ Paramilitary forces patrolled dam sites; Indigenous peoples were corralled into guarded encampments; resettlement centers proliferated. Thus development warfare is the entanglement of development projects and their politics with the threat of violence with which they arrived.

The introduction of new technologies to produce energy and irrigation changed settlement patterns and environmental systems. Taking the definition of a matrix as an environment or system in which something develops, an ecological matrix is an abbreviation of the processes that enforced reliance on new forms of energy, agriculture, and raw materials. The

Rights), December 2011; Nerve Valerio Macaspac, “Suspicion and Ethnographic Peace Research (Notes from a Local Researcher),” *Engaging Ethnographic Peace Research*, 2019, 81–98.

¹⁶ Andrew T. H Tan, *A Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2009).

dissertation presents how nipa palm operated through this ecological matrix. This not only disrupts the narrative of development warfare as we have understood it thus far—as the top-down, state-led implementation of extractive infrastructures—but as a useful material in disorienting architectural histories that have narrowly flattened natural materials into conversations around vernacular, traditional and sustainable architecture. Contrary to its invocation of specificity (*vernaculus*, deriving from Latin, meaning local language), vernacular architecture is seldom invoked as part of a specific rural context and more often a catchall term for tradition, mythmaking, or in its most basic sense invoked as having a contested relationship to “modern.”¹⁷

Debates

The existence of a climate crisis, so absorbed as an alibi in propelling current design and historical architectural discourses, has found footing in the rise of the Anthropocene as a theoretical framework. Yet a climate of crisis as environmental degradation already existed in the mid-twentieth century as an extension and continuation of colonial dispossession. Working in tandem, anticommunism and agribusiness continued to consolidate colonizing imperatives of monetizing the countryside. By sidelining Indigenous narratives, Anthropocene discourse as a

¹⁷ Mark Crinson describes the power relations inherent to the term “vernacular architecture” as rooted in its etymology. “Read carefully, the dictionary actually opens up vernacular rather than delimiting it. The word’s etymological roots are in *vernaculus*, Latin for domestic or indigenous, which in turn derives from *verna* meaning a household or homeborn slave. The Romans favoured *vernae* more than other kinds of slaves; they were the other literally domesticated. In the vernacular’s very origin, therefore, Latin as the language of power defined a subject position only possible within that power. [...] In its naming a symmetrical structure of opposites is created—high and low, raw and cooked, crafted and industrial, designed and customary—while at the same time these are made unbalanced by the disparity of status between them, the subordination of one to the other. These frameworks for the vernacular have continued as much in recent postcolonial inspired architectural history as in vernacular studies.”

Mark Crinson, “Dynamic Vernacular—An Introduction,” *ABE Journal. Architecture beyond Europe*, no. 9–10 (July 12, 2016), 1–2.

techno-scientific genre—material and thus accessible as architectural discourse too—generated a blind spot to colonial cultures of dispossession. Indeed, the sophistication with which European capitalism took off in the late-eighteenth century was through first offshoring agricultural production (through plantation economies) and substituting coal for wood at home. Here, of course, England was a leading example, but other European nations quickly followed suit. The collusion of capital and environmental resources was essential, Wolfgang Sachs writes, where “access to biotic resources from colonies and fossil resources from the crust of the earth was essential to the rise of the Euro-Atlantic civilization. There would have been no industrial society without the mobilization of resources from both the expanse of geographical space and the depth of geological time.”¹⁸ The acceleration of monocropping as a part of the “plantationocene,” a term that emphasizes the legacy of transatlantic slavery and colonialism as they pertain to the European capitalist project, and the broader “capitalocene” in which they fit, highlight the organization of nature according to a whole environmental system, are recent additives to the interpretation of Anthropocene discourse as one willfully unaware of the roots of dispossession so intrinsic to the rise of capitalist societies.¹⁹ Indeed, as Elizabeth DeLoughry argues in *Allegories of the Anthropocene* (2019), due to the lack of any serious engagement with postcolonial and Indigenous perspectives other than as the purview of humanities debates, Anthropocene discourse has laid claim to the “novelty of the crisis rather than being attentive to the historical *continuity* of dispossession and disaster caused by empire.”²⁰ In other words, the

¹⁸ Wolfgang Sachs and Ed, *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power-2nd-Ed-2010*, 2009, xi.

¹⁹ Jason W Moore, *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland(CA): PM Press, 2016); Donna Haraway, “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,” *Environmental Humanities* 6, no. 1 (May 1, 2015): 159–65.

²⁰ This perspective is argued through literary case studies in the Pacific. Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, *Allegories of the Anthropocene* (Duke University Press, 2019), 2.

logics of colonialism that pertained to the rise of capitalism did not go away with decolonization. Indeed, capitalism found new force as a world system with the disintegration of former empires and the rise of global trade organizations, the IMF, World Bank and United Nations who played an integral role in negotiating the rise of new nation states and funded their projects.²¹

These organizations provided the epistemic routes through which to analyze development—following the genealogical approach to historical study through Michel Foucault—history is perceived as a series of epistemes. The method is a way to comprehend structures and systems of power that undergird and control the architectural surface. Yet while Foucault’s methods have been instructive to architectural scholarship outlining lineages of governmentality, they also prove that a subtle continuity exists between the pre-twentieth century colonial-era governance that Foucault historicized, and his method’s appropriateness to the understanding of postcolonial governmentality. While Foucault’s work on modernity remains useful (and this continuity proves that) what results is a compliance with modernity as a homogenizing, global force (in turn taking “tradition” as an antithetical companion)—and more substantively a homogenization that relies on the archives of government and multinational institutions as the sources with which to understand this force. In other words, legacies of the Anthropocene, capitalocene, and plantationocene, cannot be comprehended through the logic of governmentality, international or otherwise. In this light, Cara New Daggett explains, the twin problems that the ontological shift forced upon the world by the Anthropocene are first that global governance is a challenge to the nation-states that international institutions are not equipped to handle, and second, that when anthropocentrism loosens its grip, “our understanding

²¹ John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

of agency, power, freedom, and justice all takes on different inflections.”²² Learning from Daggett, rather than present a techno-scientific unfolding of the politics of displacement in Southeast Asia as it was mediated by development architecture, this dissertation seeks to present an alternative recognition of the discourses that crisscrossed spheres of technocracy and the defenders of rural, Indigenous and pastoral life.

Moreover, this project does not take for granted the notion that development in the Third World was simply a multinational government-led program of top-down technocratic planning. I look to feminist theories of decolonial self-determination that emphasize ways in which development was also the self-conscious emulation and enactment of alternative forms of modernity in places deemed peripheral. Through the example of Meratus Dayaks in Kalimantan, Anna Tsing argues that marginality did not equate backwardness, indeed the spaces of apparent remoteness were at the forefront of negotiations between capitalism and alternative Indigenous ways of living. “Meratus marginality is an ongoing relationship with power, not a recent feature of “contact” and “acculturation.”²³ Indeed, binaries of center and periphery played a role in Meratus conceptions of their own modernity. Similarly, Tania Li takes the periphery as a leitmotif to explore how Lauje Indonesian highlanders negotiated capitalist terms at what she calls the “Indigenous frontier.”²⁴ Center and periphery play an important role in the present dissertation, where peripheral places where the central spaces in which development played out.

²² In this vein, the dissertation takes up Daggett’s call to “let us be free to multiply energy epistemologies, metaphors, and visions concerning how we participate in and value work, production and dynamism.” Daggett, Cara New. *The Birth of Energy: Fossil Fuels, Thermodynamics, and the Politics of Work*. Duke University Press, 2019, 188–190.

²³ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 90.

²⁴ Tania Murray Li, *Land’s End Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2014).

Unlike the anthropologists Tsing and Li who studied how people themselves negotiated marginality on capitalism's spatial frontier, this dissertation follows built form as the mediating device in these situations.

The fact that development projects played out in the periphery played an important role in almost every situation discussed in this dissertation, from planning to building, protest and resistance. Remoteness—or, as Tsing calls it, “out of the way-ness”—was a central and novel ingredient to the modernizing of the countryside in the Third World, one whose conditions differed wildly from one location to the next. Locational specificity is a prerequisite to in-depth anthropological studies such as those by Tsing and Li, yet this approach to location is still regarded with suspicion in art and architectural history circles. Their proximity to “area studies,” in which scholars become experts of singular, often nationally defined regions, is interpreted as having a limiting effect in any architectural analysis. Yet even those investigations that self-consciously avoid geographical singularity fall into other traps: studies of development architectures are often limited to following the same institutions and individuals (and relying on their archives) that carried projects out. As such, this dissertation does not purport to contribute a history of development in the Philippines, nor a granular analysis of martial law-era developmentalism.

Rather, this is a project in which geographical specificity is an integral requirement to better comprehend how architecture mediated ecological change. As part of broader cultural systems, architecture mediated changes that were geographically specific, and though extraction, agribusiness and developmentalism in tropical postcolonial contexts bear global similarities, their environmental specifics do not translate easily. Rather, in attempting to do all of the above (and avoid the traps), this dissertation “follows the palm” in the Philippines. Yet it does so

cognizant not to prescribe the homogenizing force of national borders. Instead of providing the reader with a series of multi-sited examples of development architecture abstracted from place, the project takes advantage of the specificity of the Philippines archipelago as part of a world system, both in relation to neighboring countries and transpacific US military interests. In avoiding isolated nation-state narratives, the dissertation steers an archipelagic course between three distinct Philippine island groups: Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao; with stops in South Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

As opposed to urban modernity, in which the accumulating potential of cities and their architectural debates have been well-accounted for, the problem of rural modernity presents more unstable questions for the architectural historian. Two modes of scholarship describe this process, summarized as the geographic mode and the biographical mode. In the geographic mode, accounts of modernizing projects in specific colonial geographies. For example, Paul Rabinow's work takes up "middling modernism" in French colonial Casablanca; and Jean Louis Cohen and Monique Eleb's accounts for versions of colonialism studied through the urban projects of Georges Candilis and Shadrach Woods and their military predecessor Hubert Lyautey in Casablanca.²⁵ This mode of scholarship takes on colonialism first, and environment second, and in the process places emphasis on the power relations as they trickle down from metropole to periphery. Imperial nation and emergent nation-state are the means through which environmental relations are studied. On the other hand, the biographical mode takes a more sweeping approach has been taken to the construction of Third World modernities through the biographies of

²⁵ Eleb, Monique. "An Alternative to Functionalist Universalism: Ecochard, Candilis, and ATBAT-Afrique." In *Anxious Modernisms*, edited by Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2000; Jean-Louis Cohen, "Architectural History and the Colonial Question: Casablanca, Algiers and Beyond.," *Architectural History / Produced at the School of Architecture, University of Newcastle upon Tyne.*, 2006, 349–68; Jean-Louis Cohen and Monique Eleb, *Casablanca: Colonial Myths and Architectural Ventures* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2002).

traveling architects themselves. Plans devised by the Greek planner Constantinos Doxiadis, Otto Koenigsberger, Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry, Le Corbusier and others have provided ample opportunities to study the transfer of expertise from Europe to the world.²⁶ These authors have shown how architects were involved with development, yet the emphasis on biography, while generous in terms of nuance and particularity, often present a context abbreviated by the limited agency of the architects themselves.²⁷

Rural environments and the resources they contain present an uneven canvas for understanding how developmentalism played out. In thinking through how these conditions mediated modernizing projects and the resistance they came up against, James C. Scott's work has been instrumental. Topography plays an integral role in colonial and anticolonial subjecthood, Scott asserts,

Everywhere they could, states have obliged mobile, swidden cultivators to settle in permanent villages. They have tried to replace open common-property land tenure with closed common property: collective farms or, more especially, the individual freehold property of liberal economies. They have seized timber and mineral resources for the national patrimony. They have encouraged, whenever possible, cash, monocropping,

²⁶ Here, studies of architects and their postwar travails have been exposed by Ijlal Muzaffar, Rachel Lee, Ola Uduku. M. Ijlal Muzaffar, "The Periphery within: Modern Architecture and the Making of the Third World" (2007); Iain Jackson et al., "The Volta River Project: Planning, Housing and Resettlement in Ghana, 1950–1965," *The Journal of Architecture* 24, no. 4 (May 19, 2019): 512–48; Panayiota Pyla and Aga Khan Program at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, eds., *Landscapes of Development: The Impact of Modernization Discourses on the Physical Environment of the Eastern Mediterranean* (Cambridge, Mass: Aga Khan Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2013); Ayala Levin, "The Village within: An Alternative Genealogy of the Urban Village," *The Journal of Architecture* 23, no. 3 (April 3, 2018): 392–420.

²⁷ Other historiographical projects sit outside these modes, taking on the discussion of the larger cultural flows in which architecture partook. Two projects are of note that this dissertation contends with and extends. Felicity Scott's *Outlaw Territories*, a theorization of how architects became involved in Third World projects in the Cold War period, where architecture is explored as a techno-system that met several discourses: environmentalism, the war in Vietnam, game theory, and experiments in counterculture. In a similar historiographical reorientation, *Designs of Destruction* by Lucia Allais presents the way in which destruction of monuments and their protection prior to, during, and following the Second World War, expanded (and indeed created) modern preservation discourse. Lucia Allais, *Designs of Destruction: The Making of Monuments in the Twentieth Century*, First edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); Felicity Dale Elliston Scott, *Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity/Architectures of Counterinsurgency*, Zone Books, 2016.

plantation-style agriculture in place of the more biodiverse forms of cultivation that prevailed earlier.²⁸

Indeed, state-led modernization projects often found international support through their depiction of a yet-to-be modernized rural populace at odds with new urban lives. Rabinow describes state attempts at compartmentalization as “middling modernism.”²⁹ In colonial Casablanca, the process of different systems of knowledge coming together to create new urban spaces would “create New Man, purified and liberated to pursue new forms of sociality that, it was believed, would inevitably arise from healthy spaces and forms.”³⁰ Increasing attention in architectural studies has been paid to how rural places themselves played host to architectures of modernity. Ayala Levin and Neta Feniger’s recent call to expand architectural history beyond the city reflect the combination of Scott and Rabinow’s assertions, where “political objectives, such as domesticating unruly itinerant subjects or pacifying antagonistic populations, have been coupled with economic ones, such as extracting natural resources: a combination that often results in vast resettlement projects.”³¹ Locating the coordinates of such political and economic objectives presents a challenge of sources of data, particularly when the domestication of “unruly itinerant subjects” takes place through paramilitary and extralegal means.

Here, the camp itself can be considered as the architectural definition of displacement. Descriptions of camps in architectural history have shed new light on ways of understanding

²⁸ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press, 2009, 5.

²⁹ Paul Rabinow, “France in Morocco: Technocosmopolitanism and Middling Modernism,” *Assemblage* *Assemblage*, no. 17 (1992), 54.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Ayala Levin and Neta Feniger, “Introduction: The Modern Village,” *The Journal of Architecture* 23, no. 3 (April 3, 2018), 362.

both large-scale infrastructural projects as architecture, and the way that traditional typologies come to play a contested role in colonial-controlled places. Here I am thinking, in particular, of Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi's work on migrant refugee camps in Kenya, where the scales of the border, camp planning, and the tent itself are understood to have particular historical conditions.³² The camp is a mode of infrastructural control, and a context within which new conceptions of subjecthood emerge. Indeed, to study the context of the reservation, the camp, the resettlement site or the strategic hamlet (all of which may in fact be the same under different terms), is to reorient the methods and epistemic routes with which architecture itself can be studied and historicized. Siddiqi notes that,

If we take seriously the concerns and problematics of decolonizing the mind, we might begin by looking for sources of knowledge in the refugee camp. Camps have long been sites of empirical research: in their darkest form, as sites of detention and concentration, and in a putatively lighter form, as liberatory vehicles for the rescued and their saviours. What if camps did not serve empiricist ends of knowledge, but instead, theoretical ones? If so, then the humanitarian would become the student, the refugee the professor, and the architecture of the camp that of the university.³³

In this vein, when camps and resettlement centers are constructed with the same materials as traditional dwelling structures, then nipa palm becomes the theoretical locus for both the traditional and modern. Disciplinarity, that is, the role of the architect as author and the building as object, become troubled in this context. Are structures such as dams and resettlement camps devoid of traditional modes of authorship? And if so, do they become, in the rhetorical

³² Other recent work includes: Ateya Khorakiwala, "Solar Systems for the Rural Body," *Journal of Architectural Education* 74, no. 2 (July 2, 2020): 185–97. Ginger Nolan, *The Neocolonialism of the Global Village* (U of Minnesota Press, 2018); Mark Crinson, "Compartmentalized World." In: Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis, and Mabel O. Wilson, *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020), 259–276.

³³ Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, "The University and the Camp," Special Issue: "Contingency," *ARDETH* no. 6 (September 1, 2020), 137.

questioning of Felicity Scott, “almost unspeakable as a concern for the discipline proper?”³⁴

Herein lies the disciplinary challenge of this dissertation project: to gather these objects and figures together and make a case for their study as a part of the history of architecture.

The position I take in relation to these works is that architectural histories should not necessarily fit within the neatly-defined contextual streams of architect-building-city. Sites that at first glance appear spatially marginal to the metropole are deeply integrated in metropolitan lifestyles. Struggles over the lands that infrastructures traverse, dissect or quarry, such as the #NoDAPL movement that brought inter-tribal solidarity against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock, highlight the fact that land and the structures that are built over and through it are not subject to a singular conception of historical time.³⁵ Places of extraction, though out of the way, are deeply part of the modern world, and thus their architectural histories are of consequence. Instead, this dissertation turns attention to the narratives of developmentalism set out by church clergy, Indigenous activists and others who perceived ecological change through the architectures they saw arriving and disappearing in the mountains of Luzon and Mindanao. For some of the subjects considered here, rural industrialization signified the collapse of a world-system, and the struggle over land that accompanied them birthed a political economy of indigeneity, with resettlement architecture as its intermediary.

³⁴ Felicity Dale Elliston Scott, *Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity/Architectures of Counterinsurgency*, 2016, 33.

³⁵ The recent book project by Lakota historian Nick Estes deals with the longer history of Standing Rock in context of the DAPL. *OUR HISTORY IS THE FUTURE: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. (Verso, 2020). In a similar historiographical mode, that considers the modernizing impulse of infrastructure through architecture and the Indigenous resistance that met it, Manuel Shvartzberg Carrió’s PhD dissertation “Designing Post-Industrial Society” examines how “architecture, urbanism and infrastructure mediated the technical, legal and ideological struggles that took place” in Palm Springs: “Designing ‘Post-Industrial Society’: Settler Colonialism and Modern Architecture in Palm Springs, California, 1876-1977” (Columbia University, 2019).

Methodology

The overlap of the Cold War and the period of martial law were integral to the rise of developmentalism in the Philippines, yet the specificities of these historically broad terms evade straightforward definition. The influence of the US's counter-communist imperatives during the Cold War, particularly during the mid-1950s when McCarthyism dominated foreign policy, has been documented as the trickle down of government incentives toward projects that emphasized democratic, market-driven internationalism.³⁶ Indeed, the influence of Cold War geopolitics was crucial to the conception of development as an international competition in which the US saw itself as leader, factors that played out in Philippine foreign policy and funding for postwar industrial reconstruction.³⁷ Similarly, a large portion of this dissertation's historical timeframe occurs during the years of martial law. Being the years in which rule of law and human rights were indefinitely suspended, these were the years in which development projects could be pushed through with little regard for typical rules. Martial law acutely heightened several aspects of life that impacted its historical study: the tendering of large projects was given up in favor of cronies that owned the large heavy machinery conglomerates (namely Rodolfo Cuenca and the Construction and Development Corporation of the Philippines, CDCP); state-led surveys and resettlement programs were carried out haphazardly by the army, often without plans; the

³⁶ *Parapolitics: Cultural Freedom and the Cold War*. Edited by Anselm Franke, Nida Ghouse, Paz Guevara and Antonia Majaca. Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. Sternberg Press, 2021; Louis Menand, *The Free World: Art and Thought in the Cold War* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021); John Robert McNeill and Corinna R Unger, *Environmental Histories of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

³⁷ Nick Cullather, "America's Boy? Ramon Magsaysay and the Illusion of Influence," *Pacific Historical Review* 62, no. 3 (1993), 305–38; Michael Goldman, *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization*. (Yale University Press, 2008); Łukasz Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

powerful government propaganda machine impacted international media, meaning that independent watchdogs, foreign journalists and investigators are crucial to understanding developmentalism, indeed, for fourteen years truth and fact were unstable categories. To provide an impression of the Philippines under martial law is to create an archive of cronyism against the backdrop of the media landscape that surrounded the business world in the 1970s.³⁸ Government propaganda materials are examined here for their revealing governmental self-perceptions of development. These lie in stark contrast to several other datasets that the project considers: reports by botanists, geologists and activists, and materials circulated by the church, whose various subsidiary organizations and clergy members (the AMRSP, ECTF, NASSA), though not immune to the risks under martial law, presented one of few voices that were consistently critical of the Marcos dictatorship.³⁹

In a methodological borrowing from the digital humanities and geographic information systems (GIS), the dissertation makes use of thick maps throughout the dissertation. Drawing on Todd Presner and Yoh Kawano's description of thick mapping as "processes of collecting, aggregating, and visualizing ever more layers of geographic or place-specific data," yet, paying attention to the details of the historical circumstance at hand, (sometimes being called "deep maps"), they should also "embody temporal and historical dynamics through a multiplicity of layered narratives, sources, and even representational practices."⁴⁰ Maps are useful in this

³⁸ In this regard I found that the approach taken by the UP Third World Studies Center instructive (at the University of the Philippines Diliman). This dissertation benefits both from the influence of this approach and the archives that the TWSC opened to me in, in particular, the Technocrats of Ferdinand Marcos project.

³⁹ Another archive from which the dissertation benefited was the research library at Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City, whose records of church publications under martial law are well documented.

⁴⁰ Todd Presner, David Shepard, and Yoh Kawano, *HyperCities: Thick Mapping in the Digital Humanities*, 2014 edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 17.

context because of the constant requirement to visualize spread out, spatialized events. Indeed, rather than offering the completion of a cohesive narrative, thick maps often trouble the boundaries of the visual. Providing context for the development of development across time, thick maps offer coherence and fragmentation as an important element of environmental scholarly discourse.

This dissertation gathers several stories to describe developmentalism. My use of the term “stories” is chosen specifically as an approach to the technocratic and the decolonial. Architecture, as a discipline allied with engineering and construction, is well-versed in the language of technology. A consequence of this, however, is that it creates certain challenges when confronted with modes of technology that do not fit into an architectural framework prescribed by a Euro-American, author-driven episteme. I therefore rely on an interdisciplinary approach to the study of architecture’s stories understood broadly: the rice terraces of Ifugao are described by anthropologists, activists, and Indigenous peoples as an integral technology to life; the woven nipa palm panels of the bahay kubo are historicized via botanists, anticolonial novelists and folklorists at the turn of the century. The project was also prompted to break with the technocratic due to the prevalence of narratives in which fact and truth were not were not always easily determinable. Under martial law, names were falsified for reasons of safety, archives were destroyed as governmental bodies changed hands, and indeed one of the fundamental aspects of the atmosphere of martial law was that anything could be used for and against you. In the archipelagic terrain of the dissertation, stories are a writerly technique in which nothing is taken for granted, indeed, are an admittance that not all endings are as settled as one might wish. Thus, confronting and subverting the technocratic reproduction of architectural systems of worldmaking and dealing with the unsettled archives of martial law are integral to the

challenges of decolonial thinking. Drawing on Walter D. Mignolo and Sylvia Wynter, “the decolonial option does not simply protest the contents of imperial coloniality; it demands a delinking of oneself from the knowledge systems we take for granted (and can profit from) and practicing epistemic disobedience.”⁴¹ Indeed, understanding the ecological matrix is to not to take for granted the preconditions and results of development. In Mignolo’s terms, “evolution, dysselection, and biocentricity are *origin stories with an ontological effect*. [...] we tend to believe our cosmogonies as natural truth (s).”⁴² Assembling stories, then, is an approach to architectural history that attempts to subvert the naturalized truths associated with the discipline.

Organization of chapters

The dissertation is structured around five confrontations in which architecture mediated perceptions of ecological change. Each chapter can be considered as its own self-contained historical encounter, with a specific context and set of players. While the chapters are organized chronologically, they are better understood as elements of a woven structure, whose threads run both consecutively and between one another. Chapter 1 begins in 1887 with the publication of two books: *Noli mi tangere* by José Rizal and *El Folk-Lore Filipino*, by Isabelo de los Reyes. Each work (novel and study, respectively) looked described the nipa and bamboo house as evidence of locality, tradition, and subtle allegory to anticolonial identity. Nipa palm and bamboo were not only construction materials for native dwellings, but medicinal materials, de los Reyes revealed, deeply connected to traditional lore. Rizal, on the other hand, pointed to the

⁴¹ Walter D. Mignolo, “Sylvia Wynter: What Does It Mean to Be Human?” In: Katherine McKittrick, editor, *Sylvia Wynter on Being Human as Praxis* (Durham, Carolina del Norte (Estados Unidos: Duke University Press, 2015), 107–108.

⁴² Ibid.

“bahay kubo” as representative of a culture that stood in opposition to Spanish colonialism and the greedy bureaucrats who were its lackeys. During the same timeframe, American botanists visiting the archipelago and other tropical possessions in the Pacific were studying the use of nipa palm and bamboo as construction materials for their potential use as economic plants. While each set of knowledge production overlapped in the house of nipa and bamboo, they also intersected in the negotiation of a colonial modernity, except while *ilustrados* of Rizal and de los Reyes’ interests were in delineating themselves from Spanish masters, it was a system of colonial knowledge exchange that enabled American botanists to study the same structures.

Chapter 2 cycles forward to the 1950s to examine several key events surrounding the Upper Pampanga River Project (UPRP), a hydroelectric and irrigation program that was carried out on the plain of Nueva Ecija. I examine how a protest movement begun in the 1930s by *kasama* farmers against their hacienda landowners, transformed into a communism-inspired insurgency movement by the 1950s, and the government counterinsurgency scheme to abate it, partly through the EDCOR land reform program. Government materials that described irrigation, soil fertility and power shortages were embedded in the anti-communist atmosphere of the 1950s, where the boundaries of the UPRP exactly followed that of the insurgency. “Asia’s biggest dam” was completed in 1972, the same year that Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines, and by the late 1970s the novelty of the project had turned into notoriety, as word had spread of the botched relocation process and resulting displacement. When the Marcos government announced plans for a series of dams along the Chico River in the Cordillera mountains, it was met with fierce resistance movement that rallied around aspects of the existing Indigenous landscape, such as the rice terraces that clad the steep mountainsides.

Chapter 3 intervenes between chapters 2 and 4 by following the counterinsurgency experts that moved from the Philippines to Vietnam during the early 1960s, prior to the escalation of the war, to comprehend how strategic hamlets evolved across the Vietnamese and Philippine contexts. International counterinsurgency experts and the Government of South Vietnam seemed to agree that strategic hamlets—villages fortified with ditches, spikes and watchtowers within which villagers from scattered surroundings were gathered—were working, abating the influence of the National Liberation Front led by Ho Chi Minh. The documentation of the strategic hamlets campaigns however is marked by two extremes: on the one hand the US-backed material that heralded them as a form of rural self-sufficiency that could deter communism, and on the other, from the GVN that they were a form of democratic, inherently Vietnamese, rural settlement.

When strategic hamlets were brought back to the Philippines in chapter 4, it was under the guise of tribal protection and resettlement in Mindanao later in the 1970s and early 1980s, for the reasons of both counterinsurgency and agribusiness, carried out by the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (Panamin). The extensive, surreptitious resettlement campaigns of Indigenous peoples in the name of protection between 1970–1980.⁴³ One of the primary resistance movements that met Panamin were members of the church, and the chapter examines the aesthetics of resistance through the paraphernalia of anti-development activism distributed through the church publications *Signs of the Times* and *Tribal Forum*.

Part of Panamin's political mandate hinged around the theme of protection, and this is taken up with more specificity through the twin figures of Imelda Marcos, First Lady of the

⁴³ This dissertation uses the naming convention of Panamin as noun rather than PANAMIN as acronym for legibility.

Philippines during the Marcos dictatorship, and the American architect Dorothy Pelzer in chapter 5. Both Pelzer and Imelda used the same language around “cultural protection” in relation to the plight of Indigenous peoples of the Philippines and Southeast Asia, and the displacement and resulting loss of culture created by development. Chapter 5, in this sense, takes up the theoretical category of “loss” to understand how it became paradoxically a productive category for cataloging disappearing cultures, and how architecture served as a means and a last chance to record, according to Imelda, “traditions that are dying.”

Chapters 1, 3 and 5 examine how particular attention was paid to the material qualities of the nipa and bamboo house as a part of the landscape. Across these chapters, the eponymous “nipa hut” was framed as an ecological interface, an architecture that was, in repeated instances, summoned to provide a motif for human interaction with the rural environment. In chapter 1, as an encounter, in chapter 3 as a mode of counterinsurgency, and chapter 5 as the symbol and dataset of tradition. Chapters 2 and 4 follow government development programs and the resistance movements that met them through the framework of displacement and resettlement.

Taken together, the chapters reveal several surprises and contradictions in the way that architecture played a mediating role in the development politics of Southeast Asia in the twentieth century. For example, the relationship between warfare and agribusinesses use of paramilitary forces is clear-cut, however, less obvious was the way that resettlement centers were, between 1968 and 1980, not only a means to an end, but for the Philippine government a celebrated new pastoral mode of engagement. First for resettled Huk resistance fighters, in chapter 2, and second for Indigenous peoples, in chapter 4. Caught between development as desire and development as dispossession, the traditional building methods used at these sites came to stand in as evidence for modernity rather than its opposite. Engaging the discursive

possibilities of these contradictions is part of the larger goal of considering architecture in the development discourse as particular.

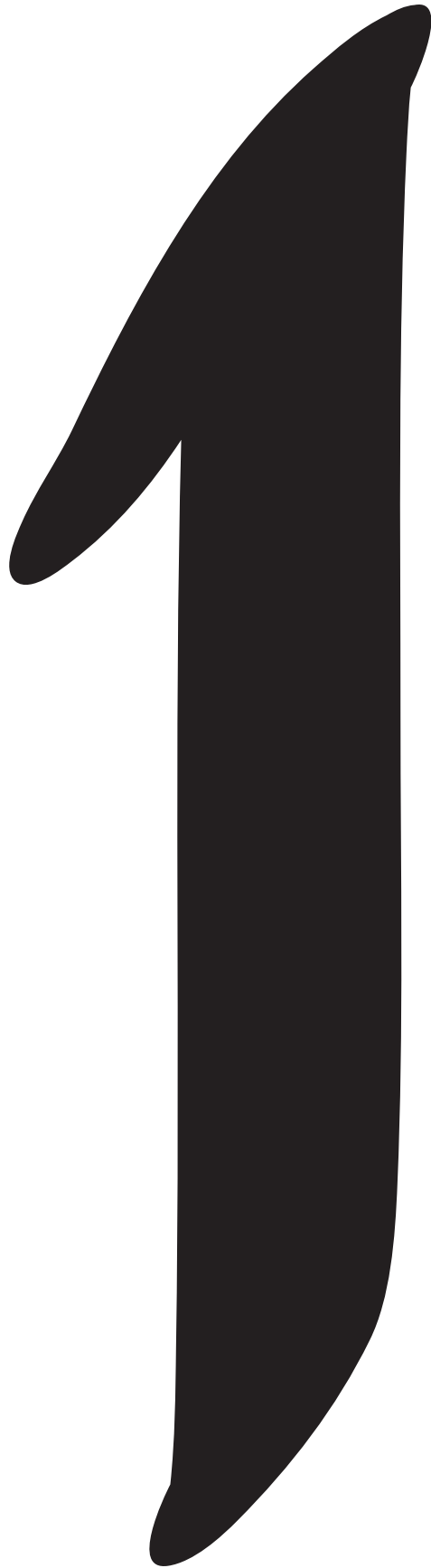
Stakes

My investigation builds on the premise that warfare was so pervasive that it became a kind of folklore that shaped every interaction with the rural landscape. Far away from cities, the architecture of bamboo and palm met the clatter of M16 gunfire, the rattle of UH1 helicopters, and jungle camouflaged green fatigues. The fight was over land: water, soil, and the belief systems that governed their use. This is where landscape changes were the most drastic, a climate crisis formed by the rise of capitalism in tropical places. Palm has a political economy that was an integral aspect of displacement: the implicit mobility and movement of lightweight dwellings was crucial to developmentalism and the counterinsurgency that accompanied it. This claim is made by studying how displacement was practiced: moving people around to make way for the industrialization of the countryside implicitly relied on lightweight mobile architectures to be possible. Yet for the architects and anthropologists in the project, the woven palms of the “nipa hut” were also symbolic of tropical, inter-generational traditional knowledge that stood in opposition to developmentalism. These aspects of palm’s political economy: mobility, modernity, ancestry, and tradition, were related. Studying nipa palm, then, is like studying an archive. A weed, a plant, an allegory, a construction material, and more substantively, a tool of displacement.

The Upper Pampanga River Project, a vast irrigation program overlooked by Pantabangan Dam, mediated the physical transition of the Pampanga River watershed and the flood plain below into an industrialized rural place, where measurement: water throughput and rice yields transformed the region into a zone of calculable capital extraction. At the same time,

the recognizable form of the earth-fill hydroelectric dam and the web of irrigation channels below mediated the visual impact those changes had.

In this way, the hydroelectric dam and the nipa and bamboo dwelling were architectural devices for communicating the changing state of ecological relationships. They are things that mediate how we interpret rural change, constituting an architectural history of a particular tropical environment in the twentieth century. The dissertation presented an alternative recognition of the discourses that crisscrossed between technocratic development architecture, and the defenders of rural, Indigenous, and pastoral life. The fact that development projects happened in the periphery played an important role in every situation discussed in this dissertation, from planning to building, protest to resistance. The central intervention of the project is to push against the idea of a superstructure of development. Palm politics is the persistency of narratives that ran counter to development, and the possible worlds they imagined.



1

Encounters with Palm

Folklore, Botany and Analytical Distance

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CHAPTER 1

Encounters with Palm

Folklore, Botany and Analytical Distance

Walk past the outstretched, overlapping leaves of *nypa fruticans* and you may notice an optical illusion. Moving past one another, the slender radial fronds appear to slide up and down, giving the green lines a shimmering movement that suggest either the plant is gliding of its own accord, or the viewer is involuntarily moving as if on an escalator. The botanical illusion is apt in describing a plant whose uses and interpretations are both simple and complex; basic yet inexplicable. While the French name for *Nypa fruticans* is *palmier d'eau*, a palm that is found in, or of, water, its local names tell us more. Among its various Filipino names are *lasa* and *sasa* meaning either “taste,” or “savor,” but they also describe a type of weed, owing to its rapid growth in the brackish water of estuaries that meet the ocean. Today it is one of the most commonly found species in tropical habitats that meet the ocean. Among the oldest angiosperm plants—those plants with stems, roots and leaves—the World Agroforestry Center has presented evidence that it had a pan-tropical distribution 13–63 million years ago. Nipa is quite literally prehistoric, and its abundance goes some way in suggesting how it has come to have had such a wide spectrum of uses in estuarine tropical places. It is woven into panels for walls, folded into shingles for roofs, it is threaded, thatched, fermented, bunched and tied into baskets, hats, mats and brooms. Its fruit is eaten as a dessert ingredient in Malaysia and Singapore, while it is fermented to become a kind of liquor in the Philippines, known as *tuba*. The short shelf-life it has as a building material is hardly a hindrance because of its wide availability. Need a roof? It’s growing right next to you.

Palm is a machine for living of and living in. However, this perennial, ubiquitous, living material, has had a brittle relationship to the realm of architectural study, where it is often sidelined as so-called “vernacular” architecture. The episteme of nipa and bamboo houses, versus the lived knowledge, or *techne* of a gendered construction process means there are alternating perspectives that shape how nipa as a building material has been used. *Techne* is concrete, specialized and tied to time and place, while *episteme* refers to abstract, analytical knowledge. Stephen Marglin notes that, “possessors of *techne* often find it impossible to articulate their knowledge [...] it is revealed in the production of cloth or creation of a painting or performance of a ritual.”¹ Considering a building material in terms of these two paradigms is useful in the case of nipa palm because it encompasses *episteme* and *techne* through a set of specific historical encounters. The first set, for *episteme*, lies in its capacity for environmental allegory: telling stories about traditions and larger social conditions. The *ilustrados* of the late-nineteenth century Philippines (well-heeled middle-class intellectuals) pointed to the material as a signifier of a particular version of Philippine history, an indicator of deeper folkloric roots and an Indigenous environment that contrasted with the one imposed by Spanish occupiers.² In turn, their writings would inspire the insurgency movement that became the Philippine Revolution of 1896, whose organizers met in coded secrecy under the cover of the ubiquitous nipa and bamboo dwellings of Tondo, then on the outskirts of Manila. The second part, describing *techne*, are the tangible

¹ Stephen Marglin, “Rationality and the World,” *Decolonizing Knowledge* (F. Apffel-Marglin and S. Marglin (eds), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

² *Ilustrados* is a term used to describe the Filipino educated class of the late colonial Spanish era, “young colonial subjects,” historian Megan C. Thomas notes, “that positioned themselves as modern scholars and intellectuals in a broader field in which their colonizers, the Spanish, often lagged behind.” Megan C. Thomas, *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Ilustrados: Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism*, 1 edition (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2012), 4.

construction methods by which nipa palm is transformed into the nipa and bamboo house. The qualities of the plant itself, however, caught the interest of a different set of eyes, those of visiting American botanists, who found their own methods for registering nipa palm as a conspicuous plant material. Allegory and structural quality are combined in a third encounter described through the figure of William Le Baron Jenney, in which the nipa and bamboo house serves as an allegorical mode through the science of travel. Three encounters—palm as folklore, specimen and allegory—structure the chapter that follows, which considers how, in the late nineteenth century, the political economy of nipa palm was affected by the perspectives and purposes of those who viewed it.

Nipa palm is an unusual palm for a number of reasons: its trunk grows beneath ground (it is *acaulescent*), only its long pinnate leaves pierce the surface. It is nicknamed the “mangrove palm” because of its growth in swampy or estuarine environments, and when its large bulbous fruit drops off, it often germinates and grows while floating in transit.³ It grows rapidly and spreads far because of this germination pattern, thriving in both freshwater and brackish water. After a year of growth, nipa palm can be harvested for its fronds, which are dried and woven into large thatch panels, stacked upon one another for a pitched roof, or for wall panels tethered to a bamboo framework. (fig 1.01) There are many varieties of the “nipa hut,” as it is colloquially known, in the Philippines and throughout island Southeast Asia. It bears commonalities with the Malay hut in that both are box-like structures raised off the ground on piles or bamboo stilts, with a steep pitched roof of thatched coconut or nipa palm shingles, with side panels woven from the same materials. The Philippine architect Rodrigo D. Perez notes that as an architecture

³ Uhl, Natalie W. “Inflorescence and Flower Structure in *Nypa Fruticans* (Palmae).” *American Journal of Botany* 59, no. 7 (1972): 729–43.

related to the ethnic traditions of Austronesia, the *bahay kubo* “grew out of people’s response to their environment and the requirements of their social life. It is our ancestral architecture, expressing basic concepts of space and structure—space surrounded by space.”⁴ There are various names for these basic elements, different heights, types of piles, yet the basic features of a cube-shaped volume with a steep pitched roof has prevailed throughout the Philippine archipelago because of their climatic adaptation and the availability of the building materials available.⁵ The fact that the house is lightweight means it can quite literally be lifted and moved (called *bayanihan* in the Philippines; *angkat rumah* in Malaysia).⁶ While these common features can be recognized, it is not the same as many other forms of “vernacular architecture” in Southeast Asia, such as the ceremonial origin-houses of Sulawesi or “men’s house” of Papua.⁷

⁴ Villalon, Augusto, Jonathan Best, and Ferdinand Doctolero. *Lugar: Essays on Philippine Heritage and Architecture*. Makati City: The Bookmark, 2001: Foreword by Rodrigo D. Perez.

⁵ The traditional “hut,” whether Malay, Philippine, Indonesian, Bornean or elsewhere in island Southeast Asia has received scant historiographical analysis from a unified perspective, despite commonalities among Austronesian house types. Two approaches characterize the available material, the first of these is architecture as an anthropological investigation is the most common of these (Olgyay; Waterson; Hart; Rudofsky and Roesler). A second more recent approach is the discussion of histories of climate in relation to architecture (Barber; Chang; Crinson). Barber, Daniel A. *Modern Architecture and Climate: Design before Air Conditioning*, 2020; Chang, Jiat-Hwee. *A Genealogy of Tropical Architecture: Colonial Networks, Nature and Technoscience*. 1 edition. London ; New York: Routledge, 2016; Crinson, Mark. “Dynamic Vernacular—An Introduction.” *ABE Journal. Architecture beyond Europe*, no. 9–10 (July 12, 2016); Hart, Donn V. *The Cebuan Filipino Dwelling in Caticugan: Its Construction and Cultural Aspects*. Cultural Report Series, no. 7. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, 1959; Olgyay, Victor. *Design with Climate: Bioclimatic Approach to Architectural Regionalism*. Princeton University Press, 2015; Roesler, Sascha. *Weltkonstruktion: der aussereuropäische Hausbau und die moderne Architektur : ein Wissensinventar*. Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2013; Rudofsky, Bernard. *Architecture without Architects: An Introduction to Nonpedigreed Architecture*. New York: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1965; Waterson, Roxana. *Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia*. Tuttle Publishing, 2012.

⁶ The tradition of moving houses in Southeast Asia is widespread, yet follows several different reasons for the actual movement itself, ranging from the death of a family member, to the marriage of a new couple, to occasionally an entire village shifting space (for example shifting cultivation, called *kaingin* in the Philippines, where the move itself is known as “bayanihan”). Sabrina Noor, “Inside the Dying 60-Year-Old Tradition Called ‘angkat Rumah’ (...and How It’s Actually Done),” *CILISOS - Current Issues Tambah Pedas!* (blog), July 19, 2018.

⁷ Roxana Waterson explores many of these traditional types in detail in *Living House*, which is a catalogue of housing types and the meanings behind housing traditions in archipelagic Southeast Asia. Roxana Waterson, *Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia* (Tuttle Publishing, 2012).

If the study of tropical plants as architectural materials has had a relatively limited reception in comparison to harder, heavier materials like concrete or steel, can this simply be attributed to architecture's geographical distribution and a straightforward eurocentrism, where the plants and climate exterior to Europe have resulted in a disorientation of discourse and destabilized historicity?⁸ Or, to further that line of questioning, is it a result of the analytical distance between the west and a site in the non-west, where distance itself plays a key part in rendering the vague analysis of an architectural portrait? Distance, so crucial to the west's study of the non-west, was integral to the US colonial project: distance between site and metropole heightened the degree of attention paid to representation. Distance crystallized the brief encounters that erstwhile colonists had with foreignness, and the burden of analysis from a distance placed weight on what was seen and how it was recorded. One of the results of this process of distancing was the degree to which foreign cultures appear fixed, indeed, to paraphrase Anna Tsing, is it true that the more a culture has been ethnographically fixed to a

⁸ While figures such as the Prussian architect Gottfried Semper have allowed historians to discuss the emergence of tropical "types" through his impressions of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Semper's interest in the tectonics of the "Caribbean Hut," for example, however, lay in the force of allegory for his sprawling works, *Der vier Elemente der Baukunst*, and *Der Stil* Semper sought to tell a narrative of human cultures that distinguished between different groups by positing architecture as the framework through which to understand difference, where, as Charles Davis describes, "race is expressed as both a biological marker of human differences and an analytical category for identifying the fixed (spiritual) characteristics of entire national or civilizational groups." Indeed Semper turns to the Caribbean hut to represent "the purest expression of the four elements of architecture [...] as emblems of the cultural practices they represented." Yet the history of architectural materiality, despite Semper's efforts, has tended to focus overwhelmingly on hard materials, not soft ones. Why is this the case? Could it be that the episteme to which Semper belongs flourished in cold countries? In this regard, the chapter uses nipa palm to provincialize the European logic of tectonics, to which both Giedion and Semper belong. The methodological approach of following how a particular architectural material affects its use and in turn, changes the landscape was introduced by Sigfried Giedion in *Bauen in Frankreich*. The novelty of Giedion's approach in the first half of the twentieth century was informed by his subject matter: the new materials of steel and concrete that radically changed how architecture and engineering shaped structures in Europe and the United States. Gottfried Semper. *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik: ein Handbuch für Techniker, Künstler und Kunstfreunde (Band 1): Die textile Kunst für sich betrachtet und in Beziehung zur Baukunst*. Frankfurt a.M., 1860; Charles L. Davis II, *Building Character: The Racial Politics of Modern Architectural Style*, 1 edition (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019), 82, 90.

particular place, the less its history as changing and independent has been recognized?⁹ The chapter confronts these two issues—the politics of place, and the science of travel—through the positioning of each in the context of the Philippine archipelago when it was in the midst of a revolutionary movement, against the backdrop of a Spanish-American colonial transition.

I

Prism of Difference

The signature broad, rough-hewn brush strokes of Fernando Amorsolo paint a nipa and bamboo house being held aloft in its totality by some thirty villagers, against the electric shades of a tropical evening sky. (fig 1.02) A man in the right of the frame gestures to the crowd, coaxing them forward, backlit against the sky, the wide brim of his domed salukot identifies him as a farmer. *Bayanihan* (1959) the process of a village moving a house in unison, is the title and subject matter of the work, which is typical of the ‘conservative realist’ strain of painting that dominated the Philippine art scene in the period directly following independence from the US in 1946.¹⁰ On the outside, the image might appear to be a celebration of pastoral, nationalist pride, with the nipa dwelling in motion—an architecture of community and mobility—as its

⁹ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 123.

¹⁰ The family gifted it to the Museum of the University of Santo Tomas in 1998. R.C. Ladrado. “A Second Look: The Conservative and the Realist Tradition in Philippine Art.” Vargas Museum, 2019. Accessed May 28, 2020. <https://verafiles.org/articles/second-look-conservative-and-realist-tradition-philippine-art>; Museum, Jorge B. Vargas. “Revisiting the Conservative.” *Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center*, April 13, 2019. <https://vargasmuseum.wordpress.com/2019/04/13/revisiting-the-conservative/>.

iconographic centerpiece. *Bayanihan* was painted the year that Amorsolo won the UNESCO National Commission Gold Medal and bought by vice-president Diosdado Macapagal. The international reception of Amorsolo, who produced paintings in copious amounts during his lifetime (some estimate at least 10,000 pieces), was welded to his status as a poster-boy of American-Philippine friendship. Amorsolo could be pinned as a pacifist-survivalist—he painted portraits of occupying Japanese soldiers during the Second World War; and US generals before and after it in order to make a living—the vast majority of his images are landscapes. Like the various strands of conservative-, social-, and socialist- realism that existed in the nonaligned world during the 1950s, landscapes communicated a pastoral politics in which rustic rural architecture—mills, farmhouses and lean-to’s—were a stable background for a world in the midst of wars. (fig 1.03)

In his day, Amorsolo’s romantic landscapes were criticized for being “empty,” in 1948 a critic described his paintings as not difficult to understand, because “there is nothing to understand.”¹¹ Yet the politics of Amorsolo’s landscapes lay in their apparent innocence. Just as the process of lifting the house onto the shoulders of a village, it took considerable narrative effort for it to become a symbol available for Amorsolo’s taking. It would be straightforward to pin a discussion of Amorsolo’s innocent *bahay kubo* on the increasing mechanization of agriculture, the mood of postcolonial nationalism, or to soothe the minds of politicians relying on US aid for quashing the recent Hukbalahap rural insurgency.¹² Convincing as this framework

¹¹ Leo Benesa, “What is Philippine about Philippine Art?” *Philippine Sunday Express*, November 16, 1975, 24–27.

¹² The Hukbalahap insurgency, which lasted from 1945 until 1955, grew out of the organized resistance of Filipino farmers to unfair tenant farming system in Central Luzon. Fueled by anti-communist suspicion, the United States Armed Forces in the Far East provided much of the aid and expertise for crushing the rebellion (see Chapter 2).

may be, it is not enough to explain how embedded the building already was in the landscape.¹³

To understand why this architecture is important to pastoral idealism in an imagined national landscape, we must cycle back more than sixty years to 1887, when it existed outside of the American colonial timeframe and apposite to the Spanish as part of an anticolonial uprising.

To arrive at that point, the chapter considers the genealogy of the nipa and bamboo house through the late nineteenth century writings of two ilustrados and the context in which their thought emerged, an internationalist intellectual movement and local insurgency culminating in the 1896 Philippine Revolution. Nipa and bamboo houses were among the meeting places of the Katipunan, a secret society whose leadership came from a mixture of laymen and ilustrados, who described the dwelling in reverential tones that stirred the sentiments of their anti-colonial insurgency. Toward the close of the nineteenth century, Filipinos were increasingly agitated with their Spanish colonial administrators. Whispers of the various revolutions that rocked Europe in 1848 reached the Philippines through the ilustrados who spent time in Spain, studying or conducting business. The splintering of monarchies in western Europe, the sole exception of which was Spain, meant that the former gleam of Enlightenment-era Spanish Empire was increasingly dulled alongside its reforming European neighbors.¹⁴ France passed universal suffrage, Kaiser Friedrich-Wilhelm unified Germany, and Italy declared itself a republic in 1849. For the rest of the world, all of this showed that actions of the citizenry could render results, and

¹³ Other conservative realists of the “Mabini Art” circle who relied on the *bahay kubo* include: Elias Laxa, Romeo Enriquez, Cesar Buenaventura, Crispin Lopez, Serafin Serna, Miguel Galvez, Isidro Ancheta, Antonio Dumlao, Wenceslao Garcia, Gabriel Custodio, Ben Alano, Simon Saulog, and Diosdado Lorenzo. R.C. Ladrado. “A Second Look: The Conservative and the Realist Tradition in Philippine Art.” Vargas Museum, 2019. Accessed May 28, 2020. <https://verafiles.org/articles/second-look-conservative-and-realist-tradition-philippine-ar>

¹⁴ Arango, Ergasto Ramón. *Spain, from Repression to Renewal*. Westview Press, 1985: 49–52, 109. See also: Miranda-Tchou, Teresita. “Art as Political Subtext: A Philippine Centennial Perspective on Francisco Goya’s *Junta de la Real Compañía de Filipinas* (1815).” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 24, no. 3/4 (1996): 206.

the main offshoot was the collapse of traditional monarchies, with the Spanish and Habsburgs as the remaining outliers. It could be done, and the reverberations of the Haitian Revolution half a century earlier could still be felt in the islands and archipelagos under extractive colonial regimes.¹⁵ One such ilustrado that traveled Europe during the decades following these ruptures was José Rizal. A doctor from a middle-class rural Filipino family, Rizal studied and worked in Madrid, Brussels and Berlin, writing for leftist publications like *La Solidaridad* whose editorial board consisted of Filipinos studying in Europe's universities.¹⁶ On his return to the Philippines in 1892, Rizal, a polymath who is reputed to have spoken over twenty-two languages, founded *La Liga Filipina*, an organization for social reform conceived through connections among the islands of the archipelago and in Europe. Within months of its founding *La Liga* was shut down and Rizal was arrested, to be exiled at Dapitan, a remote province far to the south on the coast of Mindanao. Among the founders was a nineteen-year-old Andres Bonifacio who went underground, continuing his work for *La Liga* secretly under the auspices of the “children of the nation” Katipunan revolutionary movement.

The widely accepted version of events during the 1896 “Cry of Balintawak,” heralding the start of the Philippine Revolution, follow that Bonifacio called to a crowd of assembled katipuneros to theatrically tear up their *cédulas personales*—their Spanish tax certificates. Thus

¹⁵ Recent historical accounts have illustrated how the Haitian Revolution of 1791–1804 was not an isolated moment but bore influence throughout the wider Atlantic world as well as other colonies. For example: Julius S. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*, Reprint edition (Verso, 2020).

¹⁶ *La Solidaridad* was long recognized as the heart of the “propaganda movement,” a project of the Comité de Propaganda of Manila to promote political reforms in the Philippines by appealing to a Spanish government in the peninsula that was more liberal and secular than that in the Philippines (Schumacher 1997). Schumacher, John N., S.J. 1991. *The making of a nation: Essays on nineteenth-century Filipino nationalism*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press. Thomas, Megan C. “Isabelo de Los Reyes and the Philippine Contemporaries of *La Solidaridad*.” *Philippine Studies* 54, no. 3 (2006): 398.

began the first anticolonial revolution in Asia.¹⁷ As a secret society, the location of the event that happened around August 22–26 remains obscure, but it is held to have happened in Balintawak, then a farming province on the outskirts of Manila.¹⁸ The scenography itself, taking place among nipa and bamboo farm dwellings was, according to an onlooker, at the farm house of “reportedly one of the richest men in Balintawak at the time who threw open his barn and butchered his cows, pigs, and chickens for the Katipunan.”¹⁹ This was an important moment, the historian Soledad Borromeo notes, as this countryside event taking place in a farmhouse is ingrained in the minds of Filipinos as the beginning of a revolution that is on a par with *el grito de Dolores* in Mexico or the Storming of the Bastille.²⁰

A Rome of Our Times

To understand how anti-colonialism and dwellings of nipa and bamboo come together, we can turn to *Noli me Tangere* (Touch me Not), perhaps one the most famous works of Philippine literature by Rizal, first published in Berlin in 1887. The *Noli* is narrated with a satirical lilt that lambasts the Spanish colonial administrators as gluttonous narcissists. The novel follows the tribulations of Ibarra, who (like Rizal) returns to the Philippines after studying in Europe for the previous seven years. On returning, Ibarra sees his country anew and the injustices perpetrated by corrupt officials in government and church appear as the antiquated

¹⁷ Alternately called the “Cry of Pugad Lawin” the controversy is set out by Soledad Masangkay Borromeo in *The Cry of Balintawak: A contrived controversy* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998), 24–5.

¹⁸ The actual location in which the occasion took place is taken up by Borromeo—today the area is engulfed by Quezon City in Metro Manila.

¹⁹ Borromeo, 33.

²⁰ Borromeo, 3.

relics of a feudal society. The novel has been compared to *Max Havelaar*, the 1860 novel that attacked the activities of the Dutch East Indies Company in Java.²¹ Rizal's provides a number of incidences in which we can unpack the role of the built environment for natives and colonial administrators, since the *Noli* conjures visions and iterations of nipa houses throughout. These serve not only to reify the importance of the dwelling as traditional, but to make it visible as a part of its history.

In the neighborhood of Malate, in Manila is described as a "thatched phoenix rising from its own ashes" where the residents' "thatched-roof houses, somewhat pyramid- or prism-shaped, built, like birds' nests, by the heads of families and hidden among the banana trees."²² By way of introduction, the dwelling is described as a part of its ecological environment, the plural "heads" of families indicating how they were traditionally built in equal parts by a couple (women weaving nipa palm into panels, men constructing the bamboo framework).²³ It is "hidden away" among the foliage from which it comes, and to which it will return once the life span of the panels expires in a biannual cycle of repair and upkeep. A few pages later in a description of the

²¹ Though the novels have been compared, their similarities lie mainly in terms of anti-colonial narrative and their geographical setting. "Multatuli," the pen name of Eduard Douwes Dekker, was a white Dutchman who spent time in the Dutch East Indies, while Rizal was Filipino. Whereas Multatuli criticized the workings of a capitalist extractive system (which was the case of the VOC) Rizal concentrated on the overlapping of church and state in creating an unjust society. *Max Havelaar* was published by Jakob van Lennep, who changed many of the names and disguised various aspects of the book, circulating it only to close friends. When the book came out it caused a sensation, shocking the Dutch nation in 1875. Rizal read it in 1888, and in a letter to his friend and publisher Blumentritt wrote that "Multatuli's book, which I shall send you as soon as I receive it, is extraordinarily interesting. Without doubt it is much superior to mine. But, as the author himself is Dutch, his attacks are not as violent as mine are." (The Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence, Vol. 2: 1890–1896. Translated by Encarnacion Alzona. Manila: Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission: 219). Peter Schreurs, "Multatuli, A Soul-Brother of Rizal," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 14, no. 3 (1986): 189–95; Multatuli, *Max Havelaar, of De Koffij-Verlengen Der Nederlandsche Handelsmaatschappij*, 3. druk (Amsterdam: K. H. Schadd, 1871).

²² Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere: Touch Me Not* [trans: Harold Augenbraum](New York: Penguin Books, 2006): 55.

²³ Donn V. Hart, *The Cebuan Filipino Dwelling in Caticugan: Its Construction and Cultural Aspects.*, Yale University. Southeast Asia Studies. Cultural Report Series (New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, 1959).

small Philippine town of San Diego, Rizal treats the urban context in an energetic exercise in dichotomies:

It was a Rome of our own times with the difference that in place of marble monuments and colosseums it had its monuments of *sawali* [woven bamboo panels] and its cockpit of nipa.²⁴ The curate was the Pope in the Vatican; the *alferez* of the Civil Guard, the King of Italy on the Quirinal: all, it must be understood, on a scale of nipa and bamboo. Here, as there, continual quarreling went on, since each wished to be the master and considered the other an intruder.²⁵

Outlandish comparisons are drawn up in a purposeful double act. It is both a takedown of corrupt Philippine officials in their comparison to the corruption of the papacy, while translated to the urban environment of nipa and sawali. Rizal, ever the translator, renders lightweight materials alongside marble and masonry while political corruption remains intact across each scenario. Architectural historians have described Rome as an environment scripted by the papacy into a form of sacred urbanism, where the Vatican was not just a physical city but followed pilgrims along the seven axes of the city wherever they went.²⁶ Yet Rizal conjures the same image “of our own times,” in which the translation of scales in spirituality and corruption are passed on to the fraudulent dealings among Spanish guards. Two scripts (urbanism and corruption) that deal with the problems of the administration that are held amid humble settings, and he prompts the reader to notice the key material differences between Rome and the tropics.

As for the corrupt Spanish officials and social climbers, or the “parasites, spongers, and freeloaders that God, in his infinite goodness, has so lovingly multiplied in Manila,” the figure of

²⁴ A traditional “cockpit” was a space for cockfighting.

²⁵ Rizal’s original text reads “era como la Roma contemporánea con la diferencia de que en vez de monumentos de mármol y coliseos, tenía monumentos de *sawali* y gallera de nipa [...] se entiende, todo en proporción con el sawali y la gallera de nipa” (73). I have used the 2014 Augenbraum translation in this case since it remains more faithful to the original Spanish. Rizal, *Noli* (Augenbraum 2014), 66.

²⁶ Moffett, Marian, Michael W. Fazio, and Lawrence Wodehouse. *A World History of Architecture*. Laurence King Publishing, 2003; Watkin, David. *A History of Western Architecture*. Laurence King Publishing, 2005, 134.

Doña Victorina de los Reyes de Espadaña (Doña Victorina) provides an example of how the colonial Spanish mind encountered native architecture.²⁷ Victorina, visiting a certain Captain Tiago, shows off all her verbosity,

criticizing the customs of the provincials, their nipa houses, their bamboo bridges; without forgetting to mention to the curate her intimacy with this and that high official and other persons of “quality” who were very fond of her.²⁸

While Victorina may criticize the places she finds herself, emphasizing the construction materials of nipa and bamboo, her lack of integrity means that her surroundings are never good enough. She remarks earlier in the chapter that “I wasn’t born to live here,” in an attempt to distinguish herself her surroundings. Rizal treats nipa and bamboo houses from three different angles, first from the perspective of environmental synthesis, “hidden among the banana trees,” second through a step-by-step compare and contrast with the Vatican, and third through the eyes of duplicitous colonial social climbers. While the last two are treated with an air of sardonic parody, the houses themselves are rendered with an air of indifference, the narrative is contingent on their presence, but not only are they left unscathed, they are highlighted as geographically particular and therefore important.

²⁷ From the introduction, “los parásutism moscas ó colados.” Rizal, *Noli*, 5. The image that I have taken the liberty to provide to give a sense of Rizal’s 1887 description, was taken by an administrator of the Bureau of Science two decades later. Diana Martinez has shown how the bureau condemned the use of tropical building materials for their alleged spreading of disease. Such light materials districts, she describes, were to be eventually replaced by heavy material districts of stone, masonry and eventually concrete. (Fig 1.06) Diana Jean Sandoval Martinez, *Concrete Colonialism: Architecture, Urbanism, Infrastructure, and the American Colonial Project in the Philippines*, 2017.

²⁸ “Se habló del viaje; doña Victorina lució su verbosidad criticando las costumbres de los provincianos, sus casas de nipa, los puentes de caña, sin olvidarse de decir al cura sus amistades con el segundo cabo, con el alcalde tal, con el oidor cual, con el intendente, etc.” (Rizal, *Noli*: 226 Spanish; 285 Eng. trans).

Saber popular in 1887

The second ilustrado to pay attention to nipa and bamboo as part of an archipelagic tradition that sat in the realm of international affairs was Isabelo de los Reyes. Reyes was a teenager when he began collecting notes on folk beliefs gleaned from all aspects of life in his home province of Ilocos. In the mid-1880s he had read in peninsular newspapers that a new science, *folklore*—which he translated as *saber popular*, popular knowledge—was a growing academic topic in the metropole. Reyes communicated with the editors of *El Folk-Lore Español* when he completed his own compendium of folk beliefs gathered from Ilocos, what we today might call an ethnography, publishing it in 1887. Among de los Reyes’ collection of folk remedies are a number of instances where the composite parts of a nipa and bamboo house were put to use in remedies and cures. For example, “in order not to get dizzy when you leave the house, pick up a piece of nipa from the door,” *cojer con disímulo nipa de la puerta de esta*, or wrap your temples with [rattan] string.²⁹ Another antidote recommends making incense with nipa from the eaves, *con nipa del alero*, to cure a crying man.³⁰ The historian Megan C. Thomas has contextualized how de los Reyes saw folklore as a form of data with which ethnology could study the remains of the past in the present. He presented folklore as a contemporary aspect of Philippine society in the 1880s, something that, as he wrote, was still preserved,

as beliefs are not changed like a suit of clothes, the apostles of Christianity had to take years and centuries to banish the remains of the Malayan Mythology, which is still

²⁹ Para no marearse, al bajar de casa cojer con disimulo nipa de la puerta de esta, o cenirse las sienes con hilo. [In order not to get dizzy, when you get out of the house, sneakily pick up a nipa from the door of the house, or wrap your temples with string.] Isabelo de los Reyes, *El Folk-Lore Filipino*. Manila: 1889, 153.

³⁰ Se cura al lloron dandole zahmerio con nipa del alero. [The crying man is cured by giving him incense with nipa from the eaves.] Isabelo de los Reyes, *El Folk-Lore Filipino*. Manila: 1889, 159. *Mediquillo*. Pega usted con el con aquel manga palito del nipa del *balisbisan* (alero). A de quedá umilde. [Mediquillo. You hit him with that stick sleeve of the balisbisan nipa (eaves). Let's be humble.] [In order to be humble] Pages 162–165 for context of full conversation between couple and medicine man. Isabelo de los Reyes, *El Folk-Lore Filipino*. Manila: 1889, 165.

preserved in all of its purity among the mountainfolk, and relics of it remain still in the spirit of the most devoted Catholic Filipinos.³¹

Folklore, like Rizal's depiction of the barrio, persisted in spite of Spanish colonialism, and existed in parallel with Christianity. Because the building itself was able to be deconstructed into medicinal parts, it became a highly functional piece of folk wisdom, but because of de los Reyes' ethnographic telling, also an aspect of scientific interest shared with an international audience. 1887 was a pivotal year for Rizal and de los Reyes. A 23-year-old de los Reyes won the silver medal for his *Folk-Lore Filipino* at the *Exposición General de Filipinas* in Madrid, an exposition designed as part of the effort to revive and reinvent a Spanish empire in decline, and a 25-year-old Rizal published *Noli me Tangere*, a direct attack on that empire in decline.

The Secret Society of “ñtcllg Kztzzstzzszllg Kztñpxllzll”

Penned in a small booklet of 44 pages fashioned from 11 sheets of paper folded together, the founding document of the Katipunan—the secret society of which Rizal, without his knowledge, was made honorary president—appeared in 1892, five years after the *Noli*'s first printing. (fig 1.07) The document declared that the *Noli* invited Filipinos “to observe the reality by our brave and beloved brother Mr. Rizal.”³² “We should not believe the honeyed words about being guided and tutored,” announced the opening of the document, which listed twenty-two abuses and forms of treachery committed by their colonial oppressors, “E...” (España, the country they do not call by name). Written in cipher, the document stated:

³¹ Megan C. Thomas, *Orientalists, Propagandists, and ãados: Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism*, 1 edition (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2012), 97.

³² “Casaysayan; Pinagcasundoan; Manga daquilang cautosan,” January 1892. Archivo General Militar de Madrid: Caja 5677, leg.1.37.

Ysñllzszyszy vzg bxfzt sz zrc llz ñtc llz zllg vzllgz Kzpxjczllg ñtc zy fxvllflwzjzy sz Qspzllñz zt wzlzl g kñllñkñjzjz zt kñkñjzlljñllg Pzvxvxlle kxllg dñ ñtcllg Kztzzstzszllg Kztñpxllzll.

Deciphered this became:

Ysinasaysay mag buhat sa arao na ito na ang manga Kapuloang ito ay humihiwalay sa Espania at walang kinikilala at kikilanling Pamumuno kung di itong Kataastaasang Katipunan.

Be it declared that from this day forward this archipelago is separated from Spain, and that no leadership is to be recognized other than this Supreme Katipunan.³³

With that, the Katipunan had declared themselves the first republic in Asia, one that would remake the archipelago, “these islands, which in time will be given a proper name” (other than that of a sixteenth-century Spanish prince) are understood to be part of the grammar of colonization from which they wish to break free. The words of the Katipunan’s “brave and beloved brother” Rizal would have struck a tone because of the recognition of a broader environment condition inflected by Spanish colonialism. The *Noli* hinged around the perspective of a returned protagonist who knew those conditions well but saw them in a new light that could be contrasted with the sights of Europe (such as the Vatican). The Katipunan were an underground insurgency that organized themselves through secret meetings with an elaborate code of conduct in the countryside barrios that surrounded Manila. Rizal’s descriptions (and indeed de los Reyes’ folklore) were some of the first descriptions to comprehend the reality of those places as contrasting with the decay and decline of Spanish rule, of friars that enriched themselves to the detriment of the people, the legacy of the *encomendero* system and

³³ The original text reads: “Ysñllzszyszy vzg bxfzt sz zrc llz ñtc llz zllg vzllgz Kzpxjczllg ñtc zy fxvllflwzjzy sz Qspzllñz zt wzlzl g kñllñkñjzjz zt kñkñjzlljñllg Pzvxvxlle kxllg dñ ñtcllg Kztzzstzszllg Kztñpxllzll.” Deciphered, this becomes: *Ysinasaysay mag buhat sa arao na ito na ang manga Kapuloang ito ay humihiwalay sa Espania at walang kinikilala at kikilanling Pamumuno kung di itong Kataastaasang Katipunan.* “Casaysayan; Pinagcasundoan; Manga daquilang cautosan,” January 1892.

government abuses, all of which lay in contrast to a physical environment with its own idiosyncrasies, historical modes, and materiality.³⁴

It would be tempting to confuse this organizing with nationalism, and the assumption would not be entirely incorrect. But an argument against calling it nationalism can be sensed in the Katipunan's predecessor, *La Liga Filipina*, a league being a network of minds, not a nation, that Rizal founded four years prior. For the league it was identity that was crucial for autonomy. The frame of nationhood, so often considered retrospectively as necessary for colonial emancipation, was far from their minds. The league emphasized being a subject unto oneself, and colonial indifference to such perceptions still frames much of the struggle for independence that was already being sought throughout the nineteenth century. Though he never intended for his two novels, the *Noli* and *El Filibusterismo*, to incite a revolution, the Spanish administrators had identified Rizal by proxy as one of the key instigators. After his exile in Dapitan, he was convicted of sedition, conspiracy and rebellion. Though he had little direct contact with Katipuneros at this stage, his implication was entirely through his writings. Only four months after the revolution began with the Cry of Balintawak, Rizal was executed by firing squad in Manila on December 30, 1896, solidifying his reputation as a martyr, while de los Reyes, after a brief imprisonment for his role in the revolution, went on to become a statesman.

In this unusual matrix between anti-colonial literature, revolutionary insurrectionists and the nostalgic pastoral-nationalism of Amorsolo, nipa palm rendered a service through the architecture of "prism-shaped" thatched houses. For mid-century painters like Amorsolo, the trope of nationalism to which the nipa and bamboo house was attached came not through a nation prescribed from above (in its Spanish or American guises), but relied on the anti-colonial

³⁴ Thomas, *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Ilustrados*, 183–185.

framework set out through Rizal and de los Reyes' texts, where an alternative depiction of self-image was conceived. The specificity of resistance movements like that of the Katipunan was to be thinking outside of a not-yet-imagined nation, where cultural conditions like nipa and bamboo houses identified by Rizal and de los Reyes, long viewed as primitive, could be re-asserted as part of an emerging self-identity. Rather than view this nineteenth-century revolutionary movement through the lens of twentieth-century post-colonialism, their internationalism was more complex than the kind of nation-based internationalism that would come because it relied on tropes, like the nipa and bamboo dwelling, that existed outside of imposed colonial narratives.

This first encounter illustrates how the “nipa hut” was recognized by Rizal and de los Reyes to fulfill an important function, for the former as a part of a native environment and for the latter as a component of tradition and folklore, while Amorsolo's painting confirmed the dwelling's ascent as a recognizable symbol of popular pastoralism. Nipa and bamboo construction is rendered as environmental artifice, colonial antithesis, or the passage of tradition, however in none of these cases is a description of the construction practice rendered in full. A specifically gendered construction process, the woven panels and roof shingles are traditionally fabricated by women, while men were responsible for the bamboo framework and assembly.³⁵ Was this aspect overlooked, ignored or deemed unimportant? Or was the nipa hut so ubiquitous that stages of its construction were deemed of little importance in comparison to its use for narrative and allegory? The encounter reveals that even while a recognition for the form was important to anti- or counter-colonial writing, it was on certain terms that precluded construction itself—Rizal's “nipa phoenix” was simply there, it was never built nor renewed—the allegory

³⁵ Calyd Cerio, “Women Behind the Thatch: An Analysis of Nipa (*Nypa Fruticans*) Thatch Making Community in Lagonoy, Camarines Sur, Philippines,” *International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Science*, accessed January 14, 2021.

only functioned with a fixed object. The next encounter takes a different approach, considering the nipa dwelling purely from the perspective of the tectonics of a plant-based material, raising a different set of issues than those raised by the ilustrados of this encounter.

Bridge

Step 1: Harvest. This begins after the rainy season, from December and continues through the year in 2–3-month intervals until the next rainy season (from July). Using a sharp bolo (similar to a machete) all branches are cut close to the ground, except one bud and a few young branches, which will take around three months to grow to full length. They reproduce either by large, floating seeds or by rhizome through branching and creeping. (fig 1.08)

Step 2: Soak fresh-cut palm leaves in seawater for a day, the salt preserves the cellulose in the leaves to make the shingles last longer, for 4-6 years, as opposed to 2-3 years.

Step 3: Wrap the fronds around the bamboo and pinch together, sewing them in place using rattan fiber with a sharp end to pierce through the leaf.

Step 4: Leave the shingles to dry in direct sunlight for three days, turning them at intervals. This hardens and flattens them in place.

Step 5: Shingles are tied to the roof framework with rattan. The process is often associated with a particular time of year, before the rainy season begins, and is therefore part of important seasonal repair work laden with significance. In the Visayas it is common, prior to attaching the first shingle, to put a kapia, or river snail shell, underneath it. Such shells are very hard to pry from rocks in a river, and it is considered a good omen. The shingles are attached in layers from bottom to top.

II

Seeds that Float

A photograph of three generations captured in 1940 at Biliran Island in the Visayas introduces the second encounter of this chapter, beginning with the construction process that was overlooked in the first. (fig 1.09) It was taken by David Fairchild, a botanist working on a collecting mission around island Southeast Asia. Interested in “economic plants,” those plants useful in food or in enhancing the environment, Fairchild introduced a number of crops to the US market including soybeans, pistachios and certain varieties of wheat. Indeed, he was one of the leading figures in the mid-century transformation from US agriculture to agribusiness that would later be globally exported.³⁶ Perhaps this is why, owing to his interest in the manipulation of plants, Fairchild chose to photograph this particular process of house construction. The photograph also reveals more than the photographer thought he was capturing, in the twisting, folding and drying of the fronds of nipa palm was a gendered construction process passed on between generations.

Her legs swing from the beam, a hand steadies the baby to her left, as she casts an eye toward the man with a camera: two women sit on the floor, focused on their work, two girls sit nearby watching. The woman in the foreground prepares rattan ties, while the woman in middle distance (her daughter?) lashes the nipa together, her right hand pulling the rattan tight as the shutter clicked. In the background, fronds of nipa palm lie bundled together, while the finished shingles sit on the ground in front of them, waiting to be taken away to be sold at the market. A

³⁶ Nick Cullather, “Miracles of Modernization: The Green Revolution and the Apotheosis of Technology,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 2 (April 1, 2004); Diana Martinez, “From Rice Research to Coconut Capital,” *Aggregate: Systems and the South*, 2021 (unpublished draft).

roof of 80 square feet would require around 300 of these shingles and depending on how thickly they are stacked, can last up to ten years.

Within the image, two systems can be read simultaneously: building technology knowledge passed between generations; plant science recorded from a distance. Nipa palm is trapped in the matrix of architecture as verb and noun. The construction of roof shingles lies in stark contrast to the depictions of nipa and bamboo described in the previous section, here is the act of making and more specifically, a photographic encounter between Fairchild, a botanist, and his subjects, women fabricating parts of a house for sale at the market. What is encapsulated in the image is the perception of a construction process from a distance. Fairchild had an interest in the uses of plants in tropical places, transplanting many specimens from his travels to the Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden in Miami.³⁷ Fairchild's encounter (revealed more emphatically in the shadow of his pith helmet in a photograph of nipa mats drying on the seashore, fig 1.10) introduces the second part of this chapter, which considers an alternative mode of viewership of nipa palm through the field of botany.

The architectural arts of botany

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the relationship between architecture and the botanical sciences was largely relegated to how buildings could store plant specimens, whether sustaining living plants outside of their natural climate or preserving those that were already inert. European colonial outposts had by then well-established botanical gardens: in the Malacca

³⁷ The Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden was established in 1936 by Robert H. Montgomery, a businessman who dedicated the garden to his friend David Fairchild, who brought and planted samples there. A rich historiographic tradition around Fairchild's work as a botanist in the early decades of the twentieth century, for discussions of his work in the context of American empire-building, see: Robert R. Alvarez, "The March of Empire: Mangos, Avocados, and the Politics of Transfer," *Gastronomica* 7, no. 3 (2007): 28–33; Mike Maunder, "Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden," *SiteLINES: A Journal of Place* 2, no. 1 (2006), 15–16.

Straits, the Dutch East Indies government established gardens in 1817 at Buitenzorg (Bogor), and a “Botanical and Experimental Garden” existed in Singapore since 1822, both under the urging of Stamford Raffles. Back in the metropole, Kew Gardens was made an official national botanical garden by 1840 due to the efforts of the head of the Royal Horticultural Society, Lord Cavendish (employer of Joseph Paxton, who would design the Crystal Palace later that decade). Curiosity and economy were tightly interwoven at these gardens as each raced to propagate cultivars of rubber, rice, tea and other varieties that might thrive outside of their native habitats in other colonial possessions, such as Assam tea (originally from China) being grown on plantations in the Malay peninsula.³⁸

Success in propagation efforts was in no small part due to novel architectural formats for containing fragile tropical plant specimens. The voluminous Palm House at Kew (based on Paxton’s “great stove” at Chatsworth), was an ingenious way of forcing plants to stay alive during a frigid European winter. Here, architecture was both a creative tool for preservation and protection, but also for storage and cataloguing that forced specimens into regimes of category. From shelving systems to modes of viewership, the homogeneity of an analytically distanced West was reiterated in its architectural program. Zeynep Çelik Alexander takes the example of the herbariums at Kew, which followed the Linnaean system of taxonomy, to describe “homogenous empiricism,” the compounding of difference as palimpsest of the colonial endeavor.³⁹ While homogenous empiricism was reified through the design of shelves, cabinets

³⁸ Many experiments in cultivating hybrids were undertaken at Kew Gardens. See for instance: Christophe Bonneuil, “The Manufacture of Species: Kew Gardens, the Empire and the Standardisation of Taxonomic Practices in Late 19th Century Botany,” in *Instruments, Travel and Science. Itineraries of Precision from the 17th to the 20th Century*, ed. C. Licoppe et O. Sibum M.-N. Bourguet (Routledge, 2002), 189–215.

³⁹ Zeynep Çelik Alexander: *Architectures of Homogenous Empiricism*. Lecture at UCLA, April 2017.

and storage systems, a variety of plant species nevertheless evaded it either through the magnitude of their dimensions, their shrinking in the drying process, or their susceptibility to being eaten by other inhabitants of herbaria.⁴⁰ (fig 1.11) In the field too, collecting specimens was affected by the weight and dimensions and portability of the specimen in question. Despite being one of the most useful plants of the tropical forest, palms remain one of the least studied species in the tropical world due to their size and weight. In some cases, to obtain samples of fruit or flowers it would be necessary to fell a tree.⁴¹ In order to analyze how plants such as palm were utilized then, a certain degree of presence in the field was necessary. “Ethnobotany,” a term that arose in the early twentieth century when extended ethnographic research was combined with botanical collecting, focused on human uses of plants, primarily in terms of their medicinal properties. The definition of ethnobotany does not quite fit for describing how humans use plants as architectural materials, nor can it account for the geopolitics of architectural materiality. An ethnobotanical appreciation of palm and bamboo would reveal complex tectonic properties that allow stiff frame structures and woven insulation panels that last between four and ten years before requiring replacement.⁴² Similarly, the knowledge of harvesting, weaving and thatching

⁴⁰ These storage systems, Çelik Alexander notes, were similarly bound to a “moral regime tied to ways of governing.” *Architectures of Homogenous Empiricism*, 2017. Kew Gardens’ circulation of economic botany objects and knowledge worldwide in the 19th century had a huge impact on the development of the field. See “Seeds of Industry and Empire” for an introduction to the topic: Nesbitt M & C Cornish, ‘Seeds of industry and empire: economic botany collections between nature and culture’ *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 29 (2016), 53-70; see also Susan Carter’s description of the problems of preservation in “Problems of Distinction among Succulent Euphorbia Species from Eastern Tropical Africa,” *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* 94, no. 1–2 (1987), 67–78.

⁴¹ For difficulties in collecting and cataloguing palm samples (and the ubiquity of their uses in tropical places), see: Michael J. Balick, “Ethnobotany of Palms in the Neotropics,” *Advances in Economic Botany* 1 (1984), 9–23. One could further the notion of homogenous empiricism through the geographical distribution of the flora of different biomes. The Linnaean system of taxonomy developed in tune with specimens in Europe whose seeds, leaves and fruits could comfortably fit onto a sheet of paper and be pressed into sample catalogues and shelves. Casid, Jill H. *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization*. U of Minnesota Press, 2005.

⁴² See for example: Mohd Azizi Solehin Azhar et al., “Nypa Fruticosa Rachis as Building Envelope Heat Insulator,” in *Sensor & Instrumentation System*, ed. Elmy Johana Mohamad, Anita Ahmad, and Ruzairi Abdul Rahim, vol. 14

that was passed on through generations would be difficult to tabulate alongside botanical specimens. To understand how living materials were transformed into architecture would therefore require time for observation more than simply storage facilities to contain specimens. Palm was not an obvious plant to understand through the Linnaean system because of its size, scale, and uses. The two figures that follow illustrate alternative sides to this predicament, the first in the duration of his observations, and the second in establishing a herbarium in the tropics.

An American Pacific

The American *mission civilisatrice* in the Pacific was markedly different from other maritime empires by the late nineteenth-century. Indeed, US politicians and historians sought to actively distance themselves from the European colonial approach, instead taking notions of *noblesse oblige* and even Manifest Destiny—settling an ever-expanding American West—across the Pacific as part of the self-conscious framework of American empire.⁴³ Two botanist-explorers fit into this historical moment to help illustrate how the imperial Pacific was interpreted as a space for collection and discovery. Between 1890 and 1920, William Edwin Safford and Elmer Drew Merrill considered plant specimens and the dwelling types in which they were employed in

(UTHM: Penerbit UTHM, 2020), 110–21. And: Hossain, Md Farid, and Md Anwarul Islam. “Utilization of Mangrove Forest Plant: Nipa Palm (*Nypa Fruticans* Wurm.)” *American Journal of Agriculture and Forestry* 3, no. 4 (July 17, 2015), 156–160.

⁴³ Two key examples that sit within this framework are the writings of Theodore Roosevelt and Frederick Jackson Turner, whose “Frontier Thesis” described westward expansion as the inevitable march of US history. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, H. Holt and Company, 1920); Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West* (G. P. Putnam’s sons, 1889). Similarly, Greg Bankoff describes the American tropicality discourse as lying within a “nationalist mission [with a] sense of ‘exceptionalism’ that motivated its agents and protagonists.” Bankoff, Greg. “First Impressions:” *The Journal of Pacific History* 44 (December 1, 2009): 266; Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt’s Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (University of California Press, 2004).

two of the United States' new tropical territories, Guam and the Philippines.⁴⁴ These botanists were primarily interested in “economic plants,” specimens from which food, fiber, oil, starch and sugar could be gleaned and commodified as exports. Safford wrote *The Useful Plants of the Island of Guam* during his first year serving as Assistant Governor to Guam in 1899. He would go on to be an economic botanist with the US Department of Agriculture, however these early impressions and the large survey that *The Useful Plants* provides are significant for their ethnobotanical insights.⁴⁵ Merrill, who spent twenty-two years in the Philippines from 1902 in his post as botanist at the Bureau of Science, wrote and travelled extensively and established the National Herbarium in Manila, which accumulated over a quarter of a million specimens in its first two decades, many of them collected by Merrill on field trips. Safford and Merrill collected and described the uses of plant specimens in order to draw conclusions from a distance, “to pack the world into words,” across an analytically distant lab and field.⁴⁶

The observer

Safford was thirty-nine when he found himself stationed in the new US territory of Guam in 1899, and *The Useful Plants of the Island of Guam* (1905) was one of the results of his time spent on the island. Prior to his posting as governor's aide in Guam, Safford had spent time in

⁴⁴ In December 1898 Spain relinquished the remaining possessions of its former empire to the United States. The Spanish-American war of that year saw, with Spain's eventual loss, Cuba, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines being transferred to the US with a sale price of \$20 million under the Treaty of Paris.

⁴⁵ Safford wrote two works on language and plants while stationed in Guam: *The Chamorro Language of Guam: A Grammar of the Idiom Spoken by the Inhabitants of the Marianne, or Ladrones, Islands* (1909, originally published in the *American Anthropologist* (1903-1905)) and *The Useful Plants of the Island of Guam; With an Introductory Account of the Physical Features and Natural History of the Island, of the Character and History of its People and of their Agriculture* (1905).

⁴⁶ Latour, Bruno. *Pandora's hope: essays on the reality of science studies*. Harvard university press, 1999, 24–79.

South America as commissioner for Bolivia and Peru in the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, therefore his experience in the transport and display of foreign cultures to the US public help contextualize his approach in Guam. Supported by the US National Herbarium, *The Useful Plants* was a sprawling five-hundred-page work that aimed to “identify many of the plants entering into their economy” as well as those plants’ comparison with “the uses to which they are applied in various parts of the world.”⁴⁷ Safford spent time visiting locals, learned to speak Chamorro, and collected notes on customs of the island.

Throughout the study, house structures appear alongside the species of plant with which they are associated, and nipa palm appears on five separate occasions. (fig 1.12) An important component of mangrove vegetation, nipa thrives in coastal, estuarine habitats where saltwater meets freshwater. Safford notes how “thickets of *nypa fruticans*, a stemless palm with great pinnate leaves” appear near the mouths of rivers that “furnish the natives with excellent material for thatching their houses.”⁴⁸ Some pages later he goes into more detail on the physical appearance of the “well-constructed” houses themselves,

They are raised from the ground on substantial, durable posts [...] Some of them are surrounded by balconies, enclosed by shutters or by windows with translucent *placuna* shells for panes. The roofs are either of thatch or tile, the best thatch being that made of the leaflets of the nipa palm.⁴⁹

In addition to its use in roof shingles, nipa can be woven into mats or rope, its fruits eaten as dessert, while the sap is tapped into *tuba*, a palm wine made from the sap of fermented nipa, while the tiled translucent *placuna placenta* windowpanes are made from a thin layer of oyster

⁴⁷ Safford, *The Useful Plants of the Island of Guam*, 9.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 53.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 123.

shells (also called *capiz*). Under “Houses of the Aborigines,” a tectonic analysis of the floors and roofs reveal them to be “excellent dwellings,” which are “square in shape, with the side walls and the floor formed of split bamboos flattened and interlaced and the roof thatched with coconut leaves.”⁵⁰ Safford’s descriptions foreground the texture of materials, which are provided in detail, but fall short of an architectural analysis that might consider footprint or building envelope.

Later in *The Useful Plants*, a passage enumerates the process of thatching in detail, where the characteristics of each plant component contribute to the construction itself:

For thatching, the leaflets are stripped from the rachis and formed into a thick fringe (*tagon*) on a reed. After having been thoroughly dried the thatch is secured to the framework of the roof by lashings of pandanus leaves split up the middle and deprived of their stiff keel. Two men work at a time on each reed, beginning at the eaves and working toward the ridge, which is covered with a sort of braided matting secured in place by pins passing under the ridgepole and projecting on each side. The nipa is far superior to and more durable than coconut thatch and is used for the better houses of the island.⁵¹

The stiff keel of pandanus leaves or the durability of nipa are central to Safford’s descriptive passage, which also scrutinizes the labour involved in construction as much as the way plants are involved. Plant structures themselves and their manipulation are part of architectural construction, which, for Safford is seen in the process of preparation. Indeed, the ceremonial aspects of the construction process take on increasing importance as the passage continues,

Preparations are made for thatching very much as for a cornhusking with us. The housewife begins saving up *dulces* [sweets] and other good things months beforehand. The nipa leaves are collected, made into fringe, and allowed to dry. Pandanus leaves are collected and cured and stripped of their spiny-keeled midrib. When all is ready, relatives and neighbors are invited to assist, a pig or a bullock is killed, and the work goes on amid feasting, tuba drinking, and laughter, with occasional pauses during which Areca nuts, fresh betel leaves, and lime are passed around on a tray, and the host dispenses cigars,

⁵⁰ Ibid, 97.

⁵¹ Ibid, 334.

made by the ladies of his family, of tobacco leaves in the form of a cylindrical bundle kept together by a wrapping of pineapple fiber or thread.⁵²

What can be discerned from this series of extracts is that Safford spent a considerable amount of time following each construction phase, and most likely saw it happening around him while living on Guam since nipa and bamboo dwellings were still the most prevalent at this time (in comparison to the masonry dwellings erected by the Spanish prior to US arrival).⁵³ Indeed, as he writes in the introduction, perhaps Safford was involved in such ceremonies “while sitting in native huts,” and “taking notes on the languages and customs of the natives [and the] woods used in constructing their houses and canoes.”⁵⁴ Safford’s approach has been described as personable, Greg Bankoff writes that it was “all about people in a landscape,” that is “as much ethnography as it is botany and zoology.”⁵⁵ This approach to botanical work gave him access to the materials used for thatching, and indeed drinking tuba. It was well-known that Safford was involved with the community in Guam, and he wrote the first grammar of Chamorro, which was published in instalments between 1903–1905 in *American Anthropologist*.⁵⁶

The short time that Safford spent on Guam ended in 1902 when he took up the post of Economic Botanist at the United States Department of Agriculture at its headquarters in

⁵² Ibid, 335.

⁵³ Safford lived in the second story of a stone and masonry building housing the public treasury, the former quarters of José Rodríguez Sixto in Hagåtña, the main town of the island.

⁵⁴ The full citation reads: “While sitting in native huts and while wading upon coral reefs, traversing forests and climbing mountains, I interested myself in taking notes on the languages and customs of the natives, their arts, medicines, food materials and the manner of preparing them, and the origin of their dyes, paints, fibers for fishing nets and lines, materials for mat making and thatching, woods used in constructing their houses and canoes, and gums and resins used in calking.” Safford, *Useful Plants*, 9.

⁵⁵ Greg Bankoff, “First Impressions” *The Journal of Pacific History* 44 (December 1, 2009), 275.

⁵⁶ Safford, William Edwin. “The Chamorro Language of Guam.” *American Anthropologist* 5, no. 2 (1903), 289–311. See also Bankoff, “with whom he ate, slept, socialised and even made music,” 270.

Washington DC, where he remained for the rest of his life. The work that followed took on a similar ethnobotanical approach to that developed in Guam, with his later work at the USDA focusing on native American uses of medicinal plants, such as nightshades like datura.

Ethnobotany, an immersive approach to understanding how plants are used by humans, was not the direction that biology in the American Pacific would take, where our next figure in the Philippines is more instructive.

The collector

The United States in the Philippines was altogether of a different nature to the role the US administration played in the 541 square miles of Guam. In contrast, the Philippines was a giant archipelago of 7,000 islands where over two-hundred languages were spoken at the turn of the century. Faced with the local insurgency movement of the Katipunan, the US approach to administration in the early years of their imperial project was marked by warfare and bureaucracy.⁵⁷ Assigned to a post at the Bureau of Science in 1902, Elmer Drew Merrill was one of the first botanists to attempt to fully catalogue the flora of the Philippines. When he returned to the US in 1923, he had amassed over 250,000 specimens, all catalogued in the National Herbarium in Manila that he established under the auspices of the USDA which he had left in 1902, the same year that Safford took up a post there in the Bureau of Plant Industry.⁵⁸ The US administration in the Philippines never established botanical gardens, turning their attention

⁵⁷ The Katipunan launched their rebellion in 1896 with the declaration of the First Philippine Republic, the first republic in Southeast Asia, and initially welcomed the US victory over Spain. This did not last however, and animosity between the homegrown insurgency and new colonizers culminated in the Philippine-American War, lasting from 1899 until 1902.

⁵⁸ Merrill arrived in the Philippines as part of the Taft commission for the post of botanist and a joint position with the Department of Forestry. Ida Hay, "E. D. Merrill, From Maine to Manila," *Arnoldia* 58, no. 1 (1998), 14.

instead to research on cash-crops for export. In addition to establishing a National Herbarium at Luneta Park and becoming Director of the Bureau of Science, Merrill was appointed Professor of Botany at the new, US established, University of the Philippines in nearby Quezon City.

Merrill would become a well-known figure in the history of economic botany when he returned to the US for a position at the New York Botanical Garden, but it was his career in the Philippines where he perfected the art of collecting. While Safford's approach tended to be more expansive and comprehensive—taking in the smells and sounds and sights around him, and by dint also the construction of buildings—Merrill's was marked by specificity. With meticulous attention to detail, his catalogues are lists of the many names associated with plants (in Latin, Filipino, English, among assorted other local names) paying attention to translations and etymological context. Indeed, in his introduction to *A Flora of Manila* (1912), Merrill articulates that “the principle object of a flora is [...] to determine the names of the various kinds of plants” however, this is part of the challenge of botanical study, for “the range, abundance, and relationships of the different species, and botanical usage has established the values of numerous technical names used in describing plants.”⁵⁹ Encyclopedic documentation was intended to stick to Merrill's empiricism, and that meant describing both the physical features and lexical distinguishing of plants as closely as possible: naming begets naming.

Merrill and his team at the Herbarium extended the list of known species to 8,120 species of flowering plants, 1000 species of ferns and 3000 species of cryptogams. Where did tabulation take Merrill? With this awareness, it was attention to the details of landscape that were prescient. Rather than offer descriptions of how plants appeared in architectural form (entries for *nypa fruticans* in both *The Flora of Manila* and *Philippine Flowering Plants* are large, but the

⁵⁹ Merrill, Elmer Drew. *A Flora of Manila*. Manila, Bureau of Printing, 1912, 5–9.

descriptions, unlike Safford's, do not blur boundaries of use), with Merrill we are introduced to observation of sweeping landscape effects. In 1917, Merrill visited Ambon in the Maluku Islands on a pilgrimage to explore plants originally identified by the seventeenth-century Dutch botanist Georg Eberhard Rumphius. What he noticed in Ambon was not only the disappearance of many species, but the rampant destruction of diverse plants due to monocropping.⁶⁰ The "practical extermination" of this vegetation, he wrote, "is a subject that deserves more consideration than it has received."

Unquestionably, many species of plants have been exterminated in various parts of the Malayan region within the past century as the population has increased. The areas devoted to agriculture are rapidly being enlarged in many parts of this vast region, and the consequent destruction of primeval forests over large areas is a strong argument in favor of a vigorous and intensive botanical exploration of Malaya, in order that representatives of certain elements of the flora shall be secured while they are still available or at least easily accessible.⁶¹

The logic of quantification helped Merrill determine how tropical landscapes were rapidly diversifying (though the observation is met not with a proposal for protection, but more "vigorous and intensive" exploration). The observations reappear four years later on an expedition to Borneo, where Merrill ascertained that "We are witnessing in our own generation the rapid extermination of some of the noblest types of tropical vegetation."⁶² Confronted with agricultural landscapes then, we can be sure that Merrill saw loss.

⁶⁰ Ambon was one of the Maluku Spice Islands, primarily planting clove, mace and nutmeg.

⁶¹ Elmer Drew Merrill, "An Interpretation of Rumphius's Herbarium Amboinense." Bureau of Science, Manila. 1917, 25–26.

⁶² Elmer Drew Merrill, "A bibliographic enumeration of Bornean plants" *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1921) Special number: 27-28. Cf. Ida Hay, 18.

Academic imperialism

The difference between Safford and Merrill is more than a discussion of time spent or qualitative versus quantitative (Safford's three-year spell in Guam is hardly a scratch on Merrill's two decades in the Philippines), yet these two botanists, when confronted by the same plants in similar contexts, produced different interpretive responses. When he encountered bamboo and palm houses Safford found culture and context, a lengthy construction process that involved many people with specific stages. Merrill, on the other hand, created tabulation, category and type. Safford could be historicized among early ethnobotanists who relied both on botanical knowledge and an ethnographic approach, studying the way that human cultures interact with the plant world. Merrill's work, on the other hand, is closer to the regimes of category that—though he was well aware of the detrimental effects of monocropping—resemble the beginnings of scientific manipulation of plant species that we were introduced through with Fairchild and the agribusinesses that would transform how humans use landscapes.

Botany in the early twentieth century was an art of reconciling with duration, the lifespan of living things meaning that botanists developed a range of tools to scientifically manage time. The commonality to the examples described of Fairchild, Safford and Merrill was their relationship to how they dealt with the aspect of duration and how it affected each of their encounter. For Fairchild's brief visits, the camera; for Safford, lengthy field visits and a notebook; for Merrill, the volume of samples recorded and rerecorded and tabulated over time. Up until this point I shared the encounters of the ilustrados and the botanists, but a final encounter, perhaps the briefest of all, extended itself across decades and as far as architecture was concerned, was taken up in a consequential way.

III

Nature's Child

The language and observational tools available to Safford and Merrill, and the imperial circuits through which they passed help to situate the third and final encounter between the Chicago architect William Le Baron Jenney and the nipa and bamboo houses that he saw in 1850, and who would wait until 1883 until he described his observations in lectures and articles in *Inland Architect*. Retold by his business partner William Mundie years later, the following anecdote tells of how Jenney came upon the idea of skeleton construction in tall buildings through his observations of nipa and bamboo construction while visiting Manila in 1850. Jenney maintained that skeleton construction was “nature’s child” and not his sole invention,

Progressive through the ages, it was one of evolution’s principles. His first impressions of it were gleaned from the huts and structures of the natives in Manila, where, as a youth he spent three months, stopping off there while on a voyage in one of his father’s whaling ships of the Jenney and Gibbs line [...]

There the native selected a grove of bamboo trees where the growing plant was suitable, or so spaced as to admit cutting out and sizing the cuts, leaving the large deep-rooted trees as columns for isolated piers, and lighter cuts for lateral or diagonal braces, floor supports, and partitions, all banded together with thongs at the intersections. The smaller and more pliable limbs or branches were used as thatch, with packed mud or clay for the floors and roof covering. During the prevalence of typhoons and earthquakes these buildings have survived with slight damage while larger buildings are destroyed.

While the natives of the Philippine Islands were not disturbed or concerned about stresses, as such, because of wind, earthquake or hurricanes, or the speed of construction of their huts; neither were they concerned about maximum floor space or daylight. Nevertheless, they unconsciously developed a system which gave to the alert young engineer and architect, the principles which had their part in the most extraordinary revolution in the construction of buildings ever recorded in history.⁶³

⁶³ In William Mundie’s original text, the sentence closes with “in all parts of the world,” however in Elmer C. Jensen’s edits (the man who submitted the drafts to the Ryerson-Burnham Archives in 1952), a line crosses out this sentence, and replaces it with “ever recorded in history.” For Jensen, time was more important than place. William Mundie, *Skeleton Construction, its Origin and Development Applied to Architecture*, (10). Unpublished manuscript in the Chicago Microfilm Project (Roll 23, Jenney Collection) of the Ryerson-Burnham Library at the Art Institute

According to his biographer, Jenney was an “alert young engineer and architect” who was unusual among other nineteenth-century architects in that he came “into direct contact with the architecture of primitive societies.”⁶⁴ These “youthful impressions” from overseas would wait until three decades later, when Jenney retrieved them for lectures and articles, recycled among then-fashionable theories of habitation from Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, Gottfried Semper and Theodore Roosevelt.⁶⁵ Jenney’s journey as a seventeen-year-old bore intellectual fruits in 1883, once he was an established architect in his fifties.

It would appear that his efforts to historicize himself during his life paid off: his biographer, Theodore Turak, wrote in 1966 that Jenney “observed the most primitive of men” in an environment “identical with raw nature evolving architectural forms that were perfectly fitted to physical needs.”⁶⁶ Few American architects made assertions on their travel impressions in the way that Jenney managed to, performing a Pacific alchemy in which bamboo and palm fronds were transformed into the steel frames and concrete of tall buildings in Chicago. “Raw nature,” however, was a flexible category with which Jenney operated, the lengthy preparation and manipulation of these plant materials were simply not on view for him. Jenney first spoke on the subject in his 1883 lectures at the University of Chicago, fifteen years before Spain relinquished

of Chicago. Archival Image & Media Collection - Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives. 1932. cf. Turak, Theodore. *William Le Baron Jenney: A Pioneer of Modern Architecture*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1986, 20.

⁶⁴ Turak, Theodore. “The École Centrale and Modern Architecture: The Education of William Le Baron Jenney.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 29, no. 1 (1970), 41.

⁶⁵ “The Inland Architect reveals how heavily Chicago architects were indebted to Viollet-le-Duc’s comparative approach [...] [which] provided a method of categorizing building by region and race rather than by the development of styles, which might allow American architecture to be accommodated into architectural history on an equal footing.” Merwood, Joanna-Salisbury. “Western Architecture: Regionalism and Race in the Inland Architect.” In: Waldheim, C and Rüedi Ray, K, *Chicago Architecture: Histories, Revisions, Alternatives*. University of Chicago Press, 2005, 5.

⁶⁶ Turak, Theodore. *William Le Baron Jenney: A Pioneer of Modern Architecture*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: 1986, 20.

its territories to the US under the Treaty of Paris. Reprinted as a series with illustrations in *Inland Architect*, the texts feature Jenney's own illustrations juxtaposed with those of Viollet-le-Duc's.⁶⁷ (figs 1.14, 1.15) Alongside "Le Chalet des Aryas," we see Jenney's own sketch of a nipa and bamboo house, and his following text.

Let us examine the Malay hut in the Philippine and neighboring islands, situated within the tropics, in the region of earthquakes and those fearful gales known as typhoons [...] the rains are at periods severe, and tidal waves roll over the low shorelines. Reptiles and insects and wild animals are numerous. These create a requirement that the floor of the house shall be well up above the ground.

As the Malay does not read nor write, very little light is required.
As the cooking is done out of doors, there is no chimney to the house.
The available materials are tree trunks for posts and timbers.
Bamboo, which grows in great quantities and of large size, like gigantic fishpoles, for the sides and floors as well as much of the framework.
The leaves of the palm for the thatch, and the rattan, a long and very tough vine of the palm family, very useful to tie the work together.

The Malay is naturally lazy. He had rather lie on his back in the shade and smoke his cigar and study out the easiest way to build his house, than to run the risk of doing an unnecessary stroke work. Moreover, his ancestors, for no one knows how long, have been building in the same way, so that he has only to look about him to find the problem well worked out.

Aside from the fact that almost all of Jenney's assumptions—whether on literacy, laziness or culinary habits—are fabricated, when Jenney saw plants, he ultimately saw structure. The botanists' regimes of culture (Safford) or category (Merrill), are scrambled among ethnocentrism heavily borrowed from Viollet-le-Duc, in which plants were background matter, the "natural predisposition of the environment," and construction methods were "handed down from age to age," or in Jenney's words "for no one knows how long."⁶⁸ Charles Davis has

⁶⁷ Viollet-le-Duc, "Le Chalet des Aryas," 1875. *Histoire de l'habitation humaine* (1876), 383.

⁶⁸ Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, quoted in William Le Baron Jenney, "Architecture." Western Association of Architects (U.S.), *The Inland Architect and Builder* (Chicago: Inland Pub. Co., 1883), 49.

discussed how Viollet-le-Duc's innovation was to introduce racial typologies alongside vernacular construction "to interpret race as style in the context of his architecture theory" partly out of convenience—the "Malay hut" was the Malay person, the "Aryan hut," the Aryan person. This allowed Viollet-le-Duc to establish a "discursive interpretation of organic architecture that emulated the generative principles of scientific models of racial differences in the nineteenth century."⁶⁹ Yet, crucially for Jenney, who emulated and indeed aspired to Viollet-le-Duc's approach, was that he managed to carry out the same treatment while simultaneously avoiding any discussion of actual plant properties or construction techniques that allowed the structure to come into being. If, for Jenney as with Viollet-le-Duc, the history of architecture was the history of civilization, then Jenney's history also involved time-travel as distance traveled.⁷⁰ This is what separates Jenney from his influences.

The distance covered on his father's whaling ships across the Pacific Ocean in 1850 represented chronology: for Jenney, nautical miles traveled represented so many years back in time. It is with some irony that, just as he relied on the ship for his time-travel, Jenney was subject to his own time-warp by waiting thirty years before making anything of his observations. Jenney is thus not as simple as he is typically made out to be. More than recycling racial stereotypes about "the Malay" (which do nothing more than reveal Jenney to be subject to typical prejudices of his time), Jenney crossed an ocean to go back in time, which was something

⁶⁹ Charles L Davis, *Building Character: The Racial Politics of Modern Architectural Style*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019, 67.

⁷⁰ Merwood, Joanna-Salisbury. "Western Architecture: Regionalism and Race in the *Inland Architect*." In: Waldheim, C and Rüedi Ray, K, *Chicago Architecture: Histories, Revisions, Alternatives*. University of Chicago Press, 2005, 5.

that he understood as necessary to uphold his own steel-frame constructions, even if it took place retroactively.

The botanist, the building and analytical distance

Jenney was unlikely to have been aware of the work of Safford and Merrill, nor was he interested in the techniques that brought his alleged inspiration for skyscrapers into being. For Jenney and his ilk, the search was on for an “American” architecture in a city that saw immigration, class conflict, and the disaster of the 1871 fire come together under strategies for rebuilding.⁷¹ In this disjointed imperial lattice, while Jenney is the most naturalized to the field of architectural history, the botanists help to understand his import better, and in turn, Jenney helps understand them: in all of their pursuits, analytical distance—between lab and field, lecture hall and the tropics—was the use of space and time to the advantage of study. In Safford’s *The Useful Plants*, the labor processes and practices involved in preparing plants for house construction were foregrounded, indeed, it is how living plants are processed that takes primacy over a discussion of their results in built form. If, for Safford, architecture was a convenient method by which to understand plant use, in Merrill’s case it is at the scale of the physical landscape that sweeping changes were to be observed through the *longue durée* tabulation of species and type. While the botanists introduced us to two forms of an imperial encounter—observation and collecting, both involving distance and chronology—Jenney’s reversed analytical distance. With distance and the passing of time came the inevitability fantasy. A retrospective approach to the original glance of the nipa dwelling across the Pacific allowed it to be stretched into analogies drawn from across the Atlantic. Like views from a skyscraper, revealing a landscape but

⁷¹ Merwood-Salisbury, 3.

obscuring the details, Jenney (whose name is synonymous with them) made an imperial step across the American Pacific and used ambiguity to his advantage in order to translate space into time, and bamboo into steel.

IV

Floating seeds, floating signifiers

In their juxtaposition, what we get from these three encounters with nipa and bamboo houses is a sense that materiality and structure served specific purposes for each onlooker, however their differences are not so stark as might initially appear. Both Jenney and Rizal—an unlikely pairing—found the architecture of woven palms and bamboo structure to serve as a useful allegorical device in each telling their own stories of a tropically attuned environment to foreign audiences. For both, it was reduced to an image. Indeed, de los Reyes too, who created ethnographic portraits of the house, could also be read as hyper-specific versions of Jenney’s assumptions on architectural decisions based on reading or cooking—it is unlikely he would have imagined architecture to also have medicinal uses. Rizal and de los Reyes saw the nipa hut as a useful allegory, providing the opportunity to create an alternate identity against the colonial frame. For Jenney, material and formwork were not decorative measures, as bamboo and palm would become later in the twentieth century.⁷² Rather than a reaction against a rapidly

⁷² See for example, in Ateya Khorakiwala’s description of bamboo’s political economy: “Architecture’s Scaffolds,” E-Flux / Oslo Triennale 2019. accessed March 5, 2021 <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/overgrowth/221616/architecture-s-scaffolds/>. See also Diana Martinez’s discussion of Francisco Mañosa’s Coconut Palace for the Marcoses in Manila, Diana Martinez, “From Rice Research to Coconut Capital,” *Aggregate: Systems and the South*, 2021 (unpublished draft).

modernizing society, Jenney saw the nipa hut as an opportunity to attest to certain truths inherent to structure everywhere, simply “the easiest way to build [a] house,” and made discursive leaps to prove it.

Out of the encounters, two were foreign visitors, meaning the nature of their encounter was affected more stringently by duration and the means by which they recorded what they saw, and the distance traveled between “lab” and field. Yet that distance was also important to de los Reyes and Rizal, the former who became famous first in Spain for his *El Folk-Lore*, primarily appealing to an international readership, and the latter for writing the *Noli me tangere* while living in Berlin, the distance affording a comparative circumstance and change in perspective. It would appear, then, that the nipa palm and bamboo house with which this dissertation begins was an international object, a floating signifier that was only attached to the substance of its construction, palm and bamboo. Bamboo and nipa palm are rhizomatic plants that grow quickly in estuarine habitats, the buoyant seeds of nipa palm floating until they find a place to germinate. Unlike the rhizomatic, gregarious reproduction of their source material, all of the encounters understood bamboo and nipa palm houses as locationally specific, representative of place for entirely different sets of reasons. This is why as a starting point for understanding how architecture could be identified as synonymous with landscape the nipa dwelling functions well. Anti-colonial uprising, architectural arts, ethnobotany, and empire: moments from seemingly different knowledge systems appear simultaneously in their linkage through palm, a device through which we see their intersection. If the nipa dwelling was to become subject to mobility, removal, and displacement later in the twentieth century, it was at the turn of the nineteenth century that it brought the spheres together that would go on to influence its perception. It was territorial in that it represented an ecological pairing between human and nature in a specific

place; communicative in that it established global difference through materiality; and its rate of decay proscribed construction and reconstruction.⁷³ Taken together, these contributed to the process through which architecture made landscapes legible.

⁷³ Here I am paraphrasing, to different ends than governmentality, Michel Foucault's "three great variables" of territory, communication, and speed. Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 244–245.



Fig 1.01 *Nypa fruticans*. January 2018.



Fig 1.02 "Bayanihan" Fernando Amorsolo, 1959.

Fig 1.03 "Man and Carabao Near Ruins at Sunset" Fernando Amorsolo, 1948.





Fig 1.04 José Rizal, *Noli me tangere*, Berlin: 1887

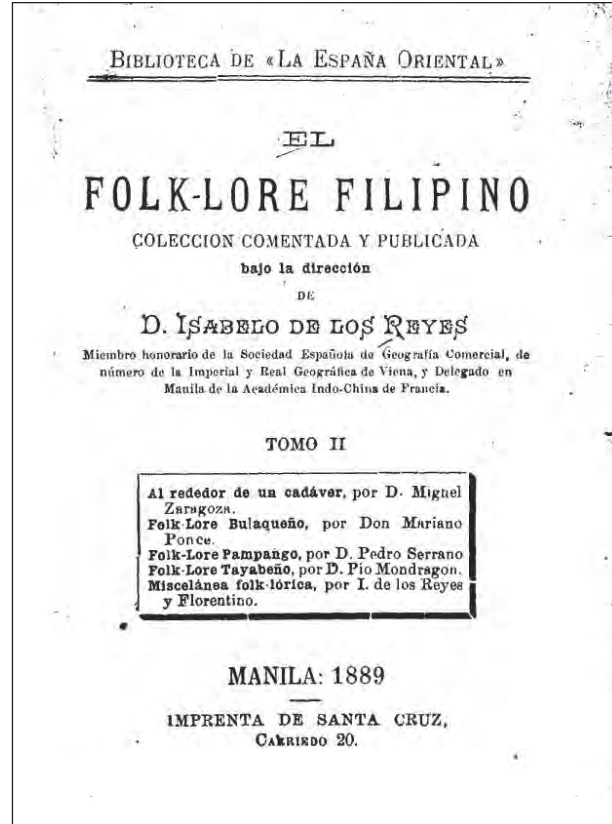


Fig 1.05 Isabelo de los Reyes, *El Folk-lore Filipino*, Manila: 1889

Fig 1.06 "Nipa district in Tondo, Manila, P.I." 1911. Bureau of Science, Thurlow & Fournier Collection, Ortigas Library, Manila



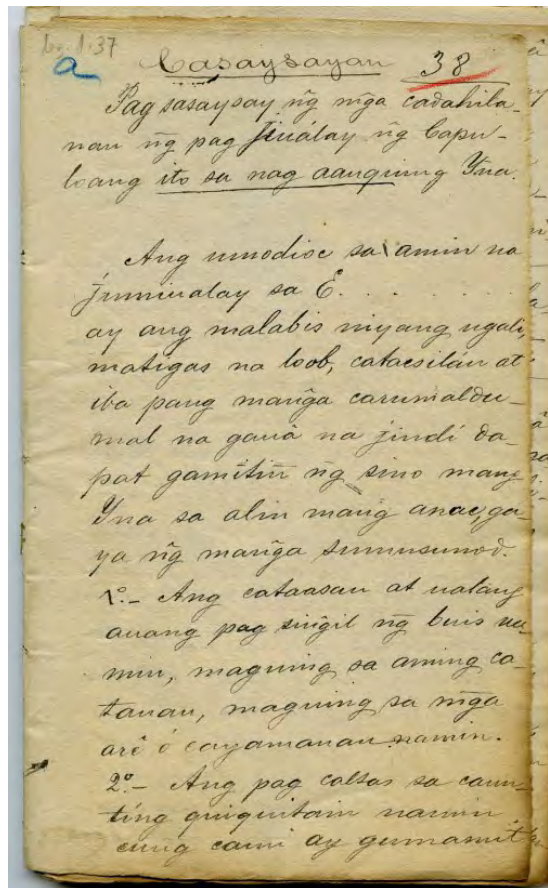


Fig 1.07 "Casaysayan; Pinagcasunduan; Manga daquilang cautosan," January 1892. Archivo General Militar de Madrid: Caja 5677, leg.1.37.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



Fig 1.08 Process of fabricating roof shingles from nipa palm:
1: harvest
2: soak
3: attach fronds to bamboo
4: dry shingles in direct sunlight
5: attach to roof
Images: Palmpedia; "how to make an atap roof," Youtube



Fig 1.09 "Women of Aslom Village Biliran Island weaving nipa thatch green leaves." Photograph by David Fairchild, Cheng Ho Expedition, January 14, 1940. Fairchild Archives. Call numbers 3496, 4567

Fig 1.10 "Nipa mats drying near seashore, Aslom Village." Photograph by David Fairchild, Cheng Ho Expedition, January 14, 1940. Fairchild Archives. Call numbers 3494, 3495





Hivea brasiliensis (HBK)
 FLORA OF THE PHILIPPINES
 PHILIPPINE NATIONAL HERBARIUM
 Eng. 41979
 Common name Para Rubber Dialect
 Field No. 61-139 Herbarium No.
 Collector Demetrio R. Mendoza
 Island or Province Agusan
 Locality Tungao, San Mateo, Butuan
 Habitat Tungao Camp and along Agusan
 River
 Altitude above the sea meters.
 Tree; shrub; bush; vine; herb tree
 Height of plant 18 meters M.
 Diameter, breast high 20 cm. Cm.
 Flower white
 (Color, odor, etc.)
 Fruit
 (Kind, odor, color, etc.)
 Special notes Cultivated in yard
 Economic uses
 Date June 3, 1961
 N. M. Form No. 38
 61690-2

PHIL. NAT. HERR. 41979
 FLORA OF THE PHILIPPINES
 PHILIPPINE NATIONAL HERBARIUM
Hivea brasiliensis (HBK) Muell.-Arg.
 Tungao So., San Mateo Bo.,
 Butuan, Agusan Province
 Mindanao
 Coll. Demetrio R. Mendoza May 30-June 26, 1961
 147 78924-2

Fig 1.11 Specimens of Para rubber tree eaten by insects. Philippine National Herbarium, 2016.



TYPICAL NATIVE DWELLING, ISLAND OF GUAM. SIDES OF BAMBOO AND WOVEN REEDS AND ROOF OF COCONUT THATCH.

Fig 1.12 "Typical Native Dwelling," *The Useful Plants of the Island of Guam*. William Edwin Safford, 1905.

Fig 1.13 *An Enumeration of Philippine Flowering Plants*. Elmer Drew Merrill, 1925.

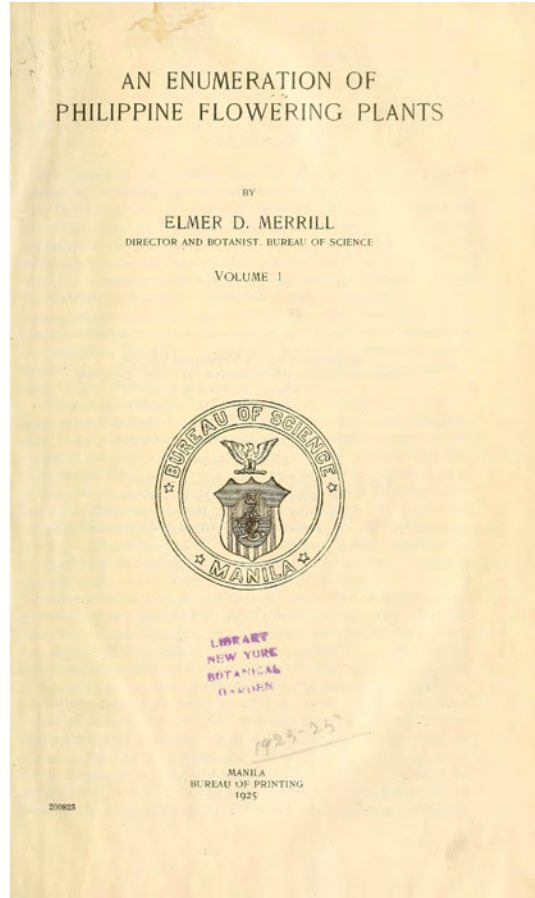
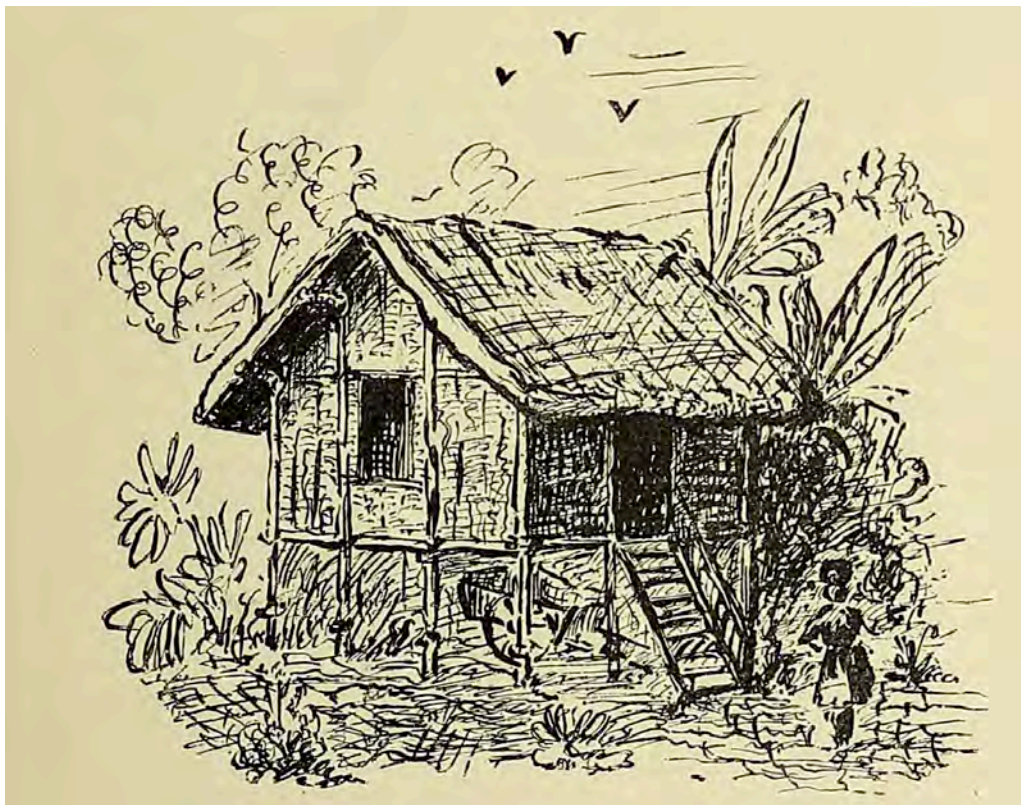


Fig 1.14 William Le Baron Jenney, "Architecture." Western Association of Architects (U.S.), *The Inland Architect and Builder* (Chicago: Inland Pub. Co., 1883): 49.



inhabitants could not move out of their houses during the day. As these insects will not enter very dark places, nearly absolute darkness as a protection from these pests was the requirement above all others to be satisfied. Their houses were literally formed one cell within another, five and six in number. They give no drawing of these huts, but they were probably of thatch, so common in Africa, which allows some light to penetrate the walls, hence the necessity of so many envelopes.

This form of building the hut is of course very local, but it serves as another example of that great principle that the form of the building grows out of the requirements modified by the material at hand, and the degree of civilization of the builders.

As another example let us examine the Malay hut in the Philippine and neighboring islands, situated within the tropics, in the region of earthquakes and those fearful gales known as typhoons, one of which has only within a month divested a large part of the city of Manila. The requirements are therefore strength to resist a vigorous shake and a fearful blow, and to be cool under a scorching vertical sun.

The rains are at periods severe, and tidal waves roll over the low shore lines. Reptiles and insects and wild animals are numerous. These create a requirement that the floor of the house shall be well up above the ground.

As the Malay does not read nor write, very little light is required.

As the cooking is done out of doors, there is no chimney to the house.

The available materials are tree trunks for posts and timbers.

Bamboo, which grows in great quantities and of large size, like gigantic fishpoles, for the sides and floors as well as much of the framework.

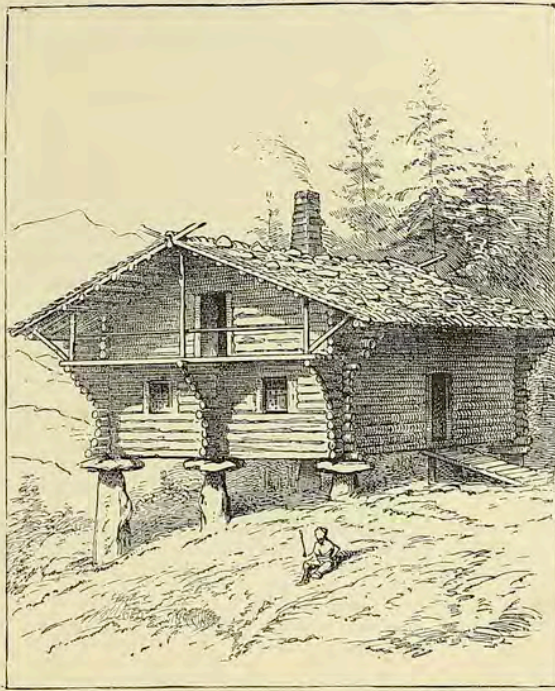
The leaves of the palm for the thatch, and the rattan, a long and very tough vine of the palm family, very useful to tie the work together.

The Malay is naturally lazy. He had rather lie on his back in the shade and smoke his cigar, and study out the easiest way to build his house, than to run the risk of doing an unnecessary stroke of work. Moreover, his ancestors, for no one knows how long, have been building in the same way, so that he has only to look about him to find the problem well worked out.



Asking the assistance of a few friends whom he has helped on a similar occasion, he cuts a few trees of proper dimensions for the posts and timbers, and builds his hut. The roof is a foot thick and is an excellent protection against both sun and rain. The sides are basket work of split bamboo, and the floor of bamboo slats, covered with mats. This hut satisfies the requirements to the fullest extent. The air circulates through it in every direction, rendering it as cool as a hut can well be. Mats hung over the door

and windows secure the necessary privacy and darken the interior to the exclusion of flies and mosquitos. House-cleaning is made easy. The floor mats are turned over from time to time, and the use on the opposite side shakes



[From Viollet le Duc.]

the dirt down between the slats of the floor. The whole has been produced for the least possible labor.

The Aryans under similar circumstances build of logs and thatch. Many ancient dwellings were built in the still waters of sheltered and shallow parts of lakes, known as Lacustrine. These belong to no special race; they are found in Switzerland and other parts of Europe, and in Asia. They were built by the yellow race, the Chinese and Turanians, and at times by the Aryans, to make their isolation in the water a protection from man and beast.

When built by the yellow race they are much like the Malay hut of bamboo and mats, when by the Aryans they were of logs. To quote Viollet le Duc, "Whether it was the result of natural predisposition or of the environment by which the various races of mankind were surrounded at the outset, it happened that these races adopted certain methods of construction, methods whose original elements are handed down from age to age, and make their appearance at the present day as manifestly as do the roots of each of the languages spoken by those primitive races."

Thus far we have treated architecture in its earliest beginnings from its starting points, directed and governed by, and originating out of, the simple requirements of protection from the elements and for privacy. Architecture as a fine art had not yet existed at these epochs and in these localities. Art is due to other causes.

"It is evident," says Viollet le Duc, "that at certain times art has been developed with singular energy, has been honored, cultivated and beloved, while at others it has fallen into indifference, neglect, or even contempt." It is customary to divide the history of art, accordingly, into periods of glory and periods of barbarism. But what is barbarism?

A people may be barbarous, according to our modern point of view, that is savage, superstitious, fanatical, without order or system in any of its movements, governed by the most imperfect laws, and yet possess very perfect arts,

Fig 1.15 William Le Baron Jenney, "Architecture." Western Association of Architects (U.S.), *The Inland Architect and Builder* (Chicago: Inland Pub. Co., 1883): 49.



2

An Epistemic Flood

Infrastructure and Insurgency in Luzon

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CHAPTER 2

An Epistemic Flood

Infrastructure and Insurgency in Luzon

In December 1962, William I. Gardner looked down on the densely forested hillsides of the Cagayan Valley from the open door of a Philippine Army helicopter. The California-born geologist was on assignment from his employer, the United States Bureau of Reclamation, to create an initial survey of a region that the Philippine Government proposed had the potential for construction of a large hydroelectric dam. By 1974, “Asia’s Biggest Dam” was complete, irrigating 8000 hectares of agricultural lands on the floodplain below, and in early 1977 its hydroelectric plant was adding 100MW of electricity to the Luzon grid to the tune of a US\$34 million loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, later known as the World Bank. Though President Ferdinand Marcos touted the speed with which the Upper Pampanga River Project (UPRP) was completed, the project began some two decades prior to his tenure as president. When viewed from the context of its inception in the middle of the 1950s, the vast irrigation plans of the UPRP, transforming a region completely, prompt a consideration of the way it was framed by social and environmental conditions. (fig 2.01, 2.03) The map that Gardner created after his helicopter flight of 1962 (fig 2.04) shows a plotted grid with two roughly drawn squiggly lines cutting through each third of the page, a note at the bottom testifies “rivers traced from mosaic made from unrectified aerial photographs.” Appearing at the end of his USBR report, hastily submitted to the Bureau in December 1962, the map indicates the town of Pantabangan, a roughly drawn oval above the Pantabangan River where roughly 13,000 persons would be displaced within the decade.

The region of Nueva Ecija, comprising mostly flat paddy-fields tilled by tenant farmers, was home to one of the largest insurgencies the country had seen since Spanish and American soldiers fought the Katipunan five decades prior. The group were known as the Huks, a communist-inspired insurgency led by a talented organizer called Luis Taruc. Born in a small town below the mountains, Taruc began organizing with tenant farmers in the 1930s, and according to the oral histories put together by Benedikt Kerkliet, created such a strong network that these citizens took up arms when the Japanese Army occupied the Philippines between 1941–46 as an underground resistance movement called the Hukbalahap.¹ This movement continued after the Second World War, and by 1951 had become an armed communist-oriented confrontation to the newly independent government. The Philippine government requested the assistance of US counterinsurgency intelligence, playing on anxieties about the spread of communism, and the Huk Rebellion was put down—partly through the reappropriation of Huk tactics—by 1955. One of the largest irrigation projects in the country and Southeast Asia at the time, the UPRP covered the exact coordinates of one of the largest resistance movements the country had seen in the twentieth century. (fig 2.05) In this way, the landless tenant farmers that formed the cadres of the Huks were conveniently integrated into the broader national program of postwar industrial rehabilitation.

In dealing with the overlaps of insurgency and irrigation, as a collusion between the economic and the biological, the chapter calls on Achille Mbembe’s description of “wars of occupation and counterinsurgency,” that aim “not only to track and eliminate the enemy but also

¹ *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon—Hukbalahap* (The Nation's Army Against the Japanese). Benedict J. Kerkliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (University of California Press, 1977).

to create a partition in time and an atomization of space.”² I consider the theoretical ramifications of an “atomization of space” through communism in the countryside and the counterinsurgency that met it. The techne of landscape architecture and landscape infrastructure played an integral, though unusual role in this process of suppression by introducing industrialization to counter insurgency. The notion of an epistemic flood—the irreversible effects of damming a landscape for productive crop yields, and the inherent positivism of hydroelectricity—comes into play for comprehending these landscape effects at capitalism’s frontier. Engineering, farming, and guerrilla warfare all constitute different ways of knowing the landscape, and it is through these alternating perspectives that the chapter aims to consider understand atomization and the architectures that create it. The role of US expertise in counterinsurgency and engineering meant that the basin of the Pampanga River was both surveilled by counterinsurgency operatives and surveyed by engineers. While UPRP presents itself as a straightforward project, an examination of the Huk Rebellion sheds light on a more complicated history of governance in the region, when examined in relation to the process of irrigation, architecture and infrastructure met an awareness of ecology and its emergence as a mode of biological governance.

The chapter is organized into five parts. The first, organic machines, looks at the development of hydroelectric dam engineering into both an architectural art and a form of democracy for export, becoming entangled in an US foreign policy dominated by McCarthyism. The circumstances of the Central Luzon plain were ideal for this newfound political machinery to irrigate land and eradicate communism, the second part looking at the Huk Rebellion and the counterinsurgency program EDCOR, which stratified the peasantry and landless Huk guerrilla

² Mbembe continues: “Capture, predation, extraction, and asymmetrical warfare converge with the rebalkanization of the world and intensifying practices of zoning, all of which point to a new collusion between the economic and the biological.” Mbembe, Achille. *Critique of Black Reason*. Duke University Press, 2017, 4–5.

fighters onto farmsteads far away from the arena of guerrilla fighting. The chapter remains in the floodplain of the Pampanga River, and builds on the previous two scenarios with the construction of Pantabangan Multipurpose Dam and the resettlement campaign it entailed. This sweeping transformation is quickly followed by more dam-building proposals, this time in the more topographically challenging terrain of the high Cordillera, on the Chico River, to the northwest of Pantabangan. Here, in the fourth part of the chapter, the Indigenous resistance movement to the dam project engaged the evidence mounting on an engineered landscape of rice terraces thousands of years old. The Ifugao rice terraces, a monument to hydrological landscape manipulation, played a key role in the resistance movement, not only getting the Ifugao rice terraces listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites, but halting dam progress on the Chico River altogether.

I

Organic Machines

To place hydroelectric dams within the context of modern architecture means tracing how both influence and experts moved between the Tennessee Valley Authority and design culture in general after the third decade of the twentieth century. By the mid-century, dam projects and the organizations that they emerged as a part of were self-internationalizing cultures, both in terms of aesthetics and political economy. Proponents of the culture of hydroelectricity drew on notions of timelessness, ecological purity, and teleological exceptionalism. Discussing the hopes with which people invested hydroelectricity on the Columbia River in *The Organic Machine*,

Richard White describes a river dammed to “do work other than its own, so that human beings could live and work differently [...] energy, in the form of electricity, became the great good the river could yield.”³ Yet toward the close of the twentieth century, and certainly in 2000 when the World Commission on Dams released its *Dams and Development* report, it was clear that in reality dams had the reverse effect, and were increasingly viewed as monoliths to unsustainability.⁴ Among the problems accrued by large dams were their vast organizational mandates, formed of management structures too large to sustain; material properties like the structural qualities of concrete would result in their degrading over time and being too large to fix; they create more environmental problems than they could possibly solve such as human-induced tremors, over and under-siltation, hillside erosion; they create a reliance on artificial distribution of water, double-triple annual crop yields, over-irrigation, reliance on a single rice yield.⁵ Such factors firmly lodge large dams (those dams over 15 meters tall) within a specific timeframe, and the combination of problems they create has meant that specific kinds of social movements—particularly those that depend on and engage with the land—have emerged out of their construction. The nature of “sustainability” changes with time, and now that dams are also the ageing—sometimes literally crumbling—artifices of a bygone infrastructural age, it is possible to see the cracks in the veneer of an assumed sustainability. Indeed, the formalizing that comes with the irrigation of dry landscapes has long been a tool of settler colonialism, and the

³ Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River*, First Thus Used edition (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 30.

⁴ World Commission on Dams. *Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision-Making: The Report of the World Commission on Dams*. Earthscan, 2000.

⁵ McCully, Patrick. *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams*. Enl. and Updated ed. London; New York: New York: Zed Books; Distributed in the USA exclusively by Palgrave, 2001.

resulting disarray they cause, from displacement to chronic water shortages to plagues of mosquitos, can be unpacked in context.

To situate dam-building in architectural history is to recognize two phases: an era of optimism and building, and an era of displacement and degradation. While the creation of the Francis turbine by James Francis was developed in 1849, it was not until advances in reinforced concrete allowed for their scaling up in the early twentieth century that hydropower became a viable option for energy generated on an industrial scale. The symbiosis with which they seemed to emerge—growing power demands, new technology to meet them—gave hydropower a near magical conceptual substance. “What happens when mechanization encounters organic substance?”, the Swiss architectural historian Sigfried Giedion asked at his Harvard lectures of 1948.⁶ The answers lay all around him. By 1940, New Deal construction programs meant hydropower accounted for forty percent of electricity generated in the US, more than tripling the capacity of two decades prior. Entire cities were now powered by water passing through Francis turbines, a “reaction turbine” whereby the working fluid hits the turbine under immense pressure, funneled water through a spiral scroll-like passageway to increase velocity and pressure as it hits the turbine blades. (fig 2.06) “In the shaping of its blades and its whole construction,” effused Giedion, “it is a plastic expression of the behavior of smoothly flowing water.”⁷

By the 1960s, hydropower technology was lodged in the metropolitan psyche and energy grids of the US, and rapidly being taken up around the world; Giedion’s homage to engineering as architecture, *Space, Time and Architecture*, was in its fourth printing; and in 1964 the Museum

⁶ Sigfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), 6.

⁷ Sigfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command*, 576.

of Modern Art in New York City staged “Twentieth Century Engineering,” a photographic exhibition of which *New York Times* architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable noted:

dams, bridges, domes, highways and instruments of the space age are engineering products of remarkable competence and complexity [...] twentieth-century engineering is producing twentieth-century monuments of lasting significance, and that the art of construction is the greatest art of our time.⁸

Were dams and engineering feats works of art? Invoking Fyodor Dostoevsky’s 1862 review of the Great Exhibition—“every possible question will vanish, simply because every possible answer will be provided [...] must one not accept this as the ultimate truth, and become silent forever?”—Huxtable wrote a century later “the visitor leaves thinking that this is a basic truth that he has always known.”⁹ It was driven by this same reverence for technology that Le Corbusier proposed erecting his “Open Hand” weathervane atop the 720-foot high Bhakra Dam in Punjab, a place he referred to as the “Fosse de la Consideration” (Pit of Contemplation), the same site on which Jawaharlal Nehru asked, “where can be a greater and holier place than this, which we can regard as higher?”¹⁰ Engineering, now a formidable form of artistry, was sacrosanct and borderless. In his paean to the work of the engineer and bridge designer Robert Maillart, Max Bill wrote:

By the very fact that he exploited the technical possibilities to the utmost limit, his bridges above all reach beyond the sphere of merely technical achievement. They are conceived in such a daring and uncompromising spirit, that they rise above the purely technical to genuine artistic vision.¹¹

⁸ Ada Louise Huxtable, “Dams, Domes and the Battle of Styles.” *The New York Times*, July 5, 1964, 211.

⁹ Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Notes from Underground*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1864; 2009.

¹⁰ With this location refused, the Open Hand became a symbol found across the new city of Chandigarh. Corbusier, Le, Ivan Žaknić, and Le Corbusier Staff. *Mise Au Point*. Yale University Press, 1997.

¹¹ Max Bill, “The artistic expression of construction,” in *Robert Maillart*, Verlag für Architektur AG., Erlenbach-Zürich. 1949, 33.

And so, like the plasticity of the materials in use, the existential domain of construction and engineering was undergoing a transformation. The very fact that it was possible to celebrate civil engineering in such a way broadened the epistemic overlaps between architecture, engineering and art. Dams, like bridges and highways, were afforded pious reflection due to their innocence, concrete demonstrations of how and what sustainability could be. Much of this historicization was self-conscious and part of broad governmental public relations campaigns. As a model for the second machine-age civilization, Le Corbusier looked to the Tennessee Valley Authority [TVA], whose regional planning and societal synthesis offered an example of integrated planning across a vast spectrum.¹²

Dam diplomacy and the TVA in the world

The 1950s in America were shiny, tense, and optimistic. Engineering concrete and steel toward the production of electricity was a cultural phenomenon where the vast infrastructural schemes of the Tennessee Valley Authority were viewed as phenomenally successful, and both the TVA and the United States Bureau of Reclamation played prominent roles in exporting this technology.¹³ It is easy to understand why dams evoked such esteem. Mining, drilling for oil, cutting down trees and other rural extractive enterprises transform the landscape based on the plundering of singled-out resources. Dams on the other hand transform a landscape based on the artificial retention and redistribution of a resource rather than its removal. Moreover, it is

¹² Bacon, Mardges. “Le Corbusier and Postwar America: The TVA and Béton Brut.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 74, no. 1 (March 1, 2015), 13–40.

¹³ David Ekbladh writes that the TVA was new and unusual “to American life and did not easily find a niche. It was bitterly opposed by power companies threatened by its operations and those ideologically hostile to what it stood for, making it, in some views, a microcosm of the struggles over the New Deal.” Ekbladh, David. “‘Mr. TVA’: Grass-Roots Development, David Lilienthal, and the Rise and Fall of the Tennessee Valley Authority as a Symbol for U.S. Overseas Development, 1933–1973.” *Diplomatic History* 26, no. 3 (2002), 345–346.

possible to produce power from the storing of that water. The epistemic flood that results from these fundamental differences places dams in their own category, which promise more than just agricultural development or technical progress.¹⁴

In *TVA, Adventure in Planning* in 1943, UNESCO founder Julian Huxley turns to the chief architect of the TVA, Roland A. Wank, in order to address the apparent disparity between architect and engineer and the closing of the gap by the TVA. (fig 2.07) In breathless prose Huxley commended Wank and “the great dams” that are “planned from the outset as works of art as well as utilitarian constructions” in which there was “conscious collaboration” between architect and engineer.¹⁵ Huxley goes on to cite Wank in full, who narrated how “there was a good deal of mutual suspicion to be overcome between the architects and the engineers,”

Small wonder the engineer felt bewildered when the slightly younger edition of the architect came back and said that he was no longer interested in columns and cornices, but that he would like to see how the engineer was making out on the disposition of the structure to its surroundings and of its component parts to each other. The matter was finally resolved, within TVA at least, upon the mutual discovery that both were interested in good, honest, efficient structures, and never mind the mayonnaise¹⁶

Perhaps Wank, a Hungarian emigree who in addition to designing the town of Norris (adjacent to the Norris Dam) at the age of 33, was responsible for removing ornament from the dam itself, saw himself in the silhouette of the “slightly younger edition of the architect” that he outlines.¹⁷ In Wank’s phrasing, architecture could find itself—its disposition, structure, surroundings,

¹⁴ Timothy Mitchell expands on this premise in the context of postcolonial governments, for whom dams provided the ability “to rearrange the natural and social environment” as a “means to demonstrate the strength of the modern state as a techno-economic power.” Mitchell, Timothy. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. 1st ed. University of California Press, 2002, 21.

¹⁵ Huxley, Julian. *TVA, Adventure in Planning*. Cheam, Surrey: The Architectural Press, 1943, 73.

¹⁶ Cited is chief architect of the TVA, Roland A. Wank. Huxley, *TVA, Adventure in Planning*, 74.

¹⁷ Patrick McCully, *Silenced Rivers*, 3.

components—as a part of a pastoral agrarian utopia in exchange for the irrelevant mayonnaise of yore. As a prominent figure in recent analyses of the architecture as a physical aspect of twentieth-century territorial planning, Huxley provides ample resources with which architectural historians can piece together the general motif of these new explorations in the urbanization of the rural. Lucia Allais points out that for Huxley, “materials, abstraction and integrated planning made the TVA a paradigmatically modernist endeavor.”¹⁸ Be that as it may, the problem of the TVA and the integration of an architectural modernism with the countryside was that for all the smooth lines poured concrete creates, the coming together of different modes of knowing the landscape, engineering and farming, combined to form a messier whole than anticipated. Huxley believed that the “TVA idea” was a new form of governmentality, where “the planned development of natural regions such as river valleys, has already found its way into the world’s general thinking.”¹⁹

As a way of making landscape legible and transcending traditional boundaries, the TVA succeeded extraordinarily well:

TVA ideas and methods are helping to guide the growth of new planning agencies such as the Middle East Supply Council; studies are being made of how a set-up of general TVA type could be adapted to serve as an international instead of a national agency (thus amount other things undercutting and transcending nationalist sovereignties, as the TVA undercuts and transcends States’ rights and boundaries), and adjusted to promote the planned development of regions of greater backwardness, like parts of Africa.²⁰

For Huxley, engineering was generalizable to such a degree that was an additional format of politics in itself that would be possible to scale up to the international level. The TVA had a

¹⁸ Lucia Allais, *Will to War Will to Art*, 361.

¹⁹ Huxley, *TVA, Adventure in Planning*, 135.

²⁰ Huxley, *TVA, Adventure in Planning*, 135.

“system of research deliberately adjusted to consumer needs, are all new tools which will be of service to any democracy in its struggle to control its own social destiny.”²¹ Huxley elaborated on his concept of internationalism as “World scientific humanism,” an accelerated political evolution with a biological dimension to thinking about resources. He outlined this in a short pamphlet outlining the aims of UNESCO in 1945, as an organization that “should aim at securing the fullest contribution to the common pool from racial groups which, owing to their remoteness or their backwardness, have so far had little share in it.”²² It was in its export that this messiness comes into focus.

Exporting the TVA

The administrator, businessman and attorney David E. Lilienthal was a proponent of bringing the TVA and the guise of democratic politics he believed it encompassed to the world. In his 1944 book *TVA—Democracy on the March*, Lilienthal emphasizes the world-spanning properties of the TVA in the chapter “TVA and World Reconstruction.” (fig 2.08) More than a government administration, the TVA was a systematization for the reorganization of landscape outside of national boundaries, “our foreign visitors see with particular clarity that TVA speaks in a tongue that is universal, a language of *things close to the lives of people*: soil fertility, forests, electricity, phosphate, factories, minerals, rivers.” The particular world that the TVA belonged to was unbounded, outside of language. “No English interpreter is needed when a Chinese or a Peruvian sees this series of working dams, or electricity flowing into a simple farmhouse, or

²¹ Lucia Allais clarifies Huxley’s interest in the TVA as “embodying [...] the advent of this collaborative stage in human history: a large-scale technical undertaking, dedicated to a single goal, but producing generalizable benefits.” Lucia Allais, “Will to War, Will to Art: Cultural Internationalism and the Modernist Aesthetics of Monuments, 1932-1964” (2008), 359.

²² Huxley, *UNESCO: Its Purpose and Philosophy*, 17.

acres that phosphate has brought back to life.”²³ After his time at the TVA (and a brief stint at the Atomic Energy Commission), Lilienthal begun his own company, the Development and Resources Corporation (D&RC), a consultancy for technological export, establishing projects in Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, Haiti, Peru, Italy, Nigeria, Malaysia, Australia and other nations.

In comparison to those projects that would be planned outside the US like the Volta River Project in Ghana or the Mekong River Project, TVA projects were relatively small in scale. Between 1950 and 2000, the worlds rivers became obstructed by more than 40,000 large dams, and only a quarter of those were built before 1950.²⁴ Perhaps Lilienthal foresaw this proliferation and scaling up overseas, in any case he was involved in many of the scaling up projects. After his resignation from the AEC, Lilienthal began D&RC and wrote a book called *Big Business* in 1953. The book introduces his concept of “bigness” which was, simply put, the scaling up of business being good for society:

As things stand today, and for the next decade or so at least, to get high productivity and low cost of iron and steel, we must have big machinery—even bigger than at present perhaps. This requires the resources and managerial scope of big companies, with earnings adequate to attract the vast capital expenditures required. [...] We eat up electric power at an unbelievable rate; in my opinion this trend will continue for an almost indefinite period [...] It is at last becoming clear that electricity is so fundamental to the life of the nation that no one should ever concern himself about a “surplus.” Electricity in great quantities, at low cost, creates its own market, creates new uses and new productivity, which in turn creates further need for more electricity. [...] These comments about electric supply go to the heart of the issue of Bigness. For it takes Bigness of individual power units, Bigness of power-supplying enterprises and Bigness of electric equipment companies to create the huge pools of power we need, timed for our needs, and at low cost.²⁵

²³ Lilienthal, David E. *TVA Democracy On The March*, 1953, 204–205; Ekbladh, David. “‘Mr. TVA’: Grass-Roots Development, David Lilienthal, and the Rise and Fall of the Tennessee Valley Authority as a Symbol for U.S. Overseas Development, 1933–1973.” *Diplomatic History* 26, no. 3 (2002), 335–74.

²⁴ According to the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD). A “large dam” is defined by ICOLD as one measuring 15 meters or more from foundation to crest, taller than a four-story building.

²⁵ Lilienthal, David Eli. *Big Business: A New Era*. [1st ed.]. New York, 1953, 111–112.

The relationship between resources and business runs in parallel. For Lilienthal, we must have both, “big machinery” and the “resources and managerial scope of big companies” which complement the vast power demands of the public. The parallels continue, not only is demand greater, corporations larger, and networks larger, but:

To build turbines and generators of this mammoth size and their ever-bigger transmission equipment requires Bigness in the manufacturing company—Bigness of research, development and production. To operate units of this size and their transmission systems that are required to move the blocks of power calls for a big electric enterprise.²⁶

Lilienthal had a vision for the way expansion could work, but it was not to be restricted to US soil. Indeed, he was clear that even if “the free nations now depend on us for military might,” they also depended on the US “for ‘economic aid’ and for our strengthening influence in a world rocking with fear and unrest.”²⁷ It was bigness that could solve these discrepancies: fear and unrest could be put at ease through the smoothing over with a blanket of bigness: big power turbines powering big electrical grids overseen by big corporations adhering to big demands on the power supply.

The historian David Ekbladh discusses how Lilienthal understood the purposes of the TVA in this light, as an effective response to a world in the throes of decolonization. Rather than succumbing to exploitation by big corporations, Lilienthal held the opposite view, writes Ekbladh, “to prevent global exploitation of the many by an elite few, the TVA could provide an example of inclusive development that would allow people local control over their own economic futures while providing for economic growth.”²⁸ The optimism was not overambitious.

²⁶ Lilienthal, *Big Business*, 112.

²⁷ Lilienthal, *Big Business*, 9.

²⁸ Ekbladh, David. “‘Mr. TVA’: Grass-Roots Development, David Lilienthal, and the Rise and Fall of the Tennessee Valley Authority as a Symbol for U.S. Overseas Development, 1933–1973.” *Diplomatic History* 26, no. 3, 2002,

Lilienthal later noted: “Our aim in forming D&R was not to try to remold the world, or any large part of it, but only to try to help accomplish some rather specific things, and, incidentally, make a profit.”²⁹ Yet it was prescient, and overlapped with US governmental aims to such a degree that the TVA was a mechanism by which to export technology and insist on modernity’s forward march. President Truman’s “Point Four” program was the means by which this export could take place, meaning that the TVA quickly became for many observers, “synonymous with foreign assistance, which itself was an integral part of a Cold War strategy that found development essential.”³⁰ Development, assistance, and technology smoothly overlapped in this strategy. Another proponent, Arthur M. Schlesinger, who worked for the Office of Strategic Services (a precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency) and founded Americans for Democratic Action together with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, noted in his 1949 book *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom*, that,

no other people in the world approach the Americans in mastery of the new magic of science and technology. Our engineers can transform arid plains or poverty-stricken river valleys into wonderlands of vegetation and power [...] The Tennessee Valley Authority is a weapon which, if properly employed, might outbid all the social ruthlessness of the Communists for the support of the peoples of Asia.³¹

The magical weapon of the TVA offered a leitmotif for the organization and natural resources. TVA projects were designed comprehensively, and differently to the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation (though they worked frequently together with both). In addition to being organizational structures, dams were a physical organizational complex,

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²⁹ John Brooks, Profile on David Lilienthal, “A Second Sort of Life,” *New Yorker*. April 29, 1961, 74–76.

³⁰ Ekbladh, “Mr. TVA,” 349.

³¹ Jr, Arthur M. Schlesinger. *The Vital Center: Politics of Freedom*. Boston, 1949, 230–234.

fulfilling a metaphor for the coordination of natural forces within human society.³² According to the figures introduced thus far, the TVA provided a model after which larger government agencies could mold themselves in the US and overseas. The vast physical interventions that dams represented, and the diplomatic organizational strategies that brought them into being meant that they were distinct from other forms of imperialist allocation of resources. Figures like Lilienthal and Eleanor Roosevelt were energetically advocating for a form of physical infrastructure in order for it to function like a political instrument, supporting US foreign interests, policy, and spending.³³

What kind of experts were involved in this movement of TVA expertise outward to the emerging Third World? The biography of William I. Gardner, who created a geological survey for the USBR of Pantabangan Dam, provides an informative contextual background to the expansion and internationalization of the USBR. Gardner was born in Napa, California, in 1903 where his grandparents had settled a generation earlier. He received a degree from the College of Mining at the University of California in Berkeley, among the first established by the UC Charter in 1869 as part of a mandate driven by the business interests in mining California gold.³⁴ Gardner went on to receive his doctorate at Minnesota in 1935, and was hired a year later by the U.S.

³² Historian Brian Black describes how large multipurpose dams were intended to function metaphorically and physically “less to sublimate natural forces than to coordinate those forces within human society.” Brian Black. “Organic Planning: Ecology and Design in the Landscape of TVA.” *Art Journal* 42, no. 3 (1982), 87.

³³ McNeill and Unger cite other projects such as the US interstate highway system and the Soviet Baikal-Amur Mainline railroad as other such projects that were carried out under the pretense of Cold War anxieties. See also Richard Tucker’s essay in the same volume. Richard P. Tucker, “Containing Communism by Impounding Rivers.” In: John Robert McNeill and Corinna R Unger, *Environmental Histories of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 7, 139–163.

³⁴ In an interview on UC Berkeley’s College of Mining with Chris Kumai (who teaches in the department of materials science and engineering) notes that: “The easy-to-access gold was gone, so any mining could only be done by bigger firms with expertise, these firms needed educated mining experts, so that’s what drove the creation of the college.” Staff, Luke Kopetsky I. “Digging through History: Looking Back at UC Berkeley’s College of Mining.” *The Daily Californian*, March 23, 2018.

Bureau of Reclamation, a government office then in its third decade and at the height of productivity (of the USBR's more than 180 projects, about 70 were authorized before the Second World War). Started under the Theodore Roosevelt administration, the Bureau approved of "reclaiming" water for agricultural purposes, particularly in the West. Gardner's first project with the USBR was to oversee the engineering geology of Shasta Dam, a new concrete-arch dam envisioned to provide year-round water to California's main agricultural region, the Central Valley. When it was completed in 1945 it was the second tallest in the US after Hoover Dam at 602 feet high. After a number of geologic planning projects through the 1940s and 50s, Gardner was named chief geologist for the Bureau of Reclamation in 1963 and moved to Denver, Colorado, where its headquarters were based. It was in the late 1950s and early 1960s that his work was increasingly outside of the American West, consulting on geological explorations for Standard Oil in Venezuela, dams in India, a hydroelectric project in the Peruvian Andes and over 800 wells during these efforts. Just as with the TVA, the USBR was a form of politics in itself (what could be more political than the allocation of resources?) but in figures like Gardner, the movement of experts as energy intermediaries that the USBR became involved in foreign projects. By the time Gardner produced his survey for the Philippine government in 1962, this circuitry was well-established as a system of exchange.³⁵

Engineering and insurgency in the Mekong Delta

The various names for armed communist insurgency in Southeast Asia such as the Red-"Tide," "Scare," or "Threat," and the idea that if one country were to be influenced by their

³⁵ Swain, Donald C. "The Bureau of Reclamation and the New Deal, 1933-1940." *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (1970), 137.

neighbor, each toppling under the influence of communist thought was called the “Domino Theory.” The Republican Senator for Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy is often cited as the figure that inflamed communist suspicion (and his famed “secret list” of covert communists in government). Yet the McCarthyism that dominated the United States after the Second World War was many things aside from fear and suspicion, one of those things was opportunism. Indeed, if the government could have “aid” activities in those countries where communist ideas and those interested in them, “the reds,” were a “threat,” then perhaps simply by dint of US presence, infrastructural or governmental, the influence of communism could be curtailed. Lilienthal built this perspective into his planning work for the TVA as a part of foreign policy. Speaking of the TVA overseas, he noted that:

If we are bold enough to make this device an instrument of our Asiatic foreign policy we can take the political initiative away from Soviet Russia, turn the tide and win country after country for the democratic cause [...] TVA represents an idea that can be utilized as one of the major influences to turn back the tide of Communism which today threatens to engulf Asia.³⁶

Of the firms that D&RC collaborated with was the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), whose organization brought in international development planners like Lilienthal and co from the US and Western Europe. Headquartered in Bangkok, one of the first large projects for ECAFE was looking for ways to develop the hydroelectric potential of the Lower Mekong region in Northern Thailand, bordering Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam. A proposal for a massive 700-foot dam in Pa Mong was put forward. (fig 2.09) A 1956 planning study report by ECAFE notes that:

The entire project area is susceptible to outside subversive influence because it lies in close proximity to areas controlled or infected by Communist forces [...] Strenuous efforts on the part of the governments have recently exposed the situation and corrective

³⁶ Cited in: Tucker, “Containing Communism by Impounding Rivers,” 144.

policing measures have been instituted in addition to the social and economic programs. It is hoped that alert effective police action plus successful implementation of the economic and education improvement measures will stabilize the area and will forestall the expansion of subversion and chaos.³⁷

International development offered a way to formalize landscapes. Particular to international development, as far as ECAFE was concerned, was the ability to trade engineering and expertise in the name of overseeing anticommunist governance, the “social and economic programs” that could stabilize these landscapes. Anticommunism and international development went hand in hand, as the stability of “social and economic programs” in the report notes. A later report by the USBR and ECAFE in 1973 emphasized the cooperation between those four countries—Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam (all headed by the US ECAFE and the USBR)—that had “maintained their faith and their activity in the Mekong Project” despite “this wearisome period of military strife in Southeast Asia.”³⁸ Lilienthal worked on the Mekong Project, proposing a Mekong Delta Development Authority (MDDA). Subversion and political resistance were part of a landscape that engineering could confront and pacify. In a *New Yorker* profile of Lilienthal in 1961, John Brooks writes that,

a solution to the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and the headwaters of the Indus River [...] could be lessened by a cooperative program to improve living conditions in the whole disputed area through economic development of the Indus Basin.³⁹

³⁷ ECAFE, *Final Report of the Mekong Planning Study* (Bangkok, 1956), 1–2.

³⁸ *Pa Mong: Key to the Development of the Lower Mekong, Data Summary 1973* (The Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin and the Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation), 1.

³⁹ Brooks, John. “A Second Sort of Life.” *The New Yorker*. April 29, 1961.

Nine years later, the World Bank-organized, Lilienthal-coordinated plan was signed as The Indus Waters Treaty.⁴⁰ Water treaties and hydroelectric projects allowed nations the opportunity to soothe tensions. In the same decade, at his inauguration of the Volta River Project, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana praised the “mutual respect” and “common ground” between the United States and Ghana, the result of contact which was “living proof that nations and people can cooperate and coexist peacefully with mutual advantage to themselves despite differences of economic and political opinions.”⁴¹ But was strife really abated? And how did political agreements and infrastructures irreversibly transform socio-ecological landscapes? The optimism of Nkrumah reflects an idealistic subscription to the promise of water treaties and hydroelectric dams, and the enthusiasm, from Nkrumah to Eleanor Roosevelt, conceals the larger concealment

⁴⁰ World Bank. “Fact Sheet: The Indus Waters Treaty 1960 and the Role of the World Bank.” Text/HTML. Accessed November 10, 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/sar/brief/fact-sheet-the-indus-waters-treaty-1960-and-the-world-bank>. See also: Akhter, Majed. “Adjudicating Infrastructure: Treaties, Territories, Hydropolitics.” *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 2, no. 4 (July 31, 2019).

⁴¹ Kwame Nkrumah’s speech for the opening of the Akosombo Dam in Ghana, on January 22, 1966. For Nkrumah, the project was a dam of cooperation, an epistemic link between technological transfers, noting: “Edgar Kaiser, President Eisenhower, and President Kennedy were genuinely interested in this project because they saw, behind the cold figures and the rigid calculations, that the Volta River Project was not only an economically viable project, but also an opportunity for the United States of America to make a purposeful capital investment in a developing country. In other words, they saw in the Volta River Project a scheme with new dimensions of growth and development which they felt could benefit both Ghana and the United States. It was on this common ground of our mutual respect and common advantage that our two countries—Ghana and the United States of America—made the contact from which grew this project. The result of this contact is living proof that nations and people can cooperate and coexist peacefully with mutual advantage to themselves despite differences of economic and political opinions.” The Akosombo Dam and Volta River Project displaced 80,000 Ghanaians at the time, and the resettlement towns involved several British and American architects. Two of these, Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, were even given a tour of dam resettlement schemes in the US in the wake of TVA schemes to prepare them for the scale of the resettlement projects that awaited in Ghana. The Volta River Project was a “joined-up” development, comprising dam, hydroelectric system, a new port, railway, aluminum plant, and planned settlement for workers housing. Jackson, Iain, Ola Udoku, Irene Appeaning Addo, and Rexford Assasie Opong. “The Volta River Project: Planning, Housing and Resettlement in Ghana, 1950–1965.” *The Journal of Architecture* 24, no. 4 (May 19, 2019), 512–48; Miescher, Stephan F. “The Akosombo Dam and the Quest for Rural Electrification in Ghana.” In *Electric Worlds / Mondes Électriques*, edited by Alain Beltran, Léonard Laborie, Pierre Lanthier, and Stéphanie Le Gallic, NED-New edition., 317–42. Creations, Circulations, Tensions, Transitions (19th–21st C.). Peter Lang AG, 2016; Wilburn, Kenneth, Smithsonian Libraries, and African Art Index Project. *Africa to the World!: Nkrumah-Era Philatelic Images of Emerging Ghana and Pan-Africanism 1957-1966*. Gainesville, FL: African studies quarterly, 2012.

of a socio-ecological conversion at work. Between communism and ecological transformation, there is no better project to read these entanglements than Nueva Ecija on Luzon.

II

Insurgency, Irrigation, Atomization

By the middle of the 1950s, the landscape of Central Luzon was beset with the kind of “strife” that attracted large Lilienthalien infrastructural projects. The next section describes the makings of the Huk Rebellion, which found its origins in the feudal farming structures of the region and follows with the way that the counter-insurgency scheme tackled it, both through urban scare-tactics and a large relocation program. Luzon is the largest island of the Philippine archipelago, and features some of the most varied terrain, from rugged forested mountains in the north to expansive flood plains below them, resembling a patchwork of rice paddies and the metropolis of Manila to the southwest. These conditions mean that Spanish colonialism and the American imperial project that followed it did not spread evenly throughout the archipelago. The central flood plain of Luzon comprises 380,000 hectares of agricultural land, nicknamed the “rice bowl” of the Philippines for its topographical shape and staple product, is within easy reach by road to Manila. It was in such low-lying provinces that Spanish power was consolidated and mediated through the church—far more so, it has been argued, than anywhere in the Americas.⁴² Over centuries, infrastructural links between Manila and the floodplain surrounding it created a

⁴² Anderson, Benedict. “Cacique Democracy and the Philippines: Origins and Dreams.” *New Left Review*, no. 169 (1988), 5.

system where the church owned these lands with friars charging tenant farmers to till them. Districts were therefore mediated largely by the size of a particular parish and the church to which peasants would visit. The American period unraveled this relationship with the wide-reaching secularization of the country, including confiscating vast landholdings from the church and mostly handing them over to the large families that had hitherto administered those lands. Between 1898 and 1930 a widening disparity between landlord and tenant ensued, essentially recreating a feudal system whereby one large family-owned huge swathes of land and the full control of profits that came from them. Landlords owned large rice-growing estates, haciendas, where tenants, sharecroppers called *kasama* farmers, were employed.⁴³ Perhaps it is no surprise then that after two decades of this system a peasant movement in Luzon emerged as an anti-landlord movement, espousing a series of small but powerful union organizations that were an affront to the landlord families that owned most of the flood plain.

With slicked-back hair and short buzzed sides, Luis Taruc, a charismatic tailor from Pampanga, wearing Converse All Stars and a bomber jacket, holds court in front of a group of similarly dressed men in the courtyard outside a nipa house. (fig 2.10) Taruc grew up in a Philippines run by the US, in a countryside busy with organizing.⁴⁴ In an oral history with Taruc conducted in 1974, he reminisced that:

What happened in Nueva Ecija was a very sad and historically important example or model of the growing greediness and haughtiness of the feudal landlords, because they were practically the masters of Nueva Ecija, the Buencamino family. In later years, when they were too old and could not really fight the powerful peasant

⁴³ Wolters, W.G. "Rise and Fall of Provincial Elites in the Philippines: Nueva Ecija from the 1880s to the Present Day." *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 4, no. 1 (1989), 59.

⁴⁴ The National Council of Peasants in the Philippines (KMPM), an organization with strong links to the then fledgling communist party of the Philippines (the PKP) grew exponentially while he was in his teenage years, with many extended families joining the ranks. At 21, Taruc stopped studying and opened a small tailor shop, "where Lope de la Rosa was coming to me in the midst of the night asking me to sew his jungle clothes, his working clothes." Oral Histories Project, University of Michigan, Bentley Historical Library, 1974, 33.

movement, I became the friend of Dona Maria, the wife of Felipe Buencamino, the son of Felipe Buencamino, senior, who were puppets of American occupation. And up to Felipe Buencamino they were known to be like Pardo de Tavera and Pedro Paterno and the Aranetas as the advocates of federalism or colonialism for the Philippines to be permanently attached as a part of America.”⁴⁵

It was these large families such as the Buencamino’s (others were the Araneta’s, Cojuanco’s and the Aquino’s) that created large political dynasties in the Philippines, consolidated as part of provincial elective seats by the US administration that Benedict Anderson calls a “Cacique Democracy,” making the country so “spectacularly different” to any other country in Southeast Asia (for example the ruling classes have no monarchical ties such as in Thailand, Indonesia or Cambodia).⁴⁶ As a major affront to this ruling class, in 1939, two of the largest peasant organizations merged to form the Socialist Party of the Philippines.⁴⁷

Armed peasants, organized resistance

Peasant organizing in Central Luzon was transformed when the country was catapulted into the Pacific arena of the Second World War. On December 8, 1941, a day after the destruction of Pearl Harbor, Japanese bombers struck the airfields of Clark Airbase in Luzon, destroying over half of the US air strength. Japanese troops landed on the Philippines and began a four-year occupation of the country. A few days later as the Americans fled, a split rapidly formed in Philippine society. While the old oligarchies sided with the Japanese, the rural poor were left

⁴⁵ Luis Taruc, Oral Histories Project. University of Michigan, BHL, 1974, 25–26.

⁴⁶ Anderson, Benedict. “Cacique Democracy and the Philippines: Origins and Dreams.” *New Left Review*, no. 169 (1988), 3–31.

⁴⁷ The KPMP with 60,000 members, and the General Workers’ Union with 70,000 members (AMT). Aguman ding Malding Talapagobra (AMT; General Workers' Union), Kalipunang Pambansa ng mga Magsasaka n Pilipinas (KPMP). They formed an alliance with the PSP, the Partido Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PSP), a rural socialist party and participated in the 1940s election, and though this triage didn’t win a seat, the party had made its mark and officially gained popular recognition by this point.

either to accept rule by the Japanese, or rebel. With a now well-organized mass base of the KPMP, AMT and PSP, this rebellion was an obvious choice for the peasants of Nueva Ecija. Four months after the occupation began, these three groups came together to form the People's Army Against the Japanese, or *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon*, taking the clipped compound *Hukbalahap* as their name, or "Huk" for short. The Huks reigned over the provinces and became a guerrilla army, harassing the Japanese and assassinating collaborators. While they were spread throughout the archipelago, the Huk stronghold was Luzon, where the initial peasant organizations had transformed to become the Huks. Historian Renato Constantino puts the episode in perspective:

Although the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the radical peasant and workers' unions that formed the backbone of the Huks had raised anti-imperialist issues before the war, the Japanese invasion and worldwide adherence of the Left to the united front against fascism muted the anti-American aspect of radical struggle in the Philippines. In its memorandum to Quezon, the Communist Party had pledged loyalty to the governments of the Philippines and the United States. Its plans visualized a unified struggle of all patriotic anti-Japanese groups.⁴⁸

Filipino patriotism was therefore not entirely anti-American, but certainly anti-imperial, indeed Filipinos had mixed opinions of both their US and Japanese occupiers during these various stages of foreign administration. The Huks, under the leadership of Luis Taruc and Vicente Lava, worked together with the US Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), providing intelligence and receiving training and arms in return. By the end of the war the Huks numbered at least 10,000, who, with the return of the Americans—and almost immediate independence from them—were required to disarm.⁴⁹ Unsurprisingly the returning landowners and request for

⁴⁸ Renato Constantino, cited in: Ma. Ceres P Doyo, *Journalist in Her Country: Articles, Essays and Photographs*. (Manila: Anvil, 1993), 42.

⁴⁹ Kerkvliet.

disarmament didn't fare well with a now well-organized army, who had fought side-by-side with the Philippine Army, Constabulary and USAFFE during the war, all of which were now reasserting their dominance and requesting the Huks stand down. Yet many of the Huks remained true to the organization and did not disperse. Taking up arms against this US-inspired administration, the Huks renamed themselves the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB), or People's Liberation Army, in Maoist emulation. The force they represented was considerable and (embarrassingly for the US) trained by the USAFFE. They were therefore well-equipped to run a military campaign that relied on dispersed underground networks and guerrilla tactics.

From the map room to the field

Thus was the transformation of an agrarian society into an organized resistance movement, and the lessons of the Huk insurgency and its demise hold important lessons for the story of land relations in Central Luzon. In order to understand how counterinsurgent warfare was spatialized in Central Luzon, it is important to set up the way in which various approaches to town-planning and town-disintegration were formatted here. When the war ended, Luis Taruc and Vicente Lava ran for congress in 1946 under the title of the Democratic Alliance, only to be disqualified as "terrorists."⁵⁰ The Huks returned underground as an armed insurrectionist movement that, due to their mass base of the peasantry, involved a wide spectrum of rural society. "There was more to guerrilla warfare than fighting" mentions former Huk Silvestre Liwanag in an interview with Kerkvliet, "collecting intelligence about the PC (Philippine Constabulary) and the Japanese, for example [which members] did best in their hometowns and

⁵⁰ They sided with the American poster-boy incumbent President Sergio Osmeña, who ran and lost against a businessman, Manuel Roxas, who sided with the Japanese during the occupation hence the Huk opposition to the Roxas presidency. Simbulan, Dante C. *The Modern Principalia: The Historical Evolution of the Philippine Ruling Oligarchy*. UP Press, 2005.

barrios.”⁵¹ The movement was thus part of rural social life. “I always tagged along the Hukbalahaps,” mentions another former Huk, Pilipinas Magdiwan, “I didn’t know then that they were of the Partido Socialista or Partido Komunista.”⁵² Just as with the resistance against landlords, the Japanese, US involvement or the police, there was degree of malleability with which the organization mobilized itself.

Just as like the Huks formed a formidable countryside network, the counterinsurgency effort was to pursue a similar, on the ground approach. In the atmosphere of growing unease with communist influence in Southeast Asia, the US introduced a new organization to levy support for democratic leadership in 1953, the Joint US Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG), whose members were mostly made up of those officials left behind by the USAFFE. Effectively becoming the main US military intelligence branch in the region, JUSMAG developed new tactics to handle insurgency and a litany of “experts” entered Southeast Asia in this guise.⁵³ One example of these operatives comes from Edward Geary Lansdale, a significant figure in the history of counterinsurgency because of his intuitive, on-the-ground approach to warfare. Taking trips in jeeps around “Huklandia,” the region of Luzon dominated by Huk control, conversing with locals, telling jokes and attempting to get closer to the leader of the Huks, Luis Taruc. Lansdale was an advertising man in San Francisco prior to his appointment with the USAFFE, and he discerned that a new kind of warfare and new tactics would be necessary as the world

⁵¹ Benedict J. Kerkyliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (University of California Press, 1977), 94. (fig 2.09)

⁵² Doyo, Ma. Ceres P. *Journalist in Her Country: Articles, Essays and Photographs*. Manila: Anvil, 1993, 41.

⁵³ On the influx of US intelligence experts into Southeast Asia between 1950–1970, see for example: Mark T. Berger, “Decolonisation, Modernisation and Nation-Building: Political Development Theory and the Appeal of Communism in Southeast Asia, 1945-1975,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 34, no. 3 (2003): 421–48; Mai Elliott, *RAND in Southeast Asia: A History of the Vietnam War Era* (Rand Corporation, 2010); Joshua Kurlantzick, *A Great Place to Have a War: America in Laos and the Birth of a Military CIA* (Simon and Schuster, 2017).

entered the middle of the century, “the world was entering the air age. I had concluded that there would be more elbow room for fresh ideas in the air force than in the older military services.”⁵⁴

It was Lansdale who explained first to a US audience that Huk leaders were communist inspired and believed in a form of “revolution instead of evolution” Marxist politics.⁵⁵ His approach—not unlike advertising—relied on persuasion and pretense, and resemble the beginnings of psychological warfare. Lansdale explains one of his urban graffiti tactics in the towns and villages of Central Luzon in his memoirs,

“The eye of God,” reminded me of the ancient Egyptian practice of painting watchful guardian eyes over the tombs of the pharaohs. The painting was stylized to give the eye a baleful glare to scare away grave robbers. Recalling its appearance, I made some sketches until I recaptured the essence of its forbidding look, and I handed over the final drawing to the Philippine Army with suggestions for its use. It was mainly useful in towns where some of the inhabitants were known to be helping the Huks secretly. The army would warn these people that they were under suspicion. At night, when the town was asleep, a psywar team would creep into the town and paint an eye on a wall facing the house of each suspect. The mysterious presence of these malevolent eyes the next morning had a sharply sobering effect.⁵⁶

Storytelling is crucial to both advertising and counterinsurgency. For Lansdale, military interactions were reformed as a set of aesthetic techniques, cheap “psywar” rather than overt

⁵⁴ In his memoirs Lansdale wrote of his deployment to the Philippines: “My orders were plain. The United States government wanted me to give all the help feasible to the Philippine government in stopping the attempt by the Communist-led Huks to overthrow that government by force. My help was to consist mainly of advice where needed and desired. It was up to me to figure out how best to do this. If funds or equipment was needed, I was to remember that the United States was straining its resources to meet the war needs in Korea and that any requests from me would have to compete against higher-priority demands. As a military officer, I was being attached to the Joint US Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) in the Philippines by the agreement of both governments, although my advisory work wasn’t necessarily to be limited to military affairs. After ninety days I should have run dry of all the advice I was capable of giving and should have returned home again. The subsequent stretching of those ninety days into years of work wasn’t envisioned.” Edward Geary Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars: An American’s Mission to Southeast Asia* (Harper and Row, 1972).

⁵⁵ Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, 147.

⁵⁶ The title cites Ronsard’s *Lettres a Helene*, 2:26. “In the midst of war, in an age without loyalty / Among a thousand trials, is it not great folly / To write of Love? They tie with manacles / Madmen who are not as mad as me.” Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars*, 75.

force that could be spatialized in the towns and villages of the central plain. Whimsical as some of these tactics were, drawing on Philippine folk beliefs or scare-tactics, the Huks were eventually disintegrated through a variety of more concrete JUSMAG schemes.

Just like advertising, “the Huks followed the Communist practice of building their strategic psychological campaigns around slogans,” Lansdale notes, “which were produced by the Politburo after lengthy deliberation [...] Since the Huk movement’s earliest recruiting efforts were among tenant farmers, their main slogan in the early years was ‘Land for the Landless’ [Lupa sa Walang Lupa].”⁵⁷ Lansdale and Magsaysay took the Huk “Land for the Landless” campaign as their own in the 1951 Economic Development Corporation (EDCOR), one of the most famous of the Defense Secretary Ramon Magsaysay’s programs (under President Quirino).

For the EDCOR program, the army cleared land, erected administration buildings, constructed roads, and prepared sites for housing using JUSMAG funds. A prominent Filipino general, and one of Magsaysay’s military strategists, José Crisol, proudly described how the program brought “pacification activities from the map rooms and council table to both field and town plaza, churches and class-rooms.”⁵⁸ In *The Red Lie*, Crisol describes the political function of the EDCOR resettlement farms:

Here, once landless peasants, who turned to dissidence under the incitement of communists who promised them land, learn that they do not have to resort to violence in order to obtain property in a democracy. [...] These socioeconomic weapons have proved more eloquent than the roar of cannon; they have been able to drown out the agitation of communist subversives.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Lansdale, 69; Abaya-Ulindang, Faina. *Resettling the Huks in the Land of Promise: The Story of the Economic Development Corps in Mindanao, 1950-1970*. National Historical Commission of the Philippines, 2017.

⁵⁸ Crisol, Jose. *The Red Lie*. Argo, 1954, 197. (fig 2.13) Crisol enjoyed a long career in the overlap between military-civic engagement, under Magsaysay during the anti-Huk campaigns of the early 1950s; as secretary of defense under Carlos P. Garcia and under Marcos as head of Civil Action Programs, directly supervising the AFP in “home defense activities,” mostly against the New People’s Army.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 202.

A tactic of urban counterinsurgency that recalls the French general Hubert Lyautey's *tache d'huile* (oil stain) approach of building markets, schools and medical centers with his protégé Henri Prost, EDCOR used the logic of atomizing the insurgency through a resettlement policy that moved insurgents hundreds of miles away onto new lands as far afield as Mindanao.⁶⁰ (fig 2.12) Building materials were supplied by the government, and with the assistance of army troops, the families prepared and cleared the land. Each was provided with 6–10 hectares of farmland, gardens, schools, public transport, electricity and water. The conditions were such that newly settled families were forbidden to sell or sub-divide land and must accept advice and guidance from the Philippine Department of Agriculture.⁶¹ The program resettled several thousand Huks and retired army soldiers on farms in Mindanao. So long as peasants felt no obligation to the government, Magsaysay believed, the guerrillas would continue to be respected. Contrary to an earlier 1949 plan to establish a “Devil’s Island” to which convicted dissidents could be shipped, the EDCOR program was a more complex strategy of atomization of insurgency. EDCOR was intended to convince active Huks that steps were being made towards land-reform, while simply removing captured Huks and replacing them to Kapatagan in a remote western region of Mindanao. (fig 2.12)

EDCOR was a successful counterinsurgency operation primarily because, in the celebratory account of the counterinsurgency campaign by Major Lawrence M. Greenberg, “it undercut the foundation upon which the Huk campaign was based. ‘Land for the Landless,’ once

⁶⁰ Cohen, Jean-Louis. “Henri Prost and Casablanca: the art of making successful cities” (1912–1940). *The New City*, (fall 1996), № 3, p. 106-121. Wright, Gwendolyn. “Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy, 1900-1930.” *The Journal of Modern History* 59, no. 2 (1987): 291–316.

⁶¹ Greenberg, Major Lawrence M. *The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955*. Analysis Branch, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., 1987: 89.

the Huk slogan, now belonged to the government.”⁶² This atomization of the populace of Luzon was massive, though estimates differ on the exact number, at least five thousand families were impacted by the program and resettled from central Luzon.⁶³ The psychological effect was “dramatic” and was one of the modes through which the movement was splintered.⁶⁴

The lasting impact of the projects of Lansdale and Magsaysay and the form of counterinsurgency he favored however is often summed up as the “hearts and minds” approach to guerrilla warfare. This approach identifies some of the key differences between guerrilla warfare—harassing an adversary; and revolutionary war—a military means by which to overthrow a political regime.⁶⁵ Within this spectrum warfare must both adapt to the emotional timbre of its surroundings and change them, so too is war itself a part of life. What was crucial to guerrilla warfare in this context was that if an insurrectional movement had a large-scale underground political infrastructure, it would be difficult to eradicate, however these networks could be eradicated if fragmented through programs like EDCOR.

The irrigation age

President Diosdado Macapagal, who took office during a national rice shortage, placed a premium on land reform and agricultural reform.⁶⁶ In his message to Congress on taking office,

⁶² Ibid: 90.

⁶³ Major Andrew E. Lembke. “Lansdale, Magsaysay, America and the Philippines: A Case Study of Limited Intervention Counterinsurgency,” Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. 2012: 81.

⁶⁴ Ibid: 91.

⁶⁵ Chaliand, Gérard, ed. *Guerrilla Strategies: An Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

⁶⁶ “The National Economic Council recently disclosed that the Philippine production of palay decreased from 3,739,500 tons in 1960 to 3,704,800 tons in 1962,” according to the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. (fig 2.12)

Macapagal stressed that land was the most valuable resource, and agriculture “the most important means of converting its potentials into the necessities of life.”⁶⁷ Yet he confronted an a rural system still inherited from the pre-war period, and a land tenure system that retained many of those traditional features in which it was the practice for absentee landlords to fragment their land into small plots where farmers were forced to till land on an uneconomic tenant relationship, many with less than three hectare plots. This practice, historian Dante Simbulan notes, was “one of the more enduring practices that have persisted through the centuries.”⁶⁸ Thus Macapagal laid out the challenge using the former colonizer as a contrast, “it takes three families in the agricultural section to produce the necessary food and fiber for themselves and one family in other sectors of our economy. Compare this rate with that of the American farmer who produces food for twenty-three Americans and three foreigners.”⁶⁹

When the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) was established in 1963, the new agency put a premium on engineering, modelling itself on the TVA and USBR whose engineers served as advisors on early irrigation projects.⁷⁰ The charter gave the NIA the status of a

⁶⁷ Magapagal, Diosdado, address to Philippine Congress on taking office.

⁶⁸ Simbulan, Dante C. *The Modern Principalia: The Historical Evolution of the Philippine Ruling Oligarchy*. UP Press, 2005.

⁶⁹ Macapagal address: “Land is our most valuable resource; agriculture, the most important means of converting its potentials into the necessities of life. For all its national importance, agriculture in the Philippines has progressed so slowly that we must constantly race against population growth. Our production is slow; it takes three families in the agricultural section to produce the necessary food and fiber for themselves and one family in other sectors of our economy. Compare this rate with that of the American farmer who produces food for twenty-three Americans and three foreigners. Our production is hindered by the very structure that should support it—the social structure. Although many of our people are engaged in agriculture, they fail to produce sufficient raw materials to develop our industries. This is not their failure, really, but ours, for we have not provided them greater opportunities.” Also cited in Teodoro M. Locsin, “The Answer to Communism” *The Philippines Free Press*. March 23, 1963.

⁷⁰ The NIA Charter (the establishment of the NIA) was under Republic Act 3601. It abolished the Irrigation Division (previously a branch of the Bureau of Public Works established by the US).

government corporation, entrusted with the task of developing, operating and maintaining irrigation systems all over the country with a mandate to make the decade following the establishment the “irrigation age” of the Philippines.⁷¹ The largely engineering staff had a bias towards larger infrastructures, Wilfredo P. David of Los Baños research institute mentions that this gave the NIA “complete control over irrigation development in the country.”⁷² The flagship project was the Upper Pampanga River Project (UPRP), conceptualized through the National Economic Council (NEC), feasibility studies were undertaken from 1960 through 1965 with the help of USAID and the USBR.⁷³

The emphasis for this irrigation project was on rice. Because of the national goal to attain rice self-sufficiency within a two-decade period, the UPRP would essentially double the irrigated area of Central Luzon and provide reliable water supply to 34,000 farming families for irrigation and double cropping of paddy in a command area of 103,000 hectares.⁷⁴ In 1965, the country imported 595,000 tons of rice, but by 1977, it was exporting rice to neighboring countries.

Reparations and rehabilitation

The economic context of the late 1940s and early 1950s deserves some explanation, since during the occupation of the country by the Japanese Army, occurring between 1942–1945, wrought “total destruction” it was the Japanese Government, under the Shigeru Yoshida

⁷¹ Republic Act No. 3601 “An Act Granting the National Irrigation Administration.” June 22, 1963.

⁷² Wilfredo P. David. *Irrigation Development in the Philippines* (Working Paper No. 90-02). Agricultural Mechanization Development Program CEAT, University of the Philippines at Los Baños. 1990.

⁷³ Wilfredo P. David. *Irrigation Development in the Philippines* (Working Paper No. 90-02). Agricultural Mechanization Development Program CEAT, University of the Philippines at Los Baños. 1990.

⁷⁴ WB Appraisal, 1990; NIA at 50; NIA Digest.

administration as part of the 1951 Treaty of San Francisco, who were responsible for reparations in all of the countries they occupied during the war.⁷⁵ Under the new president Manuel Roxas, the Philippines were to receive US\$550,000,000 in reparations from Japan in 1956, and rehabilitation funds from the US (though he was forced to concede twenty-three military bases for a 99 year lease).⁷⁶ The shortage of food and power set the scene for a range of incentives that took root in the aftermath of the war, and as the *Program for Rehabilitation and Redevelopment* put forth in 1947 report described it, “the possibilities of industrialization and mechanization in this country are vast indeed.”⁷⁷ (fig 2.18)

The report, which, though it was “put forward merely in the form of a suggestion” is illuminating for the sweeping approach to the “urgent need for an overall agro-industrial program in the Philippines,” seen most clearly in its expressive illustrations.

It might be of interest to all investors to know that the government of the Philippines believes in the principle of free enterprise and is committed to a program of encouragement for all who might wish to help us industrialize to the end that we might rise to the level of all progressive and industrialized countries of the world.

It is for this reason that we have gone to the extent of amending our constitution to allow American citizens to participate in the ownership and control of public utilities and in the development of our natural resources.⁷⁸

The latter part, of amending the constitution, was a controversial act on the part of Roxas given that the Philippines was on the brink of independence from the US in 1946. As part of the Bell

⁷⁵ Burma, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, paying a total of ¥364,348,800,000 (US\$1,012,080,000).

⁷⁶ US\$550,000,000 is roughly US\$5,278,740,927 at 1956–2020 inflation rates. The last payment was made to the Philippines on July 22, 1976.

⁷⁷ President Manuel Roxas in the preface for: *Proposed Program for Industrial Rehabilitation and Development*. Oct 27 1947, Malacañan Palace / Beyster Corporation, Detroit Michigan.

⁷⁸ President Manuel Roxas in the preface for: *Proposed Program for Industrial Rehabilitation and Development*. Oct 27 1947, Malacañan Palace / Beyster Corporation, Detroit Michigan.

Trade act of 1946, the Philippines were offered US\$800 million for rehabilitation funds. As well as providing preferential tariffs on US imports, it fixed the exchange rate and granted US and Philippine citizens “parity rights,” which gave US citizens “the right to own public utilities and corporations engaged in natural resource exploitation” in the country—similar to what happened in Hawai’i.⁷⁹ (fig 2.19) The report emphasizes hydro-electric power as the most viable way forward, recommending thirteen sites for hydroelectric development, with most of them clustered in the mountainous north of Luzon, the Cordillera Central. (fig 2.18)

Popular presses followed the internecine disputes between senators that wanted hydro projects for their own districts. For example, Senator Justinio Montano, who even suggested the ultimate pork-barrel project, a hydroelectric dam on Maria Cristina Falls in Mindanao as a solution to smaller pork-barrel projects (referring to instances where ruling politicians channel public money into particular constituencies based on their own political considerations).⁸⁰ (fig 2.20) “After all,” said Montano, “the millions in pork barrel not infrequently go to waste, as they are used not in accordance with law and the actual needs of the people, but to suit political convenience [...] Let’s use the pork barrel millions in productive ventures that well benefit the nation.” To which the *Philippines Free Press* responded “Statesmen-like sentiments, indeed!”⁸¹

The two things that dominated the press in the 1950s—the Huk Rebellion and Reparations funds—were strange bedfellows in Central Luzon. The Huks fought the Japanese

⁷⁹ “US citizens [in the Philippines] acquired—through the Parity Amendment to the Philippine Constitution and the Bell Trade Act—equal rights as Filipinos to exploit the country’s natural resources.” Bello, Walden F., David Kinley, and Elaine Elinson. *Development Debacle, the World Bank in the Philippines*. San Francisco, CA : [Oakland, Calif.]: Institute for Food and Development Policy; Philippine Solidarity Network, 1982, 7–8.

⁸⁰ Sharma, Chanchal Kumar. “A Situational Theory of Pork-Barrel Politics: The Shifting Logic of Discretionary Allocations in India.” *India Review* 16, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 14–41.

⁸¹ “Montano’s Challenge” *Philippines Free Press*, Volume XLI, Number 13. Saturday April 1, 1950: 1.

occupation, a government that now provided the funds for industrial development to modernize this landscape. Luzon was therefore the landscape in which calls for social change, organized resistance and large-scale infrastructural transformations in the physical environment came together. If the national press was dominated by reparations and rebellion in the 1950s, by the 1960s the focus was on food and power shortages. Between these conditions, dam projects were able to operate both on the surface, as a solution to food and power shortages—and as a buttress to projects like EDCOR, as a means of population control.

III

Moving a Mountain

The landscape of Luzon is divided between rugged mountains and a large floodplain of paddy fields, a sharply contrasting environment that contributes to a divided political landscape with administrative boundaries accented by altitude. With its completion in 1974, Pantabangan Dam, a massive hydroelectric dam wedged in two pieces between the steep forested slopes of the Sierra Madre mountains, at the confluence of the Carranglan, Pantabangan and Pampanga Rivers, abruptly brought these diverse realities together. (fig 2.21) The Pampanga River cuts through this messy dialectical terrain, starting in the Cagayan Valley and mountainous terrain of the Sierra Madre range in northeast Luzon. (fig 2.01) These mountains delineate a sharp boundary running northwesterly between the Central Luzon Plain and the northern mountain regions by the Philippine fault, whose tectonic activity has resulted in numerous major faults and a folded mountain topography. In this way, there is a stark divide in the terrain, biome and social

ecology of Luzon, divided between mountains and paddy fields in the floodplain taking up most of the southern half of the island. Any erosion that occurs in the mineral-rich mountains to north is thus carried south by the river and dumped onto the flood plains and rivers to the south, resulting in an alluvial plain of rich soils and a groundwater basin perfect for farming crops.

Republic Act 5499, which authorized the construction of the UPRP, was approved in June 1969 with P800 million and a US\$34 million loan from the Irrigation and Rural Development Division of the World Bank approved in August the same year. Construction began in 1971 by the Hydro-Resources Contractors Corporation and completed the project ahead of schedule in 1974, though the irrigation works were completed 30 months behind schedule.⁸² Hydro Resources Contractors Corporation was headed by Rudy Cuenca, a close friend of David Consunji, who was concurrently head of the NIA and Acting Secretary of the Department of Public Works. Consunji was head of his own private contracting company, D.M. Consunji Inc. (DMCI), closing the loop on the contracting jobs for Marcos cronies.⁸³ “Occasionally,” notes Consunji in his memoir *Passion to Build*, “we would take up some worthy government projects [...] the kind of technically challenging, large-scale, and prestigious projects that would attract reputable architects and builders.”⁸⁴

Consunji had misgivings about joining government when he joined in 1971, “I had many contracts going on,” he told Marcos in August, “one of which was the Pantabangan dam, a

⁸² Project Performance Audit Report: Philippines—Upper Pampanga River Irrigation Project (Loan 637-PH). Operations Evaluation Department, World Bank Group. June 30, 1980. Report No. 3063, 4.

⁸³ David M Consunji, *A Passion to Build: A Memoir of David M. Consunji*. (Quezon City: Center for Leadership, Citizenship and Democracy of the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance and Dacon Foundation, 2004).

⁸⁴ Consunji, *A Passion to Build*, 176. See also: Forbes. “David Consunji.” Accessed November 27, 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/profile/david-consunji/>. In 2017 the Consunji family holdings net worth were \$3.68B. (#6 Philippines 50 Richest 2017)

government project.”⁸⁵ In the end, after multiple meetings with the First Lady Imelda Marcos, he joined. “I was serving the government to pay back society” he later said of accepting the post of secretary of the Department of Public Works, Transportation and Communication (DPWTC) on August 24 1971. Consunji, in his memoirs, recalls Marcos’s orders to “Clean up the department. Find ways to make use of the fund of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Start the physical planning of the country. Get the projects done right and on time.”⁸⁶ Consunji’s misgivings about being in government remained, and whether his memoirs were an opportunity to cover his tracks as a “Marcos crony” remains to be seen.⁸⁷ He kept his desk cleared and empty for the duration of his time there “I left it bare and clean every night, with the drawers unlocked. I asked my secretary to keep all official papers and documents in her desk.”⁸⁸ Nevertheless, Consunji was embroiled in the politics of government offices that were a *mêlée* of widespread corruption. The reparations program, mentioned previously, “was the biggest avenue for corruption in the department [...] it did not take me long to discover how corruption in the DPWTC was widespread and well-entrenched, from the bureaus and district offices down to the field. There were so many opportunities for corruption that department officers [...] could take advantage of.”⁸⁹ Consunji is a complex figure because of his desire—

⁸⁵ Consunji, *A Passion to Build*, 184.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Though he was listed in Marcos’s notorious list of “undesirable characters” that would be removed from government, read to a crowd on the historic Luneta plaza at the end of August 1975. It later emerged that his blacklisting was due to internecine conflict between the “Ilocano bloc,” a group of Ilocanos in Malacañang who were very close to the president and wanted Consunji removed from his powerful post. For cronyism see also: Raquiza, Antoinette R. “Changing Configuration of Philippine Capitalism.” *Philippine Political Science Journal* 35, no. 2 (July 3, 2014): 225–50.

⁸⁸ Consunji, *A Passion to Build*, 185

⁸⁹ Consunji recalled that on a visit to Quezon Province, he was inspecting the construction of a road where the concrete certificate stated a 10-inch-thick surface, “I asked one of the workers to bore sample holes into one section of the road so that we could see the thickness for ourselves. We saw only five inches of concrete.” Consunji, *A*

according to his memoirs—to end corruption within the DPWTC, a task that was not always met with approval from President Marcos. Once, while trying to investigate the use of equipment on rental for different projects than contracted for (in Lanao, Mindanao and in Cebu), Consunji was told by Marcos that “It might be better if you just leave the two alone.”⁹⁰ “The reality that there were untouchables in government hit me hard [...] Marcos would only punish those he could afford to lose.”⁹¹

The streamlining of construction organizations in 1971 meant that Pantabangan Dam was one of the fastest earth-fill dam structures ever built.⁹² Amnon Golan, chief of the IBRD for Far East & Pacific, dubbed the NIA as “the finest irrigation agency in the whole of Asia and in any developing country in the world” when it began operation in August 1974. At this point the project, as the NIA’s flagship project, was renamed the Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation Systems (UPRIIS).⁹³ Three diversion dams, Masiway, Canili, and Diayo Dams channel water from the Aurora watershed toward Pantabangan Reservoir, where the water is held in by the massive Pantabangan Dam, a 350-foot high zoned-earth filled dam, meaning it is built of successive layers of rock with successive layers of permeability, is a mile in length, jutting across the valley in two sections (a main dam and additional one, the Aya Dam). (fig 2.21) Beneath the dam itself run the intake tunnels for the hydroelectric plant itself, which was completed in 1977,

Passion to Build. 189–190. (fig 2.22)

⁹⁰ Consunji, *A Passion to Build*. 192.

⁹¹ *Ibid*

⁹² Flores, Carmen V., and Dionisio S. Jr. Tan-Gatue. “Pantabangan Relocation Rural Development and Local Governments.” *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 19, no. 1 & 2 (1975): [v]-144, 137.

⁹³ *NIA at 50*, 52.

with its two Francis turbines powering a 60MW generator each.⁹⁴ The reservoir has a storage capacity of three billion cubic meters, two-thirds of which would be active for power and the irrigation of multiple-yield rice crops, with a 5700 square kilometer region that produces on average two million metric tons of rice annually.⁹⁵ (Pictured in a hand-drawn map in the 1969 World Bank appraisal for the project, see figs 2.23; 2.02) The provinces covered by UPRIIS are vast, consisting of the whole Nueva Ecija Province and parts of Pampanga, Bulacan, and Tarlac. The dam is responsible for domestic and industrial water supply today, as well as hydro-electric power (with an annual gross output of 232,000,000 kWh).⁹⁶ The next section considers aspects of the relocation process of some 13,000 residents of the seven villages in that were to be submerged.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ R.A. 5499 - An act authorizing the construction of the Upper Pampanga River Project providing for the financing thereof, and for other purposes. "Republic Act No. 5499: REPUBLIC ACTS - PHILIPPINE LAWS STATUTES and CODES."

⁹⁵ Philippine Rice Research Institute, and: "Nueva Ecija, Still the Country's Top Palay Producing Province" *National Statistical Coordination Board*. June 2008. As of Calendar Year 2015, UPRIIS served 119,216.49 hectares which comprises of 4 Provinces, 23 Municipalities, 5 Cities, and 452 Barangay. The main source of water supply for UPRIIS is the Pantabangan Dam with a reservoir area of 8,420 hectares.

⁹⁶ "Initial construction of Pantabangan Hydroelectric Plant was already started as early as 1972 to fill the power needs of the region until the final establishment of the first nuclear plant.[...] The Pantabangan Hydroelectric Plant, is aimed at developing the power potential of the Pantabangan Dam, of about 100 MW. This project is actually the power phase of the Upper Pampanga River Project (UPRP) being undertaken by the NIA. This features irrigation facilities and the construction of the 107 meter high zoned earth-filled Pantabangan Dam. The project, which will cost USD 16.46 million in foreign financing and PHP 78.29 million in local counterpart funding, will be completed by 1977. Other projects are being undertaken to help fill the power demand of the Luzon grid until the final establishment of the power plants is completed. These projects are the Tiwi Geothermal Plant, Sadanga Hydro Plant, Magat Hydro Plant, Kalayaan Pumped Storage Project, the Fifth and Sixth Transmission Lines and the Cagayan Valley Electrification projects." [...] "In due time, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank agreed on a division of tasks between them regarding the financing of development projects for the Philippines. This meant that the World Bank would focus on road-building projects and irrigation projects. For better focus, they divided the amounts for lending to energy initiatives between Luzon and the Visayan islands and Mindanao. The same was true in the case of USAID, the Japanese development program, and other bilateral programs." *Times Journal*, December 6, 1974; Sicat, Gerardo P. *Cesar Virata: life and times through four decades of Philippine economic history*, 2014: 766–767.

⁹⁷ Tamondong, Susan Helin, "State power as a medium of impoverishment: the case of Pantabangan Dam resettlement in the Philippines." In: McDowell, Chris, ed. *Understanding Impoverishment: The Consequences of Development-Induced Displacement*. Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, v. 2. Providence, RI: Berghahn Books,

Patron saints, exhumed bones, bundled up belongings

The old town of Pantabangan, which is recorded at least since the early eighteenth century in a map of the Philippines by Velarde, it is seen in a map drawn by a young missionary, Dominican Fray Francisco Antolín.⁹⁸ (fig 2.24) That this town had been settled since the middle of the 1700s is also visible from the remains of the church that still emerges from the reservoir during dry seasons. (fig 2.25) Thus, the social ecology of the town—bound by Catholicism and farming in a remote part of the furthest reaches of the Pampanga River—was a part of the network of some of the oldest parishes in the country. Toward the end of 1973, as people's belongings were being hauled up the valley slopes in NIA trucks, the first waters began to swirl in what would become a vast reservoir. (fig 2.28; 2.29) Today, the new town of Pantabangan can be found 3 miles south of the old, elevated a few hundred meters to a hill overlooking the reservoir. The resettlement program for the 13,000 people that were displaced by the project was overseen by the NIA, and involved a myriad of related actors: the Department of Agrarian Reform, who administered the leasing and distribution of land to re-settlers; the United Nation's World Food Program; and World Vision (a Christian relief and development group), who provided supplementary food rations during the first three years after transfer to new sites (rations included wheat flour, canned goods, rolled oats and corn-soya milk, as well as corn and sorghum for livestock).⁹⁹

1996.

⁹⁸ Antolin, Francisco, and William Henry Scott. "Notices of the Pagan Igorots in 1789." *Asian Folklore Studies* 29 (1970): 177–249.

⁹⁹ A comprehensive and critical analysis of the resettlement program can be seen in: Tamondong-Helin, Susan D. "State Power as a Medium of Impoverishment." *Understanding Impoverishment: The Consequences of Development-Induced Displacement 2*. Berghahn Books. (1996): 171–174.

If the process of construction and installation of Pantabangan Dam was relatively smooth, the resettlement process was anything but. One resident, Josefina Villaflor-Circa recalled that the situation required much of the community, including “holding the last procession of the image of their patron saint, tearing down many houses and buildings, exhuming bones from graves in the cemetery for reburial elsewhere, bundling up belongings, and bidding neighbors farewell.”¹⁰⁰ The majority of residents wanted to be relocated remaining with the same members of the neighborhood from which they came, the relocation according to these groups resulted, due to rough topography of the new sites, layouts that were neither similar nor reflective of previously existing groupings in the old Pantabangan.¹⁰¹ (fig 2.26)

Residents of Pantabangan, in the town at the center of a valley walled with steep slopes of the Caraballo Mountains, relied on traditional farming and food gathering, “most economists” wrote Flores and Dionisio in 1975, “would consider them living in a subsistence economy.”¹⁰² Farming was done as required by the families of the town, while the delta of the Pampanga and Pantabangan Rivers converging by the town center was a source of fishing and a source of livelihood. With this context in mind, and the age of the town, it was understandable that many of the residents were not enthusiastic about the relocation, even if according to early meetings some “recognized the benefits that the dam would bring to them.”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ With journalist Anselmo Roque of the *Philippine Inquirer* <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/881874/pantabangan-rises-from-watery-grave>

¹⁰¹ Tamangong-Helin: 172

¹⁰² Flores, Carmen V., and Dionisio S. Jr. Tan-Gatue. “Pantabangan Relocation Rural Development and Local Governments.” *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 19, no. 1 & 2 (1975): [v]-144, 137.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 138

The Dam and Town Facilities Division and the Resettlement and Reservoirs Division were in charge of carrying out the relocation program. Coincidentally, the documents recording this process were held in archives of the Department of Agriculture in Quezon City, were destroyed in a fire in the late 1990s.¹⁰⁴ Friar Cornelio van der Aar, the parish priest of Pantabangan assisted with the resettlement program was recorded saying that the piece-meal development of the resettlement area and abrupt transfer of families were key problems in the difficulty many families were having with adjusting to resettlement.¹⁰⁵

Careful attention was paid to the geological situation of the dam site and power station, however the resettlement, which was rushed from the start, gave no forethought to siting and topography of the resettlement sites. Four new townsites, located on hilly terrain was levelled and, in the process, scraped, leaving a farming community in a new location with little to no topsoil. This made it difficult for the community to even carry out backyard planting, let alone developing crops.¹⁰⁶ Because the dam was completed ahead of schedule and the waters began to rise early, the accelerated transfer of over one thousand families took place in 1973 on a “crash program” basis, filling temporary bunkhouses to capacity because the new town remained unfinished.

With Marcos declaring Martial Law in September 1972, any resistance to the chaotic evacuation process was futile, a factor that Susan Tamondong mentions became “an instrument” in the resettlement operation “to silence the people, diffuse resistance and facilitate the smooth and speedy transfer of people to the resettlement sites [...] an effective force that sped up the

¹⁰⁴ According to the archivist at Department of Agriculture in Quezon City, verified by Susan Tamondong.

¹⁰⁵ Mentioned during a workshop held at UPRP-NIA and “Integrated Report prepared by the Human Settlements Program,” UPRP-NIA. November, 1974, 7-8.

¹⁰⁶ Susan Tamondong, personal interview, 2020.

dam construction.”¹⁰⁷ Tamondong describes how the majority of the residents wanted to be resettled within the jurisdiction of the same municipality as previously, yet this was not possible due to the topography, leading to many of the residents migrating out to the cities or other provinces. Indeed, the new townsite was simply not large enough for the resettled and split up the town among four sites: Sitio Tanauan; Lublub; Palayan City; Dilacay.¹⁰⁸ The six components of the resettlement program, which were carried out haphazardly, were:

1. Immediate payment of compensation for the loss of properties, according to on-the-spot assessments done arbitrarily by NIA engineers.
2. The NIA assisted resettlers in building houses in the new sites, who were offered a choice of either: a) construction by the NIA of new housing, to be paid within fifteen years; b) self-help housing with the project supplying materials or; c) transfer of old houses and rebuilding at no extra cost.
3. Land distribution leased to farmers for a period of forty years, administered by the Department of Agrarian Reform.
4. Food assistance provided by the World Food Program (by the United Nations).
5. Financial assistance, 20 million pesos was to be loaned out to resettlers over a fifteen-year period.
6. Cooperative development. The NIA encouraged the formation of coops, of which a number were formed.

In 1979, the Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank visited the project and in 1980 produced a scathing report of the resettlement process:

At project inception, neither the NIA nor the Bank realized the magnitude or complexity of the task involved in resettling the population displaced by the reservoir formed by the dam. None of the preappraisal studies addressed the resettlement issue, and its impact was not evaluated at appraisal, although a modest provision for relocation was made in the appraisal cost estimate for the dam, a total of 2,300 families, or 13,000 people, was displaced by the dam. Of these, 187 families were resettled on irrigated lands in the service area and the remaining 2,116 families were, by their own choice, resettled in four newly developed sites on the hills along the southeastern rim of the reservoir.

¹⁰⁷ Tamondong, Susan Helin, “State power as a medium of impoverishment,” 175.

¹⁰⁸ By November 1974, 2,100 families were relocated in these resettlement areas, with Tanauan being the largest at 1,300 families according to statistics released by the NIA in 1975. Flores, Carmen V., and Dionisio S. Jr. Tan-Gatue. “Pantabangan Relocation Rural Development and Local Governments.” *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 19, no. 1 & 2 (1975): [v]-144, 140.

Relocation became a very emotional issue and was magnified and exploited for political purposes. To obtain agreement of the affected population, NIA complied with the demand that resettlement be within the municipal boundaries of the flooded town, so as to preserve its political identity. Although the settlers were supplied with new housing on easy terms, potable water, electricity, schools and excellent roads, the hilly terrain chosen for resettlement was not capable of providing a livelihood. The cost of resettlement amounted to US\$11.7 million, compared to the appraisal estimate of US\$1.1 million.”¹⁰⁹

The relocation of families according to their territorial grouping resulted in community layouts which were neither similar to the layout of the original communities, nor reflective of neighborhood and/or ethnic groupings that existed in the old Pantabangan.¹¹⁰ Student leaders organized a demonstration in front of the President’s Malacañang Palace. People were outraged when they heard of the congressional legislation that was passed behind their backs. A protest rally was also held at the construction site during this period, where people barricaded the passage of trucks and other construction vehicles. In response to the World Bank’s 1980 audit, the NEDA responded that “we would like to point out that no matter how well conceived plans are, they need to have the people’s support in order to be successful.”¹¹¹

Indeed they did not have the people’s support: no disclosure was given of government and NIA proceedings, and when they were, the townspeople were not told the truth.¹¹²

Researchers with the UN found that with the disintegration of the original town and fracturing of the populace, votes were co-opted, and politics became dominated by dam politics; the state of the land surrounding the reservoir; and the allocation of land and housing in the aftermath of

¹⁰⁹ World Bank 1980 Audit, 5.

¹¹⁰ See also: Urban Designers Associates, Inc., Report on the Site Selection for Pantabangan New Town. Manila, October 21, 1970.

¹¹¹ Attachments to World Bank 1980 Audit, comment from Antonio M. Locsin, Deputy Director-General, NEDA.

¹¹² Oral history with Susan Tamondong, who carried out research in Pantabangan since the late 1970s. (November 2020)

relocation. The story of resettlement itself is not necessarily only the story of a failure in planning but is more telling of the broader territorial shifts at play. A gradual breakdown in ecological relations is only theoretically reflected in social relations, but the self-help resettlement housing and dam construction are part of an ecological complex.

Water and seeds

Many of the farmers in Central Luzon were forced to use the new “miracle rice” *bagong binhi* rice seeds coming from the International Rice Research Institute in Los Baños.¹¹³ These seeds mature within 80–120 days, an extremely rapid cycle (regular long-duration rice varieties mature in approximately 150 days), and because the waters released from the huge dam happened in two cycles per year, most farmers were forced to plant these seeds to keep up with the multi-harvest rice seasons.¹¹⁴ Similarly, the rapid process of harvesting and winnowing the palay also forced farmers to use expensive, new mechanized equipment to aid in the process. Some of the larger landowners had already begun the process of mechanization in the 1950s, investing in tractors, trucks and combines.¹¹⁵

In a later audit released by the World Bank in 1990, among the main reasons for the “mediocre, and declining project performance” were water shortages due to overestimation of water resources, lack of coordination between government agencies, low efficiency due to low

¹¹³ Nick Cullather, “Miracles of Modernization: The Green Revolution and the Apotheosis of Technology,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 2 (April 1, 2004): 227–54; Diana Martinez, “From Rice Research to Coconut Capital,” *Aggregate: Systems and the South*, 2021 (unpublished draft).

¹¹⁴ Kerkvliet, Benedict J. “Martial Law in a Nueva Ecija Village, the Philippines.” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14, no. 4 (December 1, 1982): 13. Ricepedia. “Growth Phases.” Accessed November 29, 2020. <http://ricepedia.org/rice-as-a-plant/growth-phases>.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

construction standards and the unexpected frequency of typhoons and droughts, with adverse effects on yields.¹¹⁶ This was the first major project undertaken by NIA and, at the same time, the largest irrigation project in the Philippines. It can be proposed that there was a tendency on the part of the NIA and the Bank to view irrigation systems as technical problems, that can be solved by applying engineering principles, ignoring the biological and social aspects of irrigation in the process.¹¹⁷ In the Upper Pampanga River Project, providing sophisticated irrigation technologies did not necessarily advance agriculture to the degree that the NIA sought. For example, over 3,000 constant head orifices to maintain and regulate the amount of water running through an irrigation system were provided.¹¹⁸ The vast majority of these CHO's were too sophisticated for farmers to operate effectively and left unused.¹¹⁹

Insurgent returns

As far as restructuring the countryside, the UPRP was far more efficient than EDCOR or any other of the counterinsurgency tactics organized by JUSMAG or carried out by the AFP because of the radical and abrupt change in how people could interact with the landscape. Irrigation and hydroelectricity enabled the transformation of a large river basin, drastically changing the farming practices of both the watershed around the reservoir and the flood basin below. It created a range of new and fragmented zones, involving new units of calculation—and unforeseen elements of chaos. This atomization of space provides a different theoretical

¹¹⁶ World Bank Report No. 8494, March 23, 1990.

¹¹⁷ Wilfredo P. David. *Irrigation Development in the Philippines*, 26.

¹¹⁸ A CHO is a type of device for measuring and regulating the amount of water running through an irrigation system. Discharges are set and varied by changing the gate opening.

¹¹⁹ Wilfredo P. David. *Irrigation Development in the Philippines*, 26.

positioning of the dam: a physical partition in time and a dam of chronology. While it blocked and altered the flow of water, it also blockaded and shifted social time, except instead of slowing time down to a trickle, it sped it up.

The resulting unsettled landscapes sound like science-fiction: tremors, landslides, floods, power shortages and the erosion of hillsides, increased siltation all consequences of the artificial engineering of the water cycle. An “epistemic flood” is to reframe the teleology of technological transfer, a flood is the act of engulfing any previously held possibilities with a new reality, overwhelming preexisting relationships. As knowledge on the ecology was evolving during the 1950s and 60s, a series of interrelated experiments, some of them extremely destructive, were wrought on remote landscapes. That Lilienthal was involved in both experiments with nuclear weapons (at the AEC) and dam-building (at the TVA and D&RC) is hardly a coincidence. As both energy-producing and landscape-destroying endeavors of what Elizabeth DeLoughry calls the “nuclear industrial complex:”

The nuclear tests in the Pacific were foundational to the understanding of the ecology of the planet; their fallout is an uncanny residue for the Anthropocene. Turning to the fossil records of militarized radiation we can more visibly recognize that the Cold War was not simply about the explosive power of nuclear weapons (the immediate, spectacular yield) but rather its long-term radiological effects. In Braudelian terms, the shock of an eventist model of history, the nuclear explosion, should not distract our attention from the impact of a *longue durée* of radioactive ecologies.¹²⁰

DeLoughry’s perspective is important for recognizing the “shock of the eventist” modelled by the dam, a powerful tool in the service of teleology. The larger situation in Central Luzon—the mountains to the north, and the river basin below that partake in the water cycle—benefit from a long-term approach to the site is useful because it shows how the repeated forms of fragmentation are tied together, not only through the notion of cultivation and fertility, but

¹²⁰ DeLoughry, Elizabeth M. *Allegories of the Anthropocene*. Duke University Press, 2019, 70.

through the circumstances in which technical expertise could become so refined in some ways, and so vague in others.

The World Commission on Dams (WCD) made an attempt to account for rural displacement, a project funded by the World Bank from 1997 to 2000 concluded with a report, *Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision Making*.¹²¹ In it, the chair of the WCD, Kader Asmal writes:

Perhaps you see a smooth, parabolic, concrete structure. It seems to generate cheap electricity through turbines at its base. Engineers worship it, ecologists curse it, indigenous tribes lose their culture to it.¹²²

The report contends that the scale of physical displacement of populations is vague to account for at best. The WCD Knowledge Base confirms that “large dam construction has physically displaced tens of millions of people world-wide in the last half century”¹²³ contending that “WCD Case Studies show that the direct adverse impacts of dams have fallen disproportionately on rural dwellers, subsistence farmers, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, and women.”¹²⁴ Despite the differences in their geographical locations, large dams have a lot of similarities in their form and effects. It is therefore important to understand how the complexity of resettlement, as investigated in this chapter, not only took shape architecturally but finds specificity in other global characteristics. The requirements for large dams (being placed far from urban populations, along rivers, in valleys) mean that patterns of displacement and resettlement are recurring. Displacement however is a difficult metric to measure. Of the Narmada River Project on one of

¹²¹ World Commission on Dams, *Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision-Making: The Report of the World Commission on Dams* (Earthscan, 2000).

¹²² World Commission on Dams, *Dams and Development*, iv.

¹²³ World Commission on Dams, *Dams and Development*, 103.

¹²⁴ World Commission on Dams, *Dams and Development*, 124.

India's longest rivers, running through Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, Arundhati Roy describes with frustration,

It's not hard to find out how many graduates India produced [...] But the Government of India does not have a figure for the number of people that have been displaced by dams or sacrificed in other ways at the altars of 'National Progress.' Isn't this astounding? How can you measure Progress if you don't know what it costs and who paid for it? [...] At a private lecture, N.C. Saxena, Secretary to the Planning Commission, said he thought the number was in the region of 50 million (of which 40 million were displaced by dams). [...] 50 million people. [...] I feel like someone who's just stumbled on a mass grave.¹²⁵

It is not only the astounding numbers but the fact that the majority displaced are those living in the remotest areas, with least access to the very systems that energy and infrastructure deem to improve, that they are ethnically different from metropolitan Indians. While the group was successful in opposing the project, and the World Bank who had agreed to fund it did pull out, dam construction nonetheless went ahead later in 2006 and did displace millions. Indeed, "most tribal people, or let's say most small farmers, have as much use for money as a Supreme Court judge has for a bag of fertilizer."¹²⁶ In this light, resettlement alone might be seen as a luxury afforded to those whose governments were aware of the impact that large dam creation would have on the population. It raises the problem of how and in what way do you resettle some of a

¹²⁵ In Arundhati Roy's 1999 article "The Greater Common Good," the Indian novelist and activist decries the impacts of the Sardar Sarovar Dam on India's Narmada River. The project, which had its beginnings in 1961 with then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru has since spanned more than fifty years of dam building and public protest. Roy, who was heavily involved with the dams main opposition movement, Narmada Bachao Andolan that took the project to India's Supreme Court in 1995. "A huge percentage of the displaced are tribal people (57.6 per cent in the case of the Sardar Sarovar Dam). Include Dalits and the figure becomes obscene. According to the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes it's about 60 per cent. If you consider that tribal people account for only eight per cent, and Dalits 15 per cent, of India's population, it opens up a whole other dimension to the story. The ethnic 'otherness' of their victims takes some of the pressure off the Nation Builders. It's like having an expense account. Someone else pays the bills. People from another country. Another world. India's poorest people are subsidizing the life-styles of her richest." Roy, Arundhati. "The Greater Common Good," accessed June 19, 2018, <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/the-greater-common-good/207509>

¹²⁶ Ibid.

country's least connected/remote populations, tribal peoples who's ethnic 'otherness' to the metropolitan political establishment.

A convenient bridge helps us move from the claims of the first half of this chapter, to the content of the second. A secret CIA memorandum that details how, in 1967, President Marcos "moved quickly to meet the revived Huk threat" in Operation Central Luzon, which was, tellingly, renamed the Central Luzon Development Program.¹²⁷ This program implemented land reform, and had the chief goal of large-scale construction: roads, schools and irrigation projects. The document points out the links between development and counterinsurgency, and while it is not exactly a smoking gun, the shift from "operation" to "development program" helps prefigure the uses of pacification schemes that the Marcos presidency would come to rely on. The second truism is the presence of militant communism. The new threat was in fact not the Huks, as the document insinuates, but the New People's Army (NPA), a Maoist-inspired insurgency who in 1967 were in the process of formation.

IV

Rice Terraces and Indigenous Development

The Multilateral Development Bank, State government and multinational corporate view of development supposes that "development" must mean inevitable progress and it must mean the standardization of social, economic and political systems of thought among all peoples in the world. This view also supposes that there is only a single idea of progress and it is best demonstrated by the industrial development experiences of the United States, Japan and Western Europe. This nineteenth century thinking ignores and rejects the vast diversity of human development which has continued for thousands of years

¹²⁷ Intelligence Memorandum: "The Huk Resurgence in the Philippines." Directorate of Intelligence, 18 April 1967. CIA-RDP79T00826A001800010063, 2. (declassified in 2007, fig 2.30)

according to the patterns of climate and environment so different from place to place throughout the world. Indigenous populations like the Kalingas, Bontocs, Borucas, Samis of Scandinavia, Inuit of the Circumpolar region and Quecheuas of the Andean region of South America have viewed the idea of “development” as a complex process of adjustment and adaptation to diverse climates and environmental conditions. Development is both a spiritual process and a cultural process aimed at a balance between human need and the requirements of the physical and spiritual worlds. Diversity and flexibility are considered fundamental to indigenous development thinking.¹²⁸

This statement comes from the environmentalist and indigenous activist Rudolph Ryser, which he presented to Congress in a 1983 testimony before the House Banking Committee’s Subcommittee on International Development Institution and Finance. It was a landmark event that brought together activists and organizations from around the world to testify on the damage of large-scale development projects, in particular those led by the World Bank and IMF. This section explores what Ryser calls “indigenous development thinking” through one of the populations he mentions, the Kalinga, and the circumstances of the Chico River Project in the Cordillera Central. The Chico River Project, begun in 1973, was a hydropower project launched on the heels of the Upper Pampanga River Project.

Through an investigation of the architectural scales of rice terraces in the Cordillera and a resistance movement that thwarted the governments dam plans, I argue that landscape and the language of ecological protection were forms of “indigenous development thinking” in action. The rise of a broader understanding of “ecosystems” after the 1970s began to include broader physical, biological and social surroundings within the purview of the developmentalist mindset. Yet this broadening also negated many of the previous claims and praise that development garnered from the former generation of developmentalists such as Lilienthal, Huxley, or even

¹²⁸ Testimony before the House Banking Committee’s Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and Finance submitted by Ralph Eluska, Vice President and Head of the NCAI International Relations Portfolio, and presented by Rudolph C. Ryser, Deputy Director and Counselor for International Relations. June 29, 1983, 510–512.

Giedion. For early TVA projects and even those being planned into the 1970s, there was virtually no accountability for “externalized costs,” where they were going, and who would bear them.¹²⁹ One example from the previous section includes the consideration of resettlement, something that the World Bank and those planning the project gave little foresight toward. The calamitous results only came to light after the Operations Evaluation Department investigated the project over the five years following its completion.¹³⁰ Similarly, the Cordillera resistance movement brought on the establishment of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), which has become key to indigenous activism and resistance since.¹³¹

The emerging terminologies of “ecology” and “indigenous development thinking” did not arise through academic or even environmentalist discourse, but through populations like the Kalinga who live on the banks of the Chico River and fought development of the Chico River Dam Project for three decades.¹³² In this resistance, a register was formulated for understanding the physical consequences of development through bodily, communal and folk-historical notions of preservation of the existing landscape. This linked together, as I examine in this section, rice

¹²⁹ Castro, Marcia C., Gary R. Krieger, Marci Z. Balge, Marcel Tanner, Jürg Utzinger, Maxine Whittaker, and Burton H. Singer. “Examples of Coupled Human and Environmental Systems from the Extractive Industry and Hydropower Sector Interfaces.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113, no. 51 (December 20, 2016), 14528–35.

¹³⁰ World Bank Reports: 8494; 348a-PH; P-1419-PH; and 3063. See also section 2.5 this chapter. Indeed, best practices for dam-induced displacement and resettlement schemes are still widely debated today. International Hydropower Association “How-To Guide Hydropower Resettlement” Hydropower Association, 2020.

¹³¹ “Free, Prior and Informed Consent | Indigenous Peoples | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.” Accessed December 27, 2020. <http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-pillars/fpic/en/>; Delina, Laurence. “Indigenous Environmental Defenders and the Legacy of Macli-Ing Dulag: Anti-Dam Dissent, Assassinations, and Protests in the Making of Philippine Energyscape.” *Energy Research & Social Science* 65 (February 14, 2020), 101463.

¹³² Delina, Laurence. “Indigenous Environmental Defenders and the Legacy of Macli-Ing Dulag: Anti-Dam Dissent, Assassinations, and Protests in the Making of Philippine Energyscape.” *Energy Research & Social Science* 65 (February 14, 2020), 5.

terraces to traditional village structure down to Kalinga dwellings themselves. As Ryser intones, development was not simply a process of enactment “from the west to the rest,” but was already a process through which many groups had understood their relationship to their surroundings.¹³³ What becomes clear by contrasting these two examples of hydro-politics on the Pampanga River and the Chico River is that the landscape of development differs in each case. The Pampanga and the flood plain of Central Luzon is vastly different to the high-altitude Cordillera mountains through which the Chico courses. The Cordilleras have a centuries-long history of resistance to encroachment, but also a highly advanced form of terraced farming. This difference is key because it means that while Central Luzon was essentially beset by feudal planter relations, the Cordilleras had practiced a form of landscape architecture land husbandry that was self-perpetuating.

Ryser presented during two days of hearings in Washington DC, convened in June 1983 by a series of Washington environmentalist groups (the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Environmental Policy Institute, and the National Wildlife Federation as well as the London- and Washington-based Survival International and Cultural Survival in Boston) who had persuaded the House Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and Finance to hold these hearings as a review of multilateral development banks (MDBs) and the environment. In *Mortgaging the Earth*, Bruce Rich provides details of the hearings, two days of “development gone mad.”¹³⁴

¹³³ In 1975 Mr. Ryser was selected by tribal leaders in the Northwest U.S. States to serve as a Specialist on U.S. government federal administration of Indian Affairs on the American Indian Policy Review Commission (A joint U.S. Senate/House of Representatives Commission established to study U.S. and tribal policies and recommend alternative policies to the Congress).

¹³⁴ Bruce Rich, *Mortgaging the Earth: The World Bank, Environmental Impoverishment, and the Crisis of Development*, 2017, 114.

The witnesses recounted case after case of environmental and social disasters financed by the Bank and its sister institutions: huge dams that displaced indigenous peoples, botched irrigation schemes that contributed to the spread of waterborne diseases such as malaria and schistosomiasis, cattle ranching schemes that destroyed tropical forests, and massive resettlement projects, including the Polonoroeste and Transmigration programs, for which the World Bank had recently committed hundreds of millions of dollars.¹³⁵

Similarities between lived experiences emerged through the witness stand during these days, indeed Rich himself was involved in the resistance to the Polonoroeste project with the Natural Resources Defense Council, a project that was later halted in 1985 due to environmental reasons—a first for these reasons.¹³⁶ Conceptions of development appeared to approach a Lyotardian *differend*: two worldviews that cannot reconcile with the terms of the other's existence.¹³⁷ “It is not the Bank's policy to prevent the development of areas presently occupied by tribal people” reported a Bank document submitted for consideration, “assuming that tribal people will either acculturate or disappear, there are two basic design options: The World Bank can assist the government either with acculturation, or with protection in order to avoid harm.”¹³⁸ Either way, the Bank was automatically involved in each design option. Ryser dryly observed that this policy simultaneously advanced market economy goals while “easing tribes into the

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ *The Ecologist*, Vol. 15 No. 4, 1985: 146

¹³⁷ “a differend would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments. One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy.” This precept is also put to use by Arindam Dutta in “Infinite Justice: An Architectural Coda.” *Grey Room*, no. 7 (2002): 41–55; Lyotard, Jean François. *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*. Theory and History of Literature, v. 46. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988: xi.

¹³⁸ “Tribal Peoples and Economic Development: Human Ecologic Considerations.” The paper was prepared by Robert Goodland, David Maybury-Lewis, Raymond Noronha, Rebecca Latimer, and Francis Lethem, and with the editorial support of Margaret de Tchihatchef, May 1982. Finance, United States Congress House Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and. *Environmental Impact of Multilateral Development Bank-Funded Projects: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and Finance of the Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Eighth Congress, First Session, June 28 and 29, 1983*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983: 539.

mainstream economic system,” reducing tribal peoples as obstacles to development and therefore units in a system of measurement to be accounted for.¹³⁹ As “development units,” tribal peoples like the Kalinga fell into the same statistical systems that organized allocation of concrete for the construction of the Chico dams and the relocation dwelling units that would be necessary for their rehousing. Contrarily, Kalinga development thinking felt otherwise, yet was still bound to physical, architectural and urban aspects, as the next section unfolds.

Thinking through Indigenous development thinking

Implicated within the Bank’s hegemonic terms, tribal peoples are assumed to submit both to displacement but also a different worldview, a different chronotope entirely. Indigenous development thinking, if it is to be taken seriously, must therefore not be understood as an “alternative to” or an “enrichment of” existing ways of modelling the world, but a different way altogether. Are its teachings too complex, or too simple? Or only possible to think of through the metrics of western thought? To take up Ryser’s claim from a Kalinga starting point, consider this conversation between Bugtong and Pedro, a tribal elder and his younger friend, discussing the government’s designation of those without land titles as “squatters,” in a 1973 book of children’s tales:

“They tell me that I should not farm my land anymore because I am a squatter. What do they mean by a squatter?”

“The government man says that you should have a paper called a ‘title,’ if you have that paper, it means that you own the land.

“Each one of us borrows some of the land and uses it carefully. How can that young boy from the government think that a paper is going to make me own any land?”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ “The World Bank’s New Indigenous Policy: A Change in International Economic Development Strategies”

¹⁴⁰ Pedro Bundok, *Democracy Among the Mountaineers*. New Day Publishers, 1973, 40–41.

For the government man it is property, and the distinction between using and owning which becomes apparent in this dialog. “How could paper make me own land?” is described as a question of perspective, and it appears alongside woodcut prints showing tribal groups attending political rallies and rice terraces in mountainous surroundings. (fig 2.30)

The powerful paradigm of property came to clash with those it encountered in Mountain Province and those who lived on ancestral domain there for a series of reasons. The landscape had for centuries been subject to an intense form of terraced farming, so much so that it had been changed throughout the region. Indeed, it would be impossible to identify how the terraces were begun and who maintained them. When the government arrived it was therefore an explosive moment:

One day, before the first rice harvest, in the month of June, a big iron bird descended from the sky and landed near the village of Basao. When the motor of the iron bird stopped, a white man appeared. He was guarded by four uniformed soldiers. He spoke through an interpreter and this was what he said:

“My name is Manuel Elizalde. I come as the representative of President Marcos. The dams are projects of our government. If you oppose the dams, you oppose the government. If you oppose the government, you will be arrested and put to jail.”

In this oral history, Ama Yag-ao tells of how he first met Manuel Elizalde, the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (Panamin).¹⁴¹ (fig 2.31) Ama Yag-ao is Kalinga, a heterogeneous grouping of multiple tribes spread throughout the Cordillera mountains that have been described as “Igorots,” “headhunters,” “cultural minorities,” and most recently “Indigenous peoples” (IPs) in the past three centuries. By the mid-1970s the Kalinga were forced into a battle with the government over the development of a series of dams that would have flooded hundreds of

¹⁴¹ Ama Yag-ao tells his story to the priest, journalist and activist Manny Lahoz. Manuel C Lahoz and University of the Philippines Press, *Of tyrants and martyrs: a political memoir*, 2017.

square kilometers of ancestral domain.¹⁴² While construction of the Upper Pampanga River Project was well underway in 1973, the Philippine government announced these new plans to develop the hydropower resources of the mountainous interior to the northwest of Nueva Ecija. The UPRP was instructive for the organization of a coordinated resistance against the Chico River Project, a Marcos government scheme to build at least four dams along the Chico River, assisted by Panamin to organize the resettlement process. The project would become a globally renowned, “the most important conflict yet between the Marcos administration and the communist insurgents,” between which the Kalinga were caught.¹⁴³ This next section will outline what happened on the Chico River in Mountain Province with a view to understanding the notion of indigenous development thinking, when contrasted with the atomization in space and partitioning of time that happened in Central Luzon.

Interpreting legacies and legitimacies of Kalinga resistance

This was not the first time the Kalinga were threatened with relocation due to extraction of resources on or underneath their ancestral lands. In 1881 the Governor-General Fernando Primo de Rivera gave an ultimatum to all Kalingas (and other independent tribes) to move to the lowlands or have their property destroyed. The government reversed the orders since, believing other military generals in the region, would have begun a long and difficult (and ultimately costly) campaign owing to the Kalinga’s fierce reputation. One commander in the region, Evaristo de Liébana y Trincada wrote that:

¹⁴² However the Kalinga-speaking peoples are a large group of diverse autonomous villages, peoples. See Scott, William Henry. “Old Folkways, New Societies.” 1979, 69.

¹⁴³ Sheila Ocampo, “The Battle for Chico River,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*. October 20, 1978: 32–34.

Everything that can be promised them in the lowlands they already have in more abundance in their own villages; why should they leave their fields which are better cared for and richer than those of the [lowland] Christians? Destroying their terraces or the retaining walls on the mountainsides, which is what the Dominican father recommends, would be no irreparable damage, nor even much damage at all: the work of restoring them would be nothing compared to what they would have to put forth to make them anew in the lowlands [...] is it possible with one stroke of the pen to eradicate the customs, religion (if such it be) and independence of a whole people, even if this people be Igorots?¹⁴⁴

Placing the history of Kalinga resistance struggles is important to the story of land confrontations through time. The disputes of the 1970s were not isolated aspects of neo-imperialism, but rather part of a long lineage of encounter between ambassadors of civilization and the more remote coordinates of confrontation they met with. In Commander Evaristo's account is there is the self-evident comparability between a nineteenth century "stroke of the pen" and a twentieth century typewritten memo or geological survey, but this is not the most interesting aspect. Rather, it is that Evaristo elucidates that it would be a pointless task: "destroying their terraces" would do little damage at all. Clearly, Evaristo saw the larger situation at stake, that the Kalinga would hardly be stopped from rebuilding and continuing, so strong was the community there.

The letter appears in a 1973 article by William Henry Scott, a historian living in Sagada, a remote village in Mountain Province. The article describes the multiple attempts to incorporate the Kalinga into the Spanish, then American society, both of which failed spectacularly until the Marcos "New Society" which formed the most brutal assault on the region. Scott enunciates how the Kalinga remembered the plight of the 1950 Ambuklao evacuees, "still pressing their claims on the government, and the fact that for 20 years Ambuklao provided not one kilowatt of energy

¹⁴⁴ Commander Evaristo de Liébana y Trincada, *Apuntes sobre el Camino military emprendido desde la Provincia de Abra a la de Cagayan*. Madrid, 1882, 24–25. Cited in: Scott, "Old Folkways, New Societies" 1979, 74–75.

for any Igorot community on the Cordillera.”¹⁴⁵ (fig 2.14) The colonization “without an occupation force” was one of the major changes that took place in the twentieth century, where authoritarian development ran a two-decade course.

Of the proposed dam projects along the Chico River, the National Power Corporation (NPC) wrote that the Kalingas have “nothing to lose but everything to gain.”¹⁴⁶ Yet the Kalingas were well aware of what had occurred years earlier at Ambuklao and in Nueva Ecija:

Some of them have also heard about the plight of Pantabangan farmers who now barely eke out a living in the hilly, barren place where they were relocated, with grand promises for just compensation for their land and homes. Now the old barrio of Pantabangan is under the waters of a dam, with only its lonely church tower which sometimes surfaces when the water level is low as a grim reminder of better days and the government’s broken promises.¹⁴⁷

Government embarrassment of what happened at Pantabangan was only heightened because of the lack of coordination, co-opted votes and lack of telling the public the truth about what would take place in advance.¹⁴⁸ Published in 1979, this typewritten and mimeographed article in *Tribal Forum* enunciated the problems as they were emerging, a mere five years after the completion of UPRP. The critiques leveraged against the government and the World Bank from within the Philippines during the 1970s were both blurry and particular.¹⁴⁹ Within the archipelago the

¹⁴⁵ Scott, “Old Folkways, New Societies,” 80–81.

¹⁴⁶ *Tribal Forum*, May–June 1980, 7; *Hydropower Vital to Progress*, National Power Corporation (1975?)

¹⁴⁷ “Dumagats & Remontados: Defying the Dam” *Tribal Forum*, April-May 1981, 10.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Susan Tamondong, November 2020.

¹⁴⁹ Three key critiques of the World Bank in the Philippines animate the discussion of the Chico River Project, and these came from external commentators. Charles Drucker who wrote on dams and ecological destruction in the British popular journal *The Ecologist*; Joel Rocamora, an activist working in Berkeley and writing for the *Southeast Asian Chronicle*; and thirdly, Walden Bello an exiled activist who, so convinced of the World Bank’s ill-dealings in his home country, broke in to their headquarters in Washington DC, stole 6,000 documents and published them in a book, *Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines*, published by the Institute for Food and Development Policy in 1982. Their commonalities include all of them working for environmental organizations and anti-poverty activism, outside the Philippines for reasons of exile.

situation of martial law meant that government criticism could have you “red-tagged,” meaning that you might be labelled as a dissident and communist sympathizer with the PKP.

Critics of the government stopped using real names and took on aliases or stopped using names at all. The volume of critique never waned; if anything, it grew in intensity and output. This gave those presses the nickname “the mosquito press” for their constant annoying of Marcos. Among the organizations who helped channel the mosquito presses was the Catholic Church of the Philippines (CCP), who through their vast network and government legitimacy (or amicability) were able to disseminate a large number of publications, with the two longest-running being *Signs of the Times* (AMRSP) and *Tribal Forum* (ECTF).¹⁵⁰ These publications therefore provided critical information as it happened during a time of political silencing and censorship, while for this particular story, they present a crucial source of historical information from the tense context of martial law Philippine resistance fronts. A later article in 1981 describes the disastrous situation in Nueva Ecija:

Since its completion in 1974, Pantabangan Dam has turned the surrounding hillsides to a barren expanse. Pantabangan residents mockingly refer to it as a “cemetery,” where 14,000 weary people live in poverty and misery. They have no significant source of employment. Water service is unreliable. The promised two-year food ration from the World Food Program lasted only for a few months. Frequent earthquakes frighten the people, especially after a landslide plunged 100 houses into the valley below.¹⁵¹

Landslides, earthquakes, no potable water and food shortages. (fig 2.33) These are not the characteristics of a fertile valley village.

¹⁵⁰ Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines and the Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos were two of the larger organizations running bi-weekly circulatory papers.

¹⁵¹ “Dams mean destruction.” *Tribal Forum*, Vol. 1, No. 1. 1979, 5–6. See also photographs of surrounding hillsides, figure 2.02.

Anti-colonial archaeology

The rice terraces in Ifugao (referencing both the ethnolinguistic group and province within the Kalinga region) are a flashpoint in anti-colonial archaeology. The group and region have a cultural identity that existed despite Spanish colonization, which, though it dominated lowland provinces of the Philippines, failed to penetrate higher altitude and more remote parts of the country.¹⁵² Thus, the peoples in the Cordillera Central were largely uncolonized peoples, maintaining indigenous belief systems, agricultural practices, and social systems, and similarities between such uncolonized peoples can be seen across upland and remote Southeast Asia.¹⁵³ The so-called “pericolonial” setting of Ifugao was distinguished in many ways from lowland life, and the adaptations made to the physical environment—specifically the terraced mountainsides—have drawn archaeologists, historians and anthropologists to the region for over a century.¹⁵⁴ Though terraced wet-rice cultivation, which happened in the high Cordillera may have existed for thousands of years, it intensified during the Spanish colonial period, suggesting that there was increased demand for food and other agricultural products.¹⁵⁵

The irrigated terraces dominate the gentler slopes of the region (fig 2.34) and numerous small settlements accompany them. The terrain, which lies at between 1000 and 1500 meters

¹⁵² Acabado, Stephen. “The Archaeology of Pericolonialism: Responses of the ‘Unconquered’ to Spanish Conquest and Colonialism in Ifugao, Philippines.” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 21, no. 1 (March 1, 2017), 3.

¹⁵³ See: “Zomia” definition by James C. Scott. Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press, 2009.

¹⁵⁴ W. H. Scott; Worcester; Rosaldo; William Jones; Roy Barton; Otto Beyer; Harold Conklin.

¹⁵⁵ According to the findings of the Ifugao Archaeological Project: Acabado, 2017 (see table on page 8). Acabado suggests that the intensification of wet-rice terrace farming happened after 1585, in other words, since Spanish arrival by modelling of radiocarbon dates from the Bocos terrace system, Banaue, Ifugao; alongside paleoethnobotanical information from soils recovered from the Old Kiyangan Village and Hapao Terrace Cluster.

above sea level, sees annual rainfalls that exceed 3000mm, and thus water is abundant throughout the year. The planting season runs from December until March, which is followed by a three-month dry season and harvest throughout July. The terraces are kept inundated with water all year since they lie below the mixed tropical montane forests of steeper terrain, and thus benefit from the mineral runoff.

In the late 1960s Harold Conklin, an American anthropologist, carried out extensive mapping work and fieldwork with the Ifugao, a province that neighbors Kalinga to the south. The rice terraces of Ifugao, like those across the Cordillera, involved a complex set of techniques for water management and cycles of agricultural systems. It is instructive to look both at the way in which Conklin mapped out Ifugao, as well as the actual data he gathered. Both interpretations are valid inasmuch as they reveal a complex mountain engineering hydrology, and the means by which ethnohistory categorizes a different world system. How Conklin observed Ifugao culture reveals the way in which the ethnographer investigated a territory and tried to map it out according to Western scientific models—diagrammatic representations of seasonal farming systems, tabulated data on vocabulary terms, and maps that conformed to Euclidean geometry—in short, the height of the tools of 1970s ethnography. Similarly, the actual results gained from his study are some of the most complex analyses and deepest research that has been produced out of the region, at least as far as the disciplines of anthropology, architecture, biology and forestry are concerned (if not others). The main import from taking a look at Conklin's work is a deeper analysis of the engineering of the countryside that takes place in Ifugao, Kalinga and other parts of the Cordillera, providing more opportunity to pursue the idea of indigenous development

thinking through architectural, landscape forms, as averse to an analysis of the environmentalism of the poor.¹⁵⁶

In the montane tropical agricultural system of Ifugao, society is governed by the intricate interplay of three patterns of mixed farming: woodlots (that belong to a family); swiddens (*kaingin* or slash and burn); and pondfields.¹⁵⁷ (fig 2.35) Agricultural decisions are made by individual farmers in a strict social ranking system that binds familial social relations together with the land. This is perhaps one of the largest differences to the *kasama* system of tenant farming on the Central Luzon plain. This is not to say that it is an egalitarian, flattened hierarchical society, Conklin writes that it is generally assumed that “all resources and units of time or space are distributed unequally” in Ifugao society.¹⁵⁸ “No two seasons or rituals are of the same duration or importance [...] most differences are ranked.”¹⁵⁹ This ranking system affects status of person, property and natural phenomena, and though it is modifiable, it is only changed through “long-range calculation” and “competitive” action. This means that Ifugao society is heavily governed both by social relations and seasonal changes, but that like the clay separating one terrace wall from the next, these relationships are tight and compact.

¹⁵⁶ Martinez-Alier, Joan. “The Environmentalism of the Poor.” *Geoforum* 54 (July 1, 2014): 239–41.

¹⁵⁷ An in-depth discussion of shifting cultivation (known as *kaingin* in the Philippines) appears in chapter 4. The longer history of *kaingin* comprises the colonial perspective on shifting cultivation as primitive and detrimental to the landscape, a key example being in the zoologist and politician Dean C. Worcester, who in 1914 wrote: “One thing which renders it difficult to deal with some of the Filipinos of this province is that in its more remote districts they are showing a marked tendency to scatter out into the forests where they make *cañingins*, or forest clearings, and live in tiny huts. Little by little they are gravitating back to the barbarism from which they originally emerged, and under existing laws they are free to do this if they like. I regret that this tendency is by no means confined to the province of Palawan. The Spaniards dealt with it in no gentle manner, but we are powerless to do more than argue against it.” Dean C Worcester, *The Philippines, Past and Present* (London, 1914), 608–609.

¹⁵⁸ Conklin, Harold C, Puggūwon Lupāih, Miklos Pinther, and American Geographical Society of New York. “Ethnographic Atlas of Ifugao: A Study of Environment, Culture, and Society in Northern Luzon.” New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980, 36.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Conklin observed how the Ifugao perceive the surface of the land as transformable, changeable, and transportable, noting that during the long off-season from August through November, men “channel, impound, and sluice vast quantities of water and invest much labor to amass, move and use tons of stone and earth in the repair and expansion of pond fields.”¹⁶⁰ This is easy to see from his photographs, but appreciable in more detail from a cross section that reveals the complexity of the terrace forms. (figs 2.36). They are composed from five different layers of packed stone and earth, increasing in density with proximity to the pond. Not only do spillways allow water from specific points along the pond-field rims, but there are also submerged water sources that circulate beneath the visible ponds and dikes.

While the terraced mountainsides marking out visual contours might appear to be timeless—constructed by hand, covering swathes of steep hillsides—they are not entirely out of time. Like Stephen Acabado (mentioned earlier in this chapter), Conklin argues that terracing activities intensified during the Spanish colonial period, suggesting migration to, and isolation within, the mountains, and though they could have existed long before that, there is less archaeological evidence to support the extensiveness with which the landscape was formed (at least by 1979, when Conklin’s studies were concluded). This facet produces a different awareness for the environmental condition of the complexity of terraces and the livelihoods and seasons with which they are interwoven. Moreover, the specific technologies that allow the terraced landscapes to exist are a tripartite framework of architectural, geological and hydrological design.

To translate the notion of development thinking to the micro-scale of Ifugao terrace-construction, attention must be paid to both seasonality and social relations. Terrace-making is

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 1, 36.

dictated by the dry season and the damage that the previous wet-season may have brought, terraces are fixed and adapted over time (fig 2.34) and therefore change with the seasons. Similarly, because terraces are allocated according to social ties, those ties—and their jurisdiction—may change with heavy rains and a mudslide altering the shape and size area of any given terrace. It is productive to think about some of the aspects of this way of “development” thinking in contrast with governmental development, which, just like its budgets and units, rises in scale with the amount of water blocked into a valley section.

The concern with familial individuality extends to the level of the house (*bale*, fig 2.37) despite the interconnected nature of the hamlet itself, which tend to hug the contours of the hillside in line with terraces to provide more space for pond-fields. The house unit and attendant ponds that each family tends remain discrete, just as each nuclear family remains in a separate *bale*, a house raised on four posts. Indeed this house-system extends to naming practices for family (*himbale*, spouse; *imbale*, child).

Terraced rice farming preserves the mountainside by stabilizing and creating a natural form of flood control.¹⁶¹ These terraces, formed many centuries before the first galleons moored in the archipelago, have been inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage sites since 1995.¹⁶² This

¹⁶¹ Acabado, Stephen. “The Archaeology of Pericolonialism: Responses of the ‘Unconquered’ to Spanish Conquest and Colonialism in Ifugao, Philippines.” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 21, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 1–26; Acabado, Stephen, Marlon Martin, and Francisco Datar. “Ifugao Archaeology.” *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 5 (February 1, 2017): 1–11; Conklin, Harold C, Puggūwon Lupāih, Miklos Pinther, and American Geographical Society of New York. “Ethnographic Atlas of Ifugao: A Study of Environment, Culture, and Society in Northern Luzon.” New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

¹⁶² Though there has been notable dispute over how old the rice terraces in Ifugao are. While the UNESCO inscription states that: “For 2,000 years, the high rice fields of the Ifugao have followed the contours of the mountains. The fruit of knowledge handed down from one generation to the next, and the expression of sacred traditions and a delicate social balance, they have helped to create a landscape of great beauty that expresses the harmony between humankind and the environment.” In contrast, Stephen Acabado, an archeologist at UCLA, notes that “Although I acknowledge the notion that the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, there are multiple absences that together fail to establish an earlier presence of wet-rice in Ifugao: no weeds associated with wet-rice ecology, starch residue from cooking pots are from tubers, and no rice phytoliths in layers that are earlier than the 1600s.” UNESCO World Heritage Centre. “Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras.” UNESCO World Heritage

fact alone lends weight to the conflict between two forms of environmental management: soil and water as cultural objects to be preserved; and valleys and flood basins as sources of potential energy. It raises the notion of “environmental states,” an idea that Michael Goldman develops in *Imperial Nature*. The environmental states that are emerging around the world today, Goldman remarks, are topographically demarcated forms of resource allocation, “marked by the specific needs of transnational capital, which are shaping the form of legality and eco-rationality.”¹⁶³ If these overlapping forms of visualizing landscapes through the ecological survey found their precedent in sites like Ifugao, an ecologically-rich environment of potential energy, or an “energyscape” as Delina notes in regard to Kalinga, then it only heightened the green-neoliberal pressures that have “fragmented, stratified, and unevenly transnationalized Southern states, state actors, and state power in ways that defy simple definitions of modernization.”¹⁶⁴

Valleys of architectural history

To contextualize the Ifugao rice terraces in architectural history, at this point we take a moment to reflect on how landscape forms have influenced the history and historiography of architectural thought. The Scottish botanist and town planner Patrick Geddes has been canonized in architectural history for his interpretation, over a century ago, of the “civilizational values”

Centre. Accessed November 18, 2020. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/722/>; Acabado, Stephen. “The Archaeology of Pericolonialism: Responses of the ‘Unconquered’ to Spanish Conquest and Colonialism in Ifugao, Philippines.” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 21, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 19–20.

¹⁶³ Goldman, Michael. *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization*. Yale University Press, 2008, 183.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. Also: “In prodding state agencies to become more environmental and neoliberal, the World Bank prompts them to make a country’s natural assets accountable in two senses: first, in being counted and thereby made visible locally and transnationally, and second, in reference to new environmental, economic, and cultural norms and responsibilities, with new institutional policing and extractive capacities.” Simply put, “for the state to gain power in Laos, it is dam building or nothing” Delina, “Indigenous Environmental Defenders and the Legacy of Macli-Ing Dulag.” 190.

that abide by his visualization of “The valley section from hills to sea.”¹⁶⁵ (fig 2.39) Indeed, Geddes and his “Valley Section” had an influence on both the European comprehensive city-planning movement of CIAM and American technologists like Lewis Mumford.¹⁶⁶ Yet Geddes’ treatise has seldom been read more closely than Mumford’s positioning of it, which interpreted it as heralding the cohesive, natural advances of Western civilization, symbolized in the aggregation of particular tools developed for specific parts of the landscape.

In the short text, “The Valley Section” which was a transcription of one of his lectures at the New School of Social Research in 1909, Geddes contrasts the “corn-based individualism of the West” to the “rice-based communal family and institutions from the East,” in which he noticed that the type of crop-management routines also affected the livelihoods of those who tended them. In contrast to the Western concept of individuality, Geddes describes that:

...if we are Easterners, and if we are cultivating rice, the position is quite different. At the start, we can have no cultivation at all until we have formed one big water committee for the district; for we have to control the water supply of the valley and adjust its flow so each cultivator may get enough to cover his rice-fields. Here community action becomes the first necessity. Further, while corn had needed a strong man to drive and plough, everyone can put the tiny plant of rice into the ground and press it with his foot; not only the woman but the little children and the grandparents can play their part. The men here have no superiority over them.¹⁶⁷

Ethno-nationalist stereotypes notwithstanding, Geddes was interested in seeing the role of community in the management of agricultural landscapes, even if he took the basic precepts of

¹⁶⁵ Geddes, Patrick. “The valley section from hills to sea.” Transcription of one of the lectures given by the author at the *New School of Social Research*, as published in: Geddes, Patrick. *Cities in evolution*. New and Revised Edition. London: Barnes and Nobles. 1959.

¹⁶⁶ Lewis Mumford, the early-twentieth-century technologist was inspired by the idea Geddes’ cross section of a river valley captured the essence of civilization. “In a figurative sense, civilization marches up and down the valley-section,” he wrote in *Technics and Civilization*. Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1934), 60.

¹⁶⁷ Geddes, Patrick. “The valley section from hills to sea.”

“East” and “West” to illustrate his point. The management of rice terraces and activities undertaken by Ifugao as described by Conklin collapse a number of the occupations generalized in Geddes’ Valley Section (woodman, hunter, peasant, farmer), yet more interestingly, it is Mumford that draws our attention to the particularity of civilizational values that Geddes might have been perturbed by. Invoking this holistic view, Mumford believed he saw a “Neotechnic” phase emerging at his time of writing (the early 1930s) most obviously in New Deal-era United States.¹⁶⁸ The civilizational advances, in Mumford’s telling, were transforming valleys by means of units of scale, not be the means of distribution that Geddes describes in the above citation. Thus, the paths of influence between Geddes and Mumford, and the technologies that would cross the Pacific and threaten the Kalinga and Ifugao finally clashed in a simple misreading of technology.

Such are the pathways by which architectural histories extrapolate upon territory and divert ways of thinking about building and dwelling. The notion of environmental adaptation exemplified through figures like Geddes and Conklin can be furthered through development thinking, if “development” can be taken simply as a term to describe human productivity, health and wellbeing in any given landscape. Large-scale development tends to focus on metrics that can be calculated and tabulated from a distance: concrete, water, kilowatts or currency. Indigenous development thinking, if we can call Ifugao and Kalinga approaches to the land found in the Cordillera, propose physical micro-adjustments and social-structures that allow the land and the lives that are intertwined with them a large degree of flexibility, even if they are deeply implicated in the lives of many villages.

¹⁶⁸ Reinhold Martin, “Drawing the Color Line: Silence and Civilization from Jefferson to Mumford.” Cheng, Irene, Charles L Davis, and Mabel O Wilson. *Race and Modern Architecture. A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2020.

The bodongs and the Chico resistance

The government had been considering the construction of hydroelectric dams along the Chico River since 1965, proposed as a multi-purpose facility similar to that at Pantabangan as part of a Ten-Year Energy Plan (1980–1989) and the Multi-Year Human Settlements Plan (up to year 2000).¹⁶⁹ (fig 2.38) An initial survey by the German firm Lahmeyer International GmbH was submitted to the government in 1973, which outlined the feasibility of four dam locations located along the Chico River. The study announced a total catchment area of 1400 square kilometers, a range that would affect (they estimated) 100,000 people.¹⁷⁰ A year later, surveyors from the National Power Corporation (NAPOCOR) were sent to the region, at which point locals became aware of government plans.¹⁷¹ A memoir by Leticia Bula-at presented at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 details the experience of the survey teams:

The men first came to my village when I was 19 years old, in 1967 [...] they said that they were sent by the government to survey our land [...] we were never consulted, just like when they surveyed our land the first time. My elders remember that this was during the American colonial period.¹⁷²

Mirroring the colonial histories of incursions and disturbed by the lack of respect for their territorial integrity or prior consultation, twice the people dismantled the survey camps and

¹⁶⁹ Cariño 1980; Signs of the Times, “Various Reports” April 1975, 63.

¹⁷⁰ Including the peoples of Sabangan, Sagada, Bontoc, Sadanga, Bauko and Barlig, and the municipalities of Tinglayan, Lubuungan, Pasil and Tabuk in Kalinga.

¹⁷¹ “The Cordillera Resistance against Chico Dam and Cellophil.” *Bantayog Ng Mga Bayani* (blog), October 10, 2015. <http://www.bantayog.org/the-cordillera-resistance-against-chico-dam-and-cellophil/>.

¹⁷² Bula-at, Leticia: *Indigenous Women’s Struggles: The Chico Dam Project and the Kalinga Women*. Presented at the NGO Forum of the Fourth World Conference on Women 1995, Forum on Women’s Resistance Strategies by Leticia Bula-at of INNABUYOG. Edited and translated by Bernice See. Sourced from: <http://cpcbrisbane.org/Kasama/1996/V10n2/Innabuyog.htm>

equipment at Maswa, Basao.¹⁷³ However the survey teams returned with military escorts. As they began surveying, a first *bodong* (alternately called *vochong*) was organized in Tanglang (Kalinga) to bring together tribal leaders (*pangats*) from different parts of the Cordillera to rally against the project. Meanwhile, a group of elderly women performed the *lusay* at the NAPOCOR campsites, dismantling the sites and disrobing to display their tattooed torsos and limbs in front of soldiers and surveyors, believed to bring a curse on those observing them.¹⁷⁴ The approach that the Kalinga took recalls similar resistance movements in Honduras that call upon ancestral powers for support, of which indigenous activist Berta Cáceres said “...I have a conviction in the spirituality of the Lenca people, that the ancestors accompany us.”¹⁷⁵ It emerged that the project would have created irreversible damage to ancestral domain across the Cordillera, inundating the rice terraces and the villages by them. One dam facility at Tabuk would completely submerge six villages, rendering more than 100,000 Kalinga and Bontoc homeless.¹⁷⁶

In the Cordillera, the political power of the *bodong* allows for any number of people to come to an agreement on an issue. They have traditionally been utilized to settle disputes related

¹⁷³ *The Philippines: Authoritarian Government, Multinationals, and Ancestral Lands*. Anti-Slavery Society: Indigenous Peoples and Development Series 1, 1983, 103.

¹⁷⁴ Delina, 6.

¹⁷⁵ “In Rio Blanco, we achieved expelling the biggest transnational dam construction company in the world, Sinohydro. Also, we achieved stopping the financing of the World Bank. The transnationals were furious and have a strategy of destroying COPINH [...]. But we are determined that the politics of terror will not paralyze us and that we will continue with hope, with joy, joining together all that we can in this project of life”

Korol, Claudia. 2016. Las revoluciones de Bertha Cáceres. Pensamientos y prácticas rebeldes. *Fragmentos de diálogos con Claudia Korol*. In *Feminismos Populares: Pedagogías y Políticas*, ed. Claudia Korol. Buenos Aires, Argentina: El Colectivo, 283.

Maher, Mónica A. “A Rebellion of Spirituality: On the Power of Indigenous Civil Resistance in Honduras.” In *Civil Resistance and Violent Conflict in Latin America: Mobilizing for Rights*, edited by Cécile Mouly and Esperanza Hernández Delgado, 41–63. Studies of the Americas. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019.

¹⁷⁶ Delina, 6; Cariño.

to land or interpersonal relationships, but in May 1975 for the first time a bodong was organized in order to create an agreement to resist the encroachment upon ancestral lands in all of the provinces of the Cordillera.¹⁷⁷ (fig 2.40) This particular Bodong was arranged in Metro Manila, under the auspices of the Vochong Conference for Development as part of the Share and Care Apostolate for Poor Settlers. It was attended by 150 pangats, and created the Bodong Federation to collectively oppose the Chico River Project, the first time an indigenous treaty was signed by such a diversity of groups to oppose development. The resulting agreement was called the *Pagta ti Bodong* (laws of the peace pacts), which formally united the indigenous peoples of these regions, consolidating resistance.¹⁷⁸ The anti-dam peace pact outlined the following:

1. The people of Bontoc and Kalinga affected by the Chico River Basin Development Project are prohibited from working on the dam project.
2. Should a Kalinga or a Bontoc from the dam areas be killed while working on the dam project, the peace pact villages opposed to the dam will not be held responsible, nor will they have to answer for the victim.
3. The parties to this agreement will warn the sons of Bontoc and Kalinga who are in the army not to be hard on the people who oppose the dam project.
4. The villages affected by the dam project are prohibited from selling their goods/products or giving food to the employees or workers of the National Power Corporation.
5. Anybody who is found to have been bribed against the interests of the people in favor of the NPC will be severely dealt with, including death.
6. A peace pact already existing between two *barrios* will not be affected in any way when one of the members of a peace pact village dies or is killed as a consequence of his working with the NPC. Relatives will claim his body quietly but they are prohibited from taking revenge.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ There are seven distinct ethnic groups in the Cordillera. In 1980, their populations and locations were:

Ifugaos, Ifugao, 180,000; Bontocs, Mt. Province, 148,000; Kankanays, Benguet, 125,000; Kalingas, Kalinga-Apayao, 106,780; Inibalays, Benguet, 93,000; Tinggians, Abra, 44,000; Isnags, Kalinga-Apayao, 19,922.

Tribal Forum Vol. II, No. 7, Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos, September–October 1981, 5.

¹⁷⁸ Joanna Cariño in a presentation to the Anthropological Association of the Philippines in 1975.

¹⁷⁹ *The Philippines: Authoritarian Government, Multinationals, and Ancestral Lands*. Anti-Slavery Society: Indigenous Peoples and Development Series 1, 1983, 105–106.

This bodong for the first time united all six provinces that meet along the Cordillera Central mountain range (Abra, Apayao, Kalinga, Benguet, Ifugao, Mountain Province). A unified indigenous front, the pact was both unprecedented in the scale of its unity bringing together tribal groups that had previously fought between one another, as well as it having received support from academics, church groups, NGOs and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (as well as their subgroup, the Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos). By summer 1975, the Marcos government had pulled out its survey teams, however, the debacle would continue.

It was by October 1975, when momentum was building in the resistance movement and people in the Cordillera were ready to take up arms, that Marcos called in Manuel Elizalde and Panamin to assist in the pacification of resistance in the region. Joanna Cariño, an anthropologist from Baguio described the events that followed in a presentation to the Philippine

Anthropological Association in late 1975:

Using bribery, deception and force, Secretary Elizalde inveigled *pangats* and peace pact holders to sign letters and petitions endorsing the PANAMIN as the exclusive authority to deal with their problems including the Chico IV dam. Signatories often had to sign blank sheets accompanied by envelopes of money. [...] PANAMIN also invited the people of Kalinga to form a delegation to Malacañang [the Presidential Palace]¹⁸⁰

This delegation arrived at Malacañang in December that year, but the reports of what occurred during the delegation were mixed. According to the Presidential Press Staff, “the Kalinga leaders supported the dam project after being convinced by Secretary Elizalde that the construction of the dam will redound to the good of everyone concerned.”¹⁸¹ While the Kalingas who were part of the delegation said,

¹⁸⁰ Cariño, “Situation Report,” 53.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

the constant pressure kept us up for four or five days and nights [...] the question was whether to sign or not and the possible consequences [...] these were simple blank sheets, six of them with our names already typed and no texts [...] you are not forced to sign [...] but if you do not sign you will not go back with the others¹⁸²

Clearly bribery and deception were now part of the governmental powers invoked to oppose the tribal unity of the bodong. The support rendered for the Kalinga and peoples in Cordillera was unwavering, however, and extended both to hyper-local networks within the Cordillera, and global networks of church groups and NGOs. Of these two streams of support for the resistance, two are of note here: the World Bank-IMF and the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New Peoples Army (NPA).

The Kalinga's open letter to President of the World Bank, Robert McNamara and to all delegates of the IMF-WB Conference held in Manila in 1976, reflects the awareness of the stratification that would occur with the building of dams along the Chico. It was signed by 5,000 tribal elders, citizens of 22 villages, and other concerned public, and was reprinted in *Signs of the Times*, put in no uncertain terms:

The Government's Chico River Basin Development Project is a series of huge hydroelectric power dams to be constructed along the Chico and Pasil Rivers within our territory and that of our neighbors, the Bontocs. The Lahmeyer Report on the project has indicated that the total catchment area of the dams would be 3,419 square kilometers. This would mean the inundation of that much of our ricelands and plantations, and the dislocation of 90,000 of us from our tribal homes.

You can, therefore, understand why we have fiercely opposed this project since 1973, when the Government first revealed its plan. We have demonstrated our refusal to be destroyed in the only way we knew. Time after time we have dismantled the camps of the National Power Corporation and of the Philippine Constabulary. We have written letter after letter to President Marcos to give us a hearing, to no avail. We have sent delegation after delegation (nineteen, at the last count) to see the President in Manila, also to no avail. Only once was an audience with the President granted, when our delegates signed their consent to the project under duress on 12 December 1975.

Because of our determination to oppose the construction of the dams, the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN) was commissioned by the national

¹⁸² Ibid.

government to dissuade us from our common stand. PANAMIN came to our region with money to bribe our tribal elders. PANAMIN came with money to bribe our children and estrange them from us through dubious scholarship grants. PANAMIN came with arms and men to destroy our tribal system of inter-village peace pacts and organization, and succeeded only in sowing mutual suspicion and fear among us.

All this we have rejected and still reject. The records of our opposition signed by 5,000 family heads are on file with Undersecretary of National Defense Carmelo Barbero of the Office of Civil Relations.¹⁸³

In their attempts to bribe tribal elders, Panamin encountered one of the key leaders in the resistance movement, Macliing Dulag. In attempting to gain Dulag's favor, Elizalde called him to a meeting in a hotel in Manila, and offered him a thick envelope. Macliing replied: "This envelope can contain only one of two things – a letter or money. If it is a letter, I do not know how to read. And if it its money, I do not have anything to sell. So take your envelope and go."¹⁸⁴ Dulag, thrust unwillingly to the center of the Kalinga struggle, was both negotiator and networker, able to unite the combined forces of the church movement and international NGOs, who had become aware of the situation through periodicals like *Signs of the Times* (discussed in chapter 4). A letter reproduced in *Signs* attests to the reach of an evolving awareness to the Kalinga struggle,

Just as important is the knowledge of the Bontoc and Kalinga peoples which will be lost. The whole world desperately needs to learn what they know of irrigation and fertilization. We need to know how to be self-sufficient in producing food and how to live without needing all the man-made things we now consider necessities.¹⁸⁵

Mirroring the insights of Conklin, the collision here meets at the overlap of hydropower knowledge, one being an imported, large-scale technology and the other being self-sufficient

¹⁸³ Open letter to Robert McNamara, 1976. Reprinted in *Signs of the Times*, September 18, 1976, 11–12.

¹⁸⁴ "The Cordillera Resistance against Chico Dam and Cellophil." *Bantayog Ng Mga Bayani*

¹⁸⁵ "American Writes Marcos on Chico Dam Project," (Sgd. Pat Wagner) *Signs of the Times* September 19, 1975, 8.

Indigenous hydrology, of which insights being created in the western mode were only just emerging. Indeed, even if Conklin meticulously identified the techniques with which the Ifugao terrace system functioned, the worldview that it encompassed was in conflict with a worldview that consisted of concrete and electricity, both required land to function. Dulag's speech during a Bodong in 1979, however, related that in the Kalinga worldview, land was not a product but sacred and life-affirming,

Apo Kabunian [Kalinga deity], Lord of us all, gave us life and placed us in the world to live human lives. And where shall we obtain life? From the land. To work the land is an obligation, not merely a right. In tilling the land you possess it. And so land is a grace that must be nurtured. To enrich it and make it bear fruits is the eternal exhortation of Apo Kabunian to all his children. Land is sacred. Land is beloved. From its womb springs our Kalinga life.¹⁸⁶

On April 24th every year, the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) celebrates Cordillera Day. The date commemorates the killing of Dulag by the 4th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army in Bugnay, Kalinga. (fig 2.43) As a prominent *pangat*, Dulag was quickly singled out by the military and executed in April 1980. By this stage, the Cordillera was a warzone. In an editorial to *The Ecologist*, Edward Goldsmith wrote that by 1984, Marcos had elevated the situation in the Cordillera to a warzone, with “T28 planes have bombed the Kalinga village of Bugnay, while helicopter gunships have been made use of in attacks on neighboring villages.”¹⁸⁷ When the

¹⁸⁶ Macliing Dulag, 1978. Cited in *Tribal Forum* Vol. II, No. 7, Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos, September–October 1981, 13.

¹⁸⁷ Environmentalist Edward Goldsmith highlights the interface between warfare and agribusiness in his editorial in *The Ecologist* in 1985. “One must remember that in 1977, the World Bank suspended another loan, that time to the Government of the Philippines for the financing of the construction of four large dams on the Chico River. [...] In this case, it must be noted, the funding was not suspended for environmental reasons, but because the project, if it had gone ahead, would have given rise to a veritable civil war. Indeed, the Kalinga, Bontoc and Kankanaï people who inhabit the area that was to be flooded, simply refused to give up their ancestral lands and sabotaged efforts to build the dam. This led to a very brutal response on the part of the Government. The military was introduced. The head of the opposition to the dam, a Kalinga tribesman called Macli-ing Dulag, was gunned down in his house by a squad of soldiers, while other anti-dam protesters were hunted down by the military and forced to go underground. [...] all sorts of other destructive projects threaten the Cordillera where the 500,000 tribesmen live, including a massive 200,000-hectare logging operation to be conducted by the Cellophil Resources Corporation. Plans are also

Chico River Dam Project was officially shelved in 1987, it was the first time that an IMF-World Bank-funded project had been successfully stopped because of local opposition and was a landmark case in ancestral domain. The official landscape represented by the Bank and the Marcos administration was forcibly imposed on a “vernacular landscape,” one shaped by the “affective, historically textured maps that communities have devised over generations.”¹⁸⁸ In this regard, environmental assets are technical forms of eco-rationality (a river is a source of electricity).

One of the unforeseen consequences of the Chico Dam proposals was the way in which different tribal communities came together before and in the wake of Macliing Dulag’s murder. Delina asserts that it was these two events, the initial Bodong in 1975 in Quezon City and the death of Dulag that, for the first time, brought people from across the Cordillera together, and changed the course for the Chico Dams. The geographer Nerve Macaspac has proposed an alternative framing of such peacemaking through the framework of insurgency to emphasize the “disruptive and transformative dynamics” of community-led peacebuilding processes. “Insurgent peace,” Macaspac contends, captures:

the daily practices and work required from marginalized groups in protecting their own lives, foregrounding the processes through which civilian communities carve alternative political spaces, transform relations of power and enact peaceful futures in the everyday beyond the purview of state and non-state actors.¹⁸⁹

afoot to exploit its important gold and copper deposits. These massive schemes and the industrial and urban development associated with them badly require the electricity that the dam would provide. It also appears that Mr. Marcos and his business associates have a considerable financial interest in these ventures, and they are not the sort of people to allow a few hundred thousand primitive tribesmen to stand between them and the millions that are at stake. This being so, it is thus not surprising that Mr Marcos’s army has launched (June 27th 1984) a major assault on the Chico Valley. T28 planes have bombed the Kalinga village of Bugnay, while helicopter gunships have been made use of in attacks on neighbouring villages.” Edward Goldsmith in the editorial of *The Ecologist*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 1985, 147.

¹⁸⁸ Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press, 2011.

¹⁸⁹ Macaspac, Nerve V. “Insurgent Peace: Community-Led Peacebuilding of Indigenous Peoples in Sagada, Philippines.” *Geopolitics* 24, no. 4 (August 8, 2019): 840.

Peace, just like war, also takes place in the everyday, a kind of “extrastatecraft” outside of the purview of the state as an “undeclared form of polity.”¹⁹⁰

V

An Epistemic Flood

The topographically challenging terrain that this chapter covered is distinguished by a series of overlapping dichotomies. Two resistance movements in Luzon, one that ended with a dam project, the other that fought against one, each found their traction in interpretations of land as an egalitarian territory. In the case of the Huks, counterinsurgency can be measured through the urban incursions and dislocations they faced (both through Lansdale’s psyops tactics and Magsaysay’s EDCOR resettlement camps far from the battlefield). The Kalinga faced a different force. Equipped with the recent history of Pantabangan Dam and its resulting atomization, there were no doubts as to the way in which territory would be spatially re-mapped through the planning of the four Chico Dams. The rice terraces added texture to the problem and nuance to the resistance movement. The Kalinga were able to use pond-field terraces as a locus for organizing an aesthetics of resistance, and for the first time a World Bank project was shelved as the result of an indigenous resistance movement.

¹⁹⁰ Easterling, 15 and Macaspac, 847.

Part IV began with the hearings in US Congress on the work of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), looking in particular at the activist Rudolph Ryser who testified before the House Banking Committee. We return now to Ryser for another part of his closing statement:

Take a look at the world. What you see is a quilt divided up into various little pieces we call states. What we don't see from out there is an ancient world that has existed for thousands of years that has been covered up by that quilt and, in fact, divided up by the little pieces of string that make the quilt. Underneath that surface are the millions of indigenous peoples of ancient societies.¹⁹¹

For its illustration of the situation of the Kalinga, Rich can be excused for the romance that his metaphor invokes. Indeed, Ryser's quilt exists far away from the Cordillera mountains, and though it covers the Central Luzon plain now irrigated by the UPRP and Pantabangan Dam, it is the tension between these two ontological domains—the upland mountain regions James Scott calls “Zomia” and the lowland provinces absorbed in the state—that shape the next chapter.

There are two major takeaways from this chapter. The first takeaway is the way in which both political and spatial atomization—an epistemic flood—occurred haphazardly through processes of dam-making, whose consequences were barely understood even by the metrics that had them constructed in the first place (hectares irrigated, megawatts produced). The second is the way in which a political economy of indigeneity emerged through the resistance against the Chico River dam projects. Confirmed first through the organization of tribal communities in Bodong meetings, the physical environment was enshrined as cultural property (later consecrated

¹⁹¹ Finance, United States Congress House Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and. *Environmental Impact of Multilateral Development Bank-Funded Projects: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and Finance of the Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Eighth Congress, First Session, June 28 and 29, 1983*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983, 524.

Also cited in Rich, Bruce. *Mortgaging the Earth: The World Bank, Environmental Impoverishment, and the Crisis of Development*, 2017, 117.

by UNESCO) and second through the government entity of Panamin that sought to absorb them within the larger programs of the state.

Genealogies of anticommunism and agribusiness

A larger takeaway linking these two points together (atomization; indigeneity) is the way in which anti-communism paved the way for agribusiness. The Philippines was at the forefront of an anti-communist organizing with the US in Southeast Asia. When Ramon Magsaysay became president in 1953, the US appeared to confirm their influence in the region. To counteract the Afro-Asia Bandung Conference of 1955—hosted in communist Indonesia and attended by many nonaligned nations emerging from colonialism—the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), hosted in Bangkok and Manila, was conjured as a diametric proxy to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).¹⁹² An editor at the *Manila Times* wrote in 1961 that “it was in fulfillment of Philippine commitments under the SEATO Treaty, that it would bolster efforts of the free countries of Southeast Asia to present a common front against the Communist menace.”¹⁹³ Support in quelling communism meant US aid, however, there is some debate as to the level of willingness with which the Philippines accepted foreign aid in order to quell communism. Indeed, anticommunism in the Philippines was also a ploy on the part of Magsaysay, Nick Cullather argues, to use US anxieties around communism to obtain important funding for infrastructural projects.¹⁹⁴ Senator Jose P. Laurel argued in 1955 that it was

¹⁹² Eslava, Luis, Michael Fakhri, and Vasuki Nesiiah, eds. *Bandung, Global History, and International Law: Critical Pasts and Pending Futures*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

¹⁹³ Hartendorp, A. V. H. *History of Industry and Trade of the Philippines: The Magsaysay Administration*. Manila: Philippine Education Co., 1961: 93.

¹⁹⁴ Cullather, Nick. “America’s Boy? Ramon Magsaysay and the Illusion of Influence.” *Pacific Historical Review* 62, no. 3 (1993).

“characteristically Filipino” to manipulate American proconsuls in this way, that it was in the Philippines that the implements of US control, “military advisers, CIA assets, propaganda, aid programs, and economic controls,” were their most fully developed.¹⁹⁵

Writing in the English-language *Fookien Times Yearbook* of 1960, aimed at overseas businessmen published in Chinese and English, Chief SEATO Affairs minister in the Department of Foreign affairs wrote that: “The responsibility for action in countering communist subversion rests primarily with SEATO member governments. On the conviction that the best defense against the subversive threat is availing the public with information on the latest subversive developments...”¹⁹⁶ Rafaelita Hilario Soriano, who previously worked in the War Department in Washington DC, wrote in a 1960 *Fookien Times* that this information “comes from the conclusions arrived at by the Security Experts committee” who held seminars on “counter subversion,” the first at Baguio in Luzon in 1958. In another article of the same issue, J.M. Carson, Commander of the US Naval Forces Philippines wrote that “The Free World must be ready to wage war in the fourth dimension—ready to counter each Communist thrust as soon as it is made; ready to locate, isolate and destroy each Communist assault on the minds of free men.”¹⁹⁷ Commander Carson wrote that:

We in Southeast Asia are at war. Our enemy is Asian Communism. Our war has four dimensions. The first three of these dimensions are military ones, wherein opposing land, sea and air forces are poised to threaten aggression and counterpoised to resist it. The fourth dimension is man’s mind.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 306–307.

¹⁹⁶ The *Fookien Times* was a publication with strong ties to businesses and government in the Philippines, its masthead proudly stated that it was “Internationally Recognized as The Chronicler of Philippine Progress,” as a Chinese-owned publication it sought to distance itself from the notion that all Chinese people overseas were communists, as alleged through the *Philippines Free Press* and other American publications. Rafaelita Hilario Soriano. “SEATO and the Philippines.” *Fookien Times*, 1960, page 74

¹⁹⁷ Carson, J.M. “Fourth Dimensional Warfare.” *Fookien Times*, 1960, 67.

For Carson, communism was “a religion without morality,” an “assault on the minds of men,” and in order to compete with it, people would have to embrace the “total inventory of human endeavor—military, economic, political, diplomatic, scientific and spiritual.”¹⁹⁸ Among the pages of the *Philippines Free Press* in the 1950s, “Strategic Factors in the Southeast Asia Struggle” became a regularity. (fig 2.15) With a map cropped in on peninsular Southeast Asia, including China at the top and Sumatra at the bottom, with Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaya (Malaysia) and French Indochina (Vietnam). The map resembles a geopolitical patchwork, shaded with different “concentrations” of communism (the caption reads “In the Far East the ‘cold war’ is a ‘hot war’”).¹⁹⁹ On the same page as the map, “The United States decided to send financial and military aid to the French-supported regime of Bao Dai in its fight against the Moscow-supported forces of Ho Chi Minh. The aid will be sent directly to Indo-China, without going through French hands.”²⁰⁰ Thus, through such committees, experts and initiatives, anti-communism became a magical conspiratorial force that was able to filter its way down through the English-language media outlets, to infrastructural projects, permeating from politics through to governance, to collaboration, to international cooperation and foreign aid. Indeed, large-scale investment in anti-communist operations would come with economic benefits to the investor-nation, in this case, the US.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹⁹ Oddly enough, the map points out the “Chinese minorities” found in each country outside China, as if to say that nationality alone could influence political perspective.

²⁰⁰ *Philippines Free Press*, May 13, 1950, 61.

Embracing a scientific and spiritual endeavor

International organizations and their movements were not immune from the general trickle-down of communist suspicion. This included the overlapping environmental and governmental aims of the large power blocs. How the environment and the physical structures that mediate it would be organized, was through systems that harbored specific political world views. The Cold War provided a superstructure to encourage these movements and comprehend them. However, the way that research was encouraged into development of irrigation projects in far-flung regions like the Cordillera, suspected of an NPA presence, and by successfully suppressing the Huk Rebellion through the EDCOR scheme the link between anticommunism and agribusiness shows that it can only be understood in the terms of a long-term process structured around particular specifics.²⁰¹

A combination of forces were now at play in Luzon: rapidly shifting relationships between landlords and tenant farmers; introduction of agricultural machinery, speeding up the production process; proof that irrigation schemes could be achieved that allowed for year-round rice cultivation when Ambuklao dam was completed in 1950; (fig 2.16) organized unions turned insurrectionists. Clearly pressure was building on this region, pushing capitalism's frontier further into the mountains. As a cumulative, long-term approach to understanding how landscapes change over time through modernization schemes, architectural devices assist in the mediation of such changes. Ayala Levin and Neta Feniger summarize these concerns as follows:

Political objectives, such as domesticating unruly itinerant subjects or pacifying antagonistic populations, have been coupled with economic ones, such as extracting natural resources: a combination that often results in vast resettlement projects [...] large-

²⁰¹ "It incorporated almost the entire world, directly or indirectly, and was bound up with the politics of nationalism and decolonization. There is much to reckon with within the conventional reckoning." McNeill, John Robert, and Corinna R Unger. *Environmental Histories of the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013: 2–3.

scale territorial interventions signify a transition from these attempts to active reconfigurations of site and people.²⁰²

What happened in Luzon, on the flood plain of Nueva Ecija was a large-scale transformation into capitalist relations. These new relationships cannot be disentangled from the background of organizing and insurgency that preceded it. The epistemic flood that Pantabangan Dam created was also a frontier, surrounding the floodplain were mountains, and it was there that indigenous groups, mainly Aeta and Dumagat, were forced to relocate to.

To view forms of frontiers instituted in the landscape, it is useful to turn to Tania Li, who describes such frontier-making as the essence of capitalist relations, in which “notions of wildness are still deployed by contemporary development planners, who see frontier spaces as ‘underutilized’ resources that should be put to efficient and productive use, and devise schemes to attract corporate investors.”²⁰³ Yet the creation of a frontier-like space by way of a new infrastructural technology like a dam does not necessarily transform it from “wild” to “civilized,” since the environmental impact of such technology is actually detrimental to the forms of farming and husbandry that may have taken generations to develop. Indeed, if “to be modern,” as Paul N. Edwards discusses, “is to live within and by means of infrastructures, and therefore to inhabit, uneasily, the intersection of these multiple scales,” then the immediate impacts of the UPRP on the people of Pantabangan was also to exist *in spite of* the scale of infrastructure.²⁰⁴ A quick scan of the watershed boundaries of central Luzon (fig 2.17) shows in no uncertain terms

²⁰² Ayala Levin & Neta Feniger, “Introduction: the modern village,” *The Journal of Architecture*, 23:3. 2018, 362.

²⁰³ Li, Tania Murray. *Land’s End Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier*. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2014, 13.

²⁰⁴ Edwards, Paul. “Infrastructure and Modernity: Scales of Force, Time, and Social Organization in the History of Sociotechnical Systems.” In *Modernity and Technology*, 2002: 186.

the vast potential that damming this floodplain posed.²⁰⁵ The Pampanga River, which courses through it entering from the Sierra Madre mountains to the northeast, was the obvious choice for a multipurpose project. It flooded the watershed above, and the epistemic conditions for what could constitute an industrial landscape in the 1960s.

²⁰⁵ “Historical Mapping for Marikina Flooding: Learning from the Past – Land, People, and Science – Institute of Environmental Science for Social Change.” Accessed October 15, 2020. <https://essc.org.ph/content/view/273/46/>.



Fig 2.01 Luzon sites discussed in this chapter: the Pampanga and Chico Rivers. ESRI / Earthstar



Fig 2.02 Pantabangan Reservoir, 2018.

Fig 2.03 President Ferdinand Marcos inspects irrigation plans on Central Plain of Luzon relief model, pictured in: Ileana Maramag, *To Move A Nation To Progress: Achievements of President Ferdinand E. Marcos*. 1970, 38.

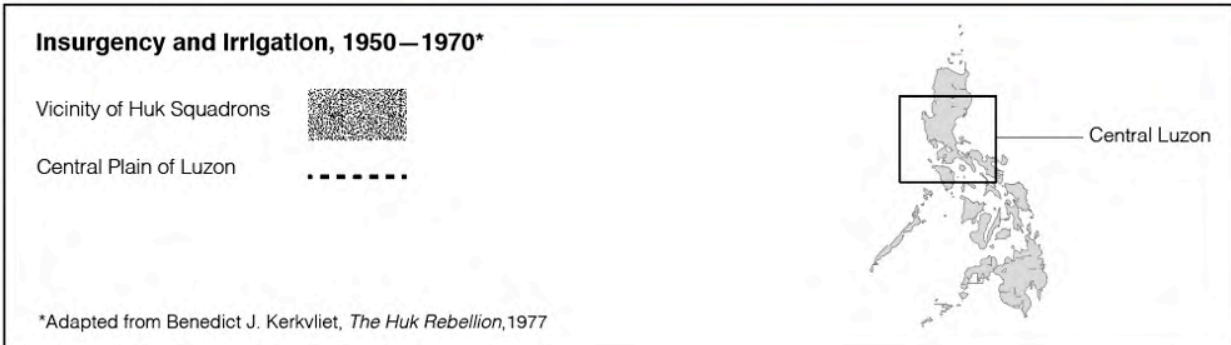
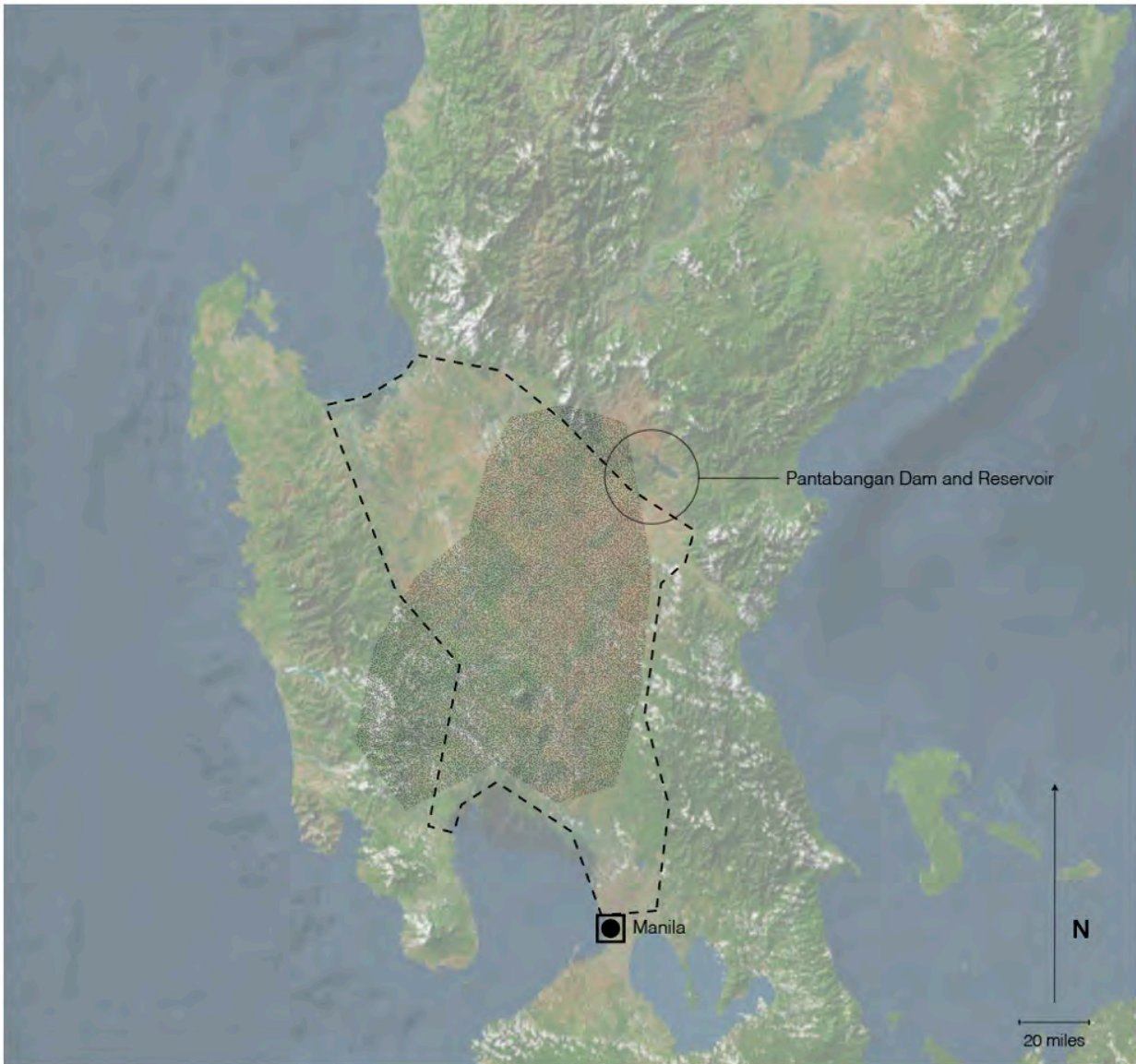


Fig 2.05 Diagram of the overlaps between the UPRP (later UPRIS) and the Huk Rebellion

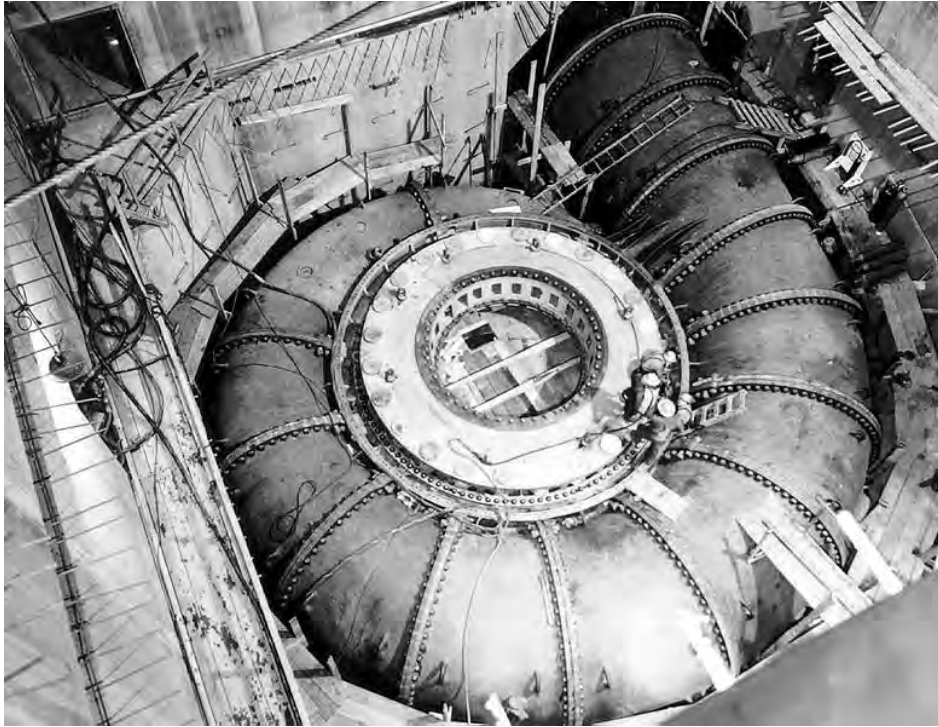


Fig 2.06 Installation of inlet scroll and Francis turbine runner at Grand Coulee Dam, September 1941. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

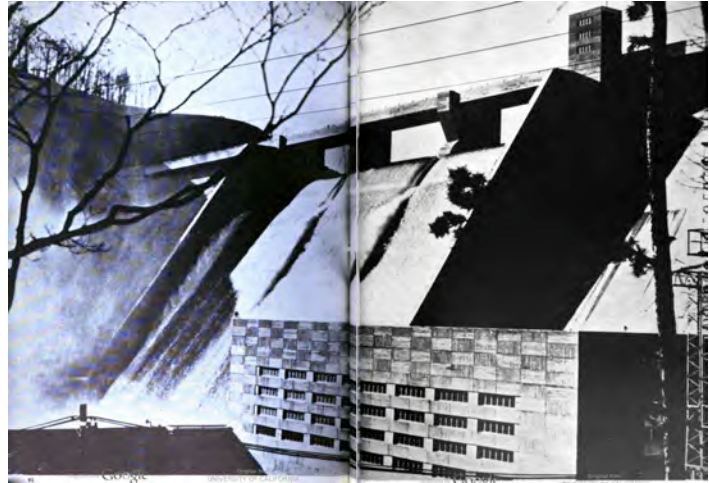
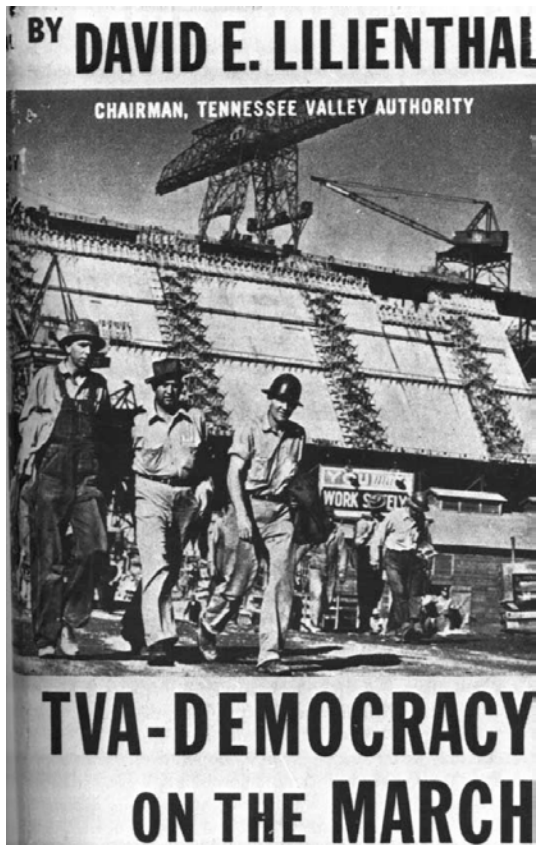


Fig 2.07 Julian Huxley's *TVA: Adventure in Planning*, 1943.

Fig 2.08 David E. Lilienthal *TVA: Democracy on the March*, 1953.



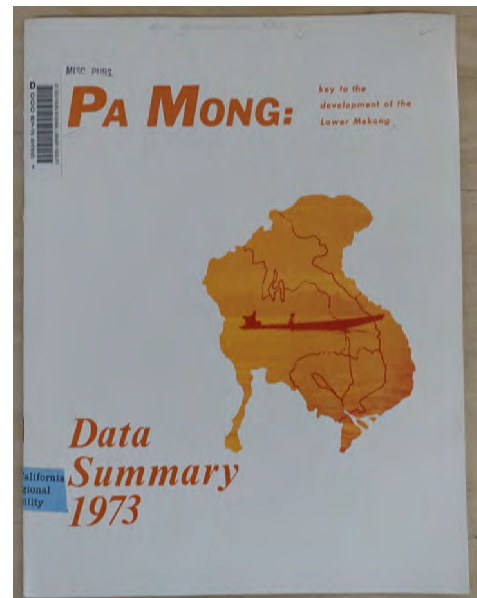
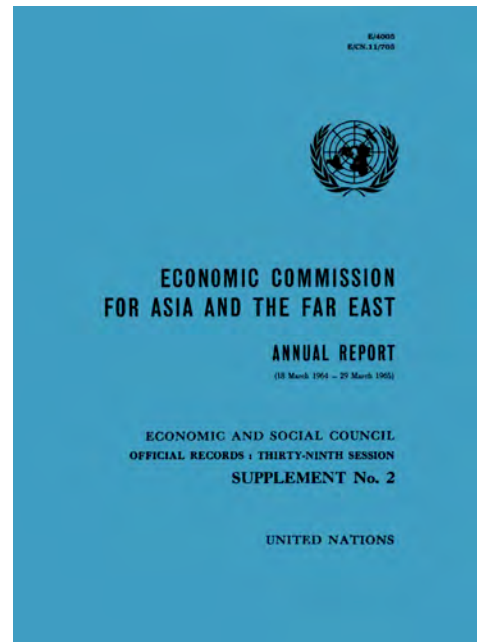
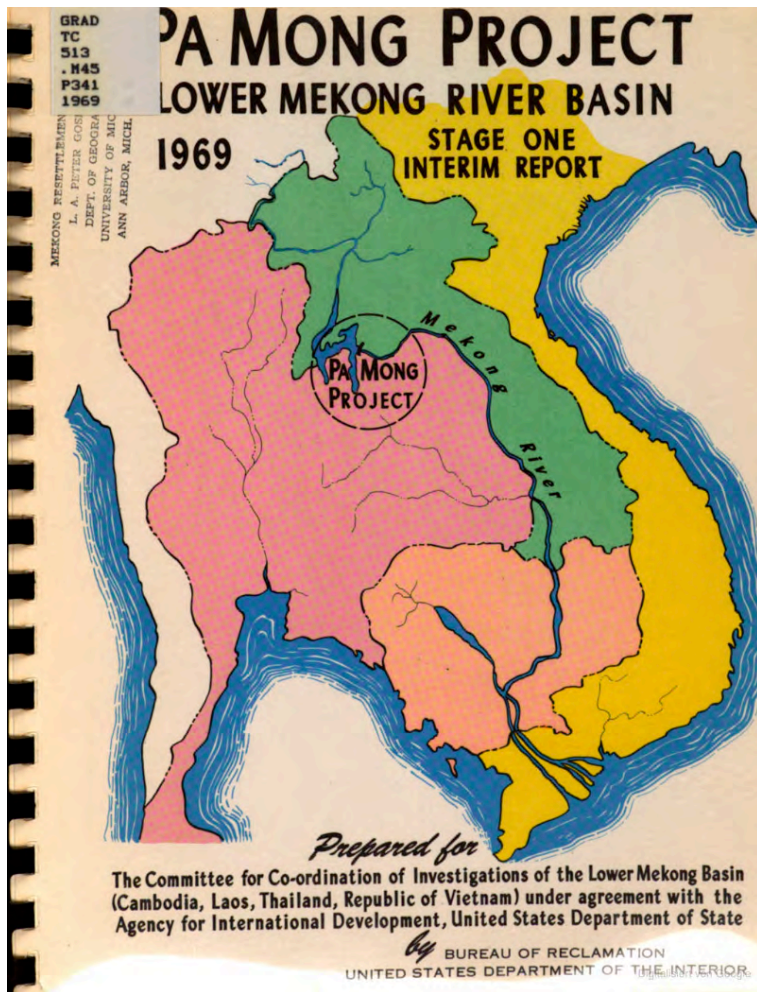


Fig 2.09 The Pa Mong reports toward damming the Mekong emphasized the regional “susceptibility to outside subversion” and “the continued efforts [to] eliminate conditions favoring communism” Chapter III, 1, 16. Pa Mong Project, Laos-Thailand: Stage 1--Interim Report. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, 1969.



Fig 2.10 Luis Taruc in 1948. The photograph, first in an article in *The Manila Times*, dated at 1948, and again in the memoirs of the American counterinsurgency operative Edward G. Lansdale. Lansdale's caption reads "Luis Taruc, the Huk leader, giving a political lecture to his bodyguards in a central Luzon hideout," 1948.

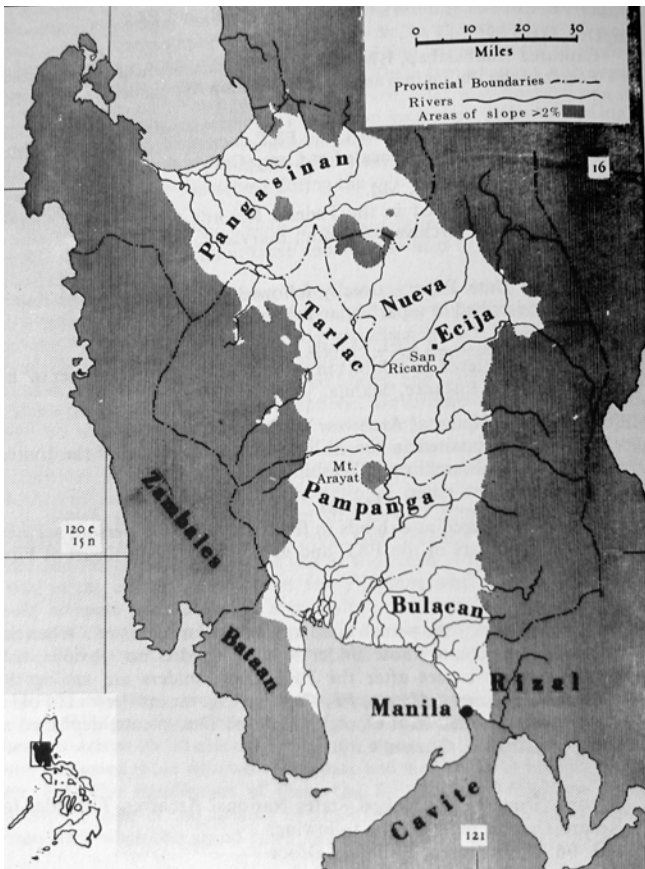
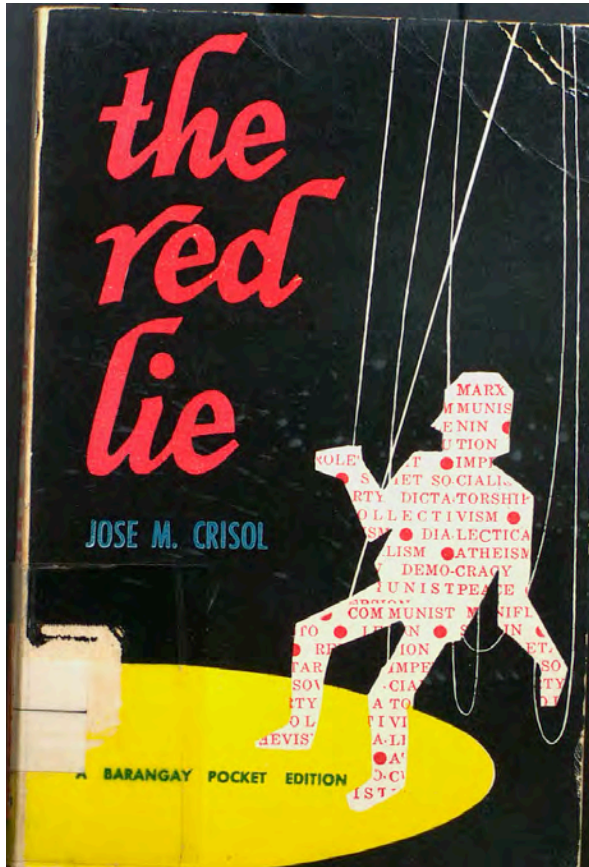


Fig 2.11 Map of central plain of Luzon, Benedikt Kerklviet, *The Huk Rebellion*, 1961.



Fig 2.12 Defense Secretary Ramon Magsaysay visits EDCOR farm communities in Mindanao, Lansdale can be seen to Magsaysay's left, 1951. Signal Corps, Armed Forces of the Philippines.



TO
RAMON MAGSAYSAY
 SAVIOUR OF PHILIPPINE DEMOCRACY
 THIS BOOK
 IS HUMBLLY DEDICATED

Fig 2.13 Jose M. Crisol's book *The Red Lie*, dedicated to Ramon Magsaysay. (Barangay Pocket Edition). Manila : Benipayo Press, 1954.

Fig 2.14 President Diosdado Macapagal inaugurating the Masalib River Irrigation Project and Tubao Dam, La Union, June 1962, and in a bid for reelection passes out bags of rice to Dumagat families in Aurora, Luzon. "Politics: DM's Style" *Philippines Free Press*, January 9 1965, 63.



The WORLD IN BRIEF

Ready

Dismissing as "provocative impertinence" the Soviet charge that the maintenance of American military bases in Japan violates occupation policies, Gen. Douglas MacArthur declared that the United States alone controlled Okinawa and could make there whatever military preparation it wanted; as for Japan proper, MacArthur said that bases for American and British occupation forces would be maintained as long as the occupation lasted. The bases, MacArthur went on, would be maintained in a condition "of such adequacy and preparations as will insure the fullest security, operational efficiency and most complete readiness for any eventuality."

Afterward, MacArthur told a group of newspapermen that the current conflict between Soviet Russia and the "Anglo-Saxon" nations showed no sign of developing into a shooting war. It seemed to him that neither Russia nor America wanted war, that each was arming merely for defense. If either wanted war, war would have come already, he said.

MacArthur also defended the Potsdam decision to exempt Emperor Hirohito from war responsibility, called Hirohito Japan's No. 1 democrat.

☆☆☆

Russian Move

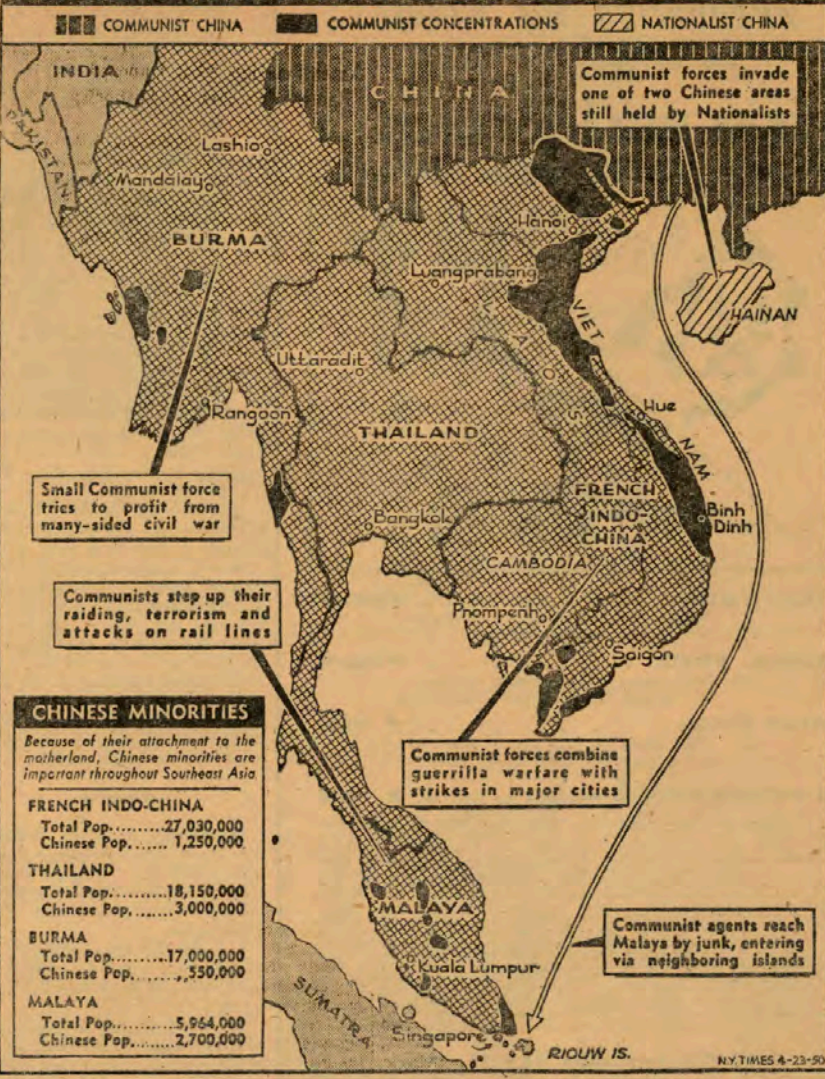
Turning from the Far East which had occupied most of its attention the last six months, Soviet Russia demanded that the United States, Great Britain and Yugoslavia pull their occupation troops out of Trieste and that the Big Four agree to an international regime for the "free territory." Russia demanded, in a magazine article, special rights from Turkey in the control of the Dardanelles. These, and other moves, were described by American Secretary of State Dean Acheson as "saber rattling."

☆☆☆

Approval

While India finally made up its mind, the United States decided to send aid will be sent directly to Indo-China,

STRATEGIC FACTORS IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIA STRUGGLE



In the Far East the "cold war" is a "hot war."

Walk-out

While India finally made up its

Aid

The United States decided to send aid will be sent directly to Indo-China,

ported forces of Ho Chi Minh. The

Fig 2.15 "Strategic Factors in the Southeast Asia Struggle." Philippines Free Press, May 13, 1950: 61.

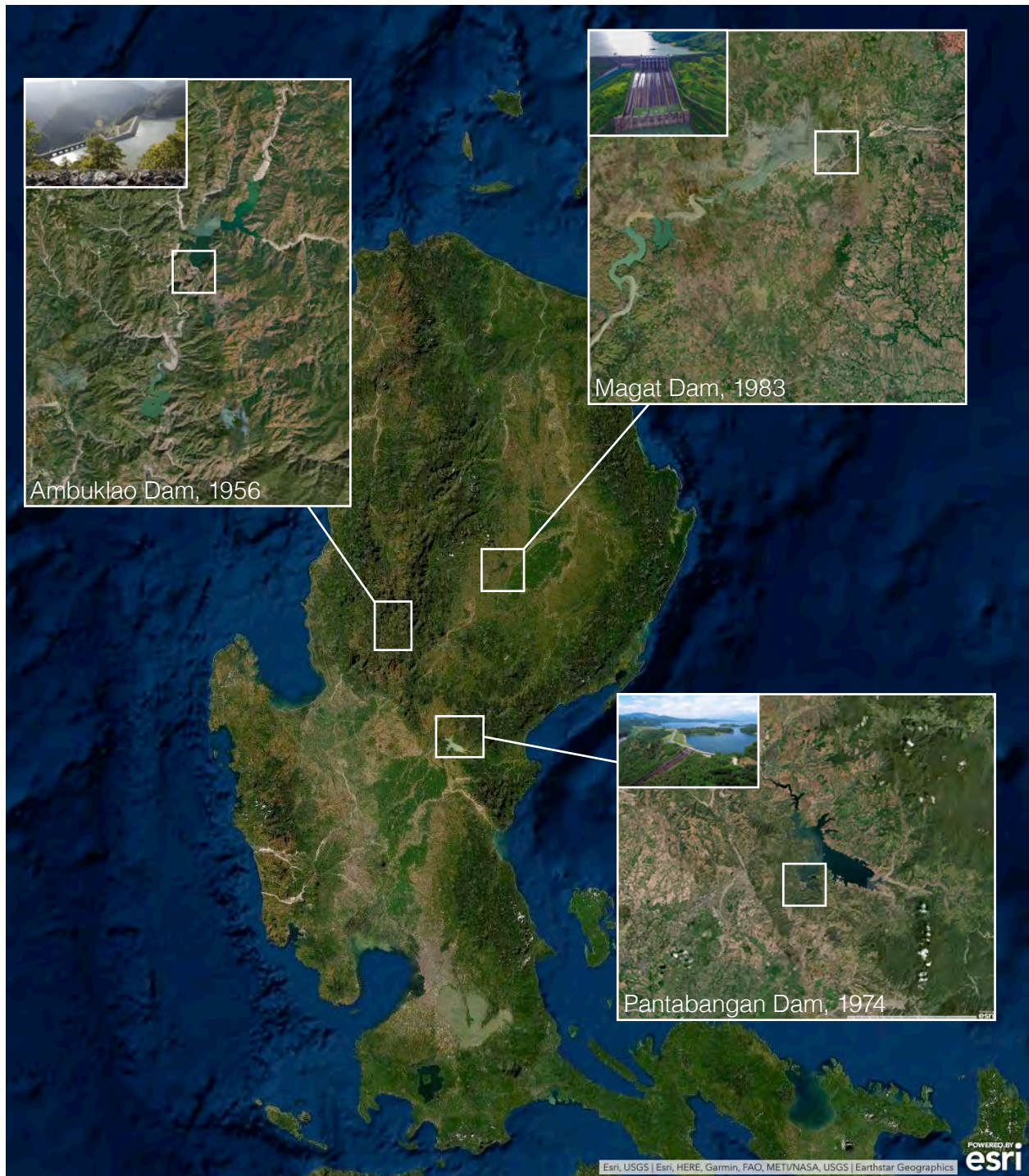


Fig 2.16 Locations and years of completion of Ambuklao, Pantabangan and Magat dams. ESRI / Earthstar.



Fig 2.17 Route of the Pampanga River. ESRI / Earthstar.

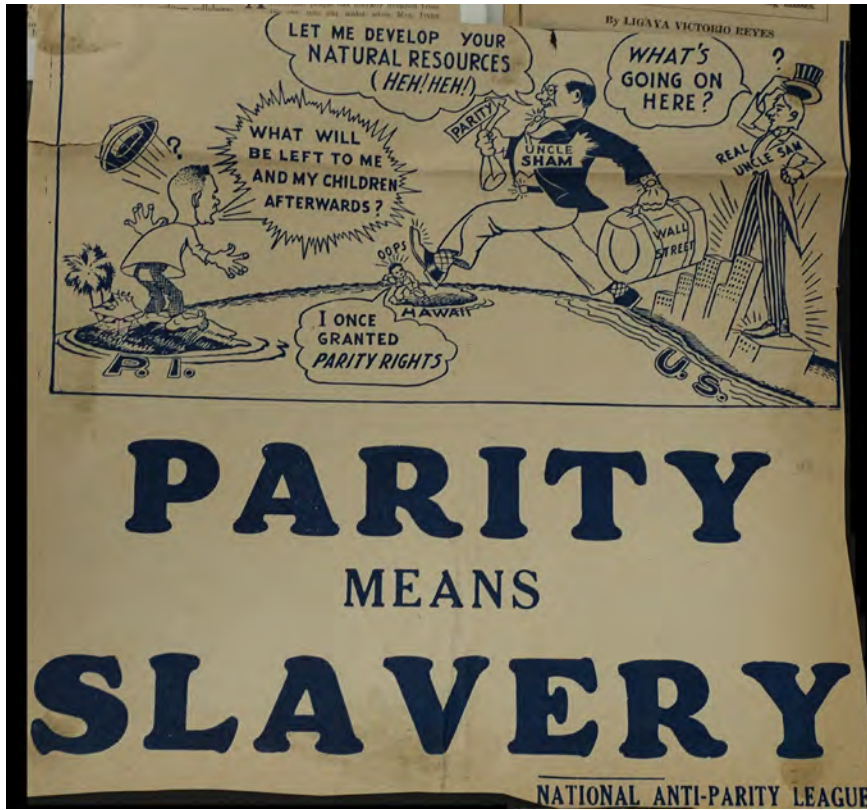


Fig 2.19 Poster for the National Anti-Parity League, circa 1948. American Historical Collection, Ateneo de Manila.

Fig 2.20 "Montano's Challenge" *Philippines Free Press*, April 1, 1950.

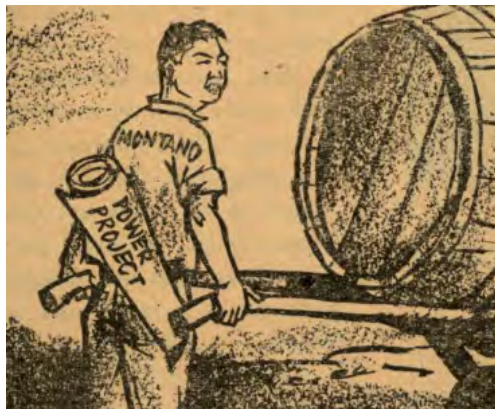




Fig 2.21 Views of Pantabangan Dam, spillway and reservoir (January 2018).



Fig 2.22 David M. Consunji (center, flanked by Imelda (L) and Ferdinand (R) Marcos) accepting the post of head of the Department of Public Works, Transportation and Communication (DPWTC), August 24, 1971. *Passion to Build: A Memoir of David M. Consunji*. 2004: 185. Below, at the Project Planning and Development Office (PPDO) which oversaw the “comprehensive plan for building our national infrastructure system and human settlements.” (page 195, *Passion to Build*).

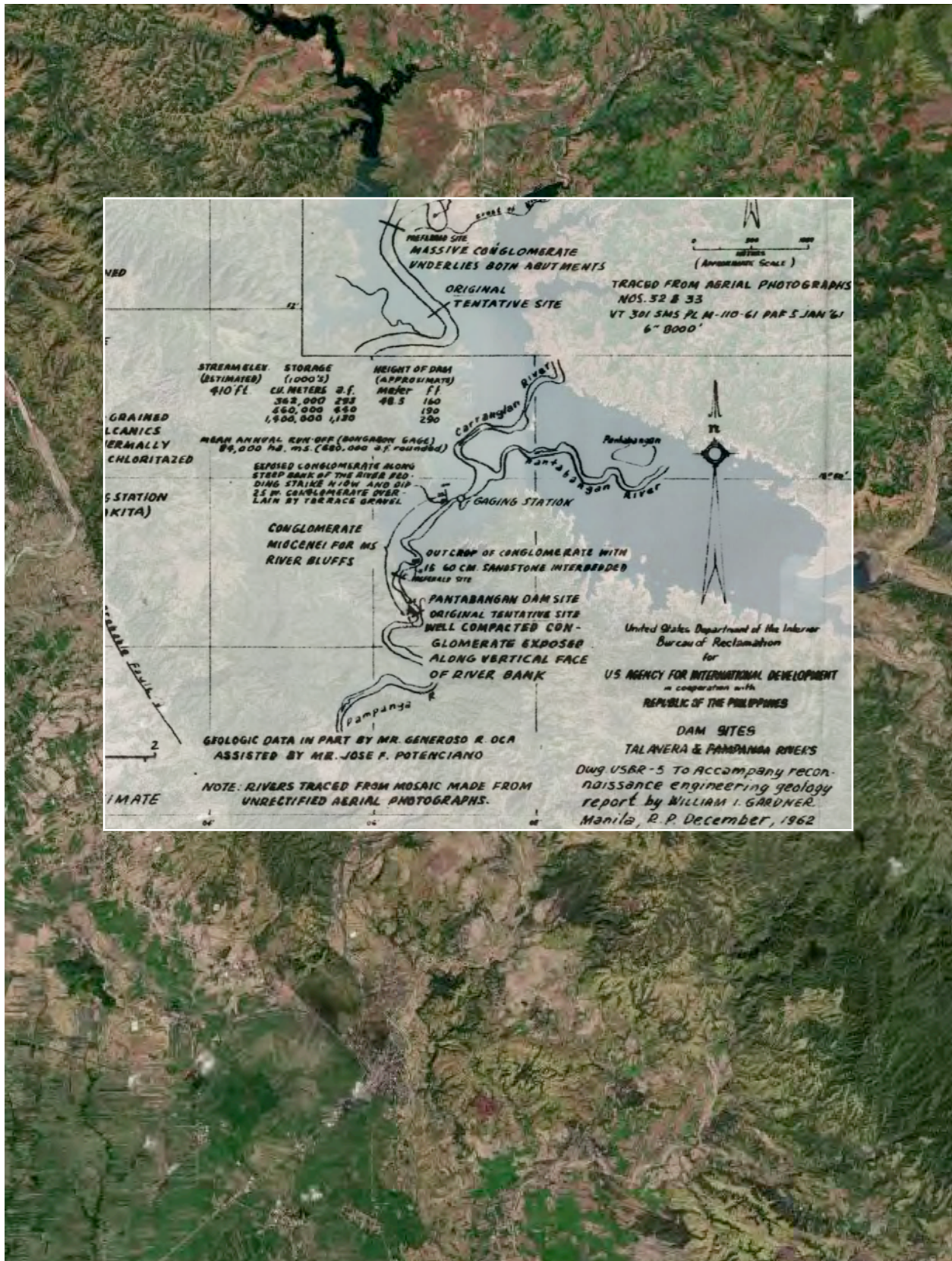


Fig 2.23 Sketches of geological risks by USBR geologist William I. Gardner, 1962, overlaid on ESRI/NASA/USGS satellite imagery, October 2020.

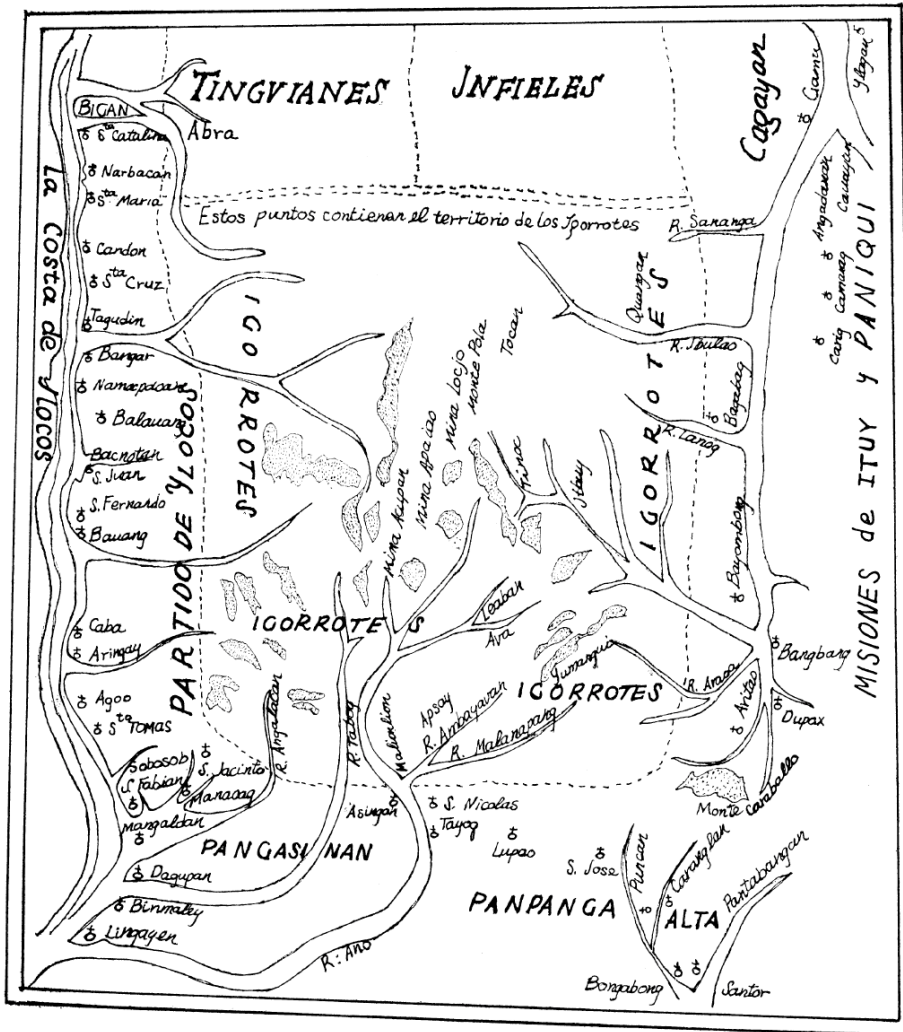


Fig 2.24 Dominican Friar Francisco Antolin's map of Igorot territory, 1789. Pantabangan can be seen in the bottom right of the frame. The dotted line in the upper quarter demarcates the boundary with the Cordillera Mountains, "Estos puntos contienar el territorio de los Igorotes" and "Tingvianes Infieles."

Fig 2.25 Photographs by John John Salem Fernandez. Jul 30, Mario Alvaro Limos |, and 2020. "An Underwater Town in the Philippines Had Reemerged and It's an Eerie Sight." *Esquire Magazine Ph*. Accessed November 14, 2020. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/long-reads/features/pantabangan-underwater-town-a00293-20200730>.





Fig 2.26 Relocation of Pantabangan based on 1962 sketches of USBR geologist William I. Gardner.



Winnowing palay with a gasoline engine-powered blower. The blower owner bends over the machine while the palay's owner (a tenant farmer) stands on a carabao-drawn sled that he uses to transport the palay. Photo: B. Kerkvliet

Fig 2.27 Kerkvliet, Benedict J. "Martial Law in a Nueva Ecija Village, the Philippines." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14, no. 4 (December 1, 1982), 13.

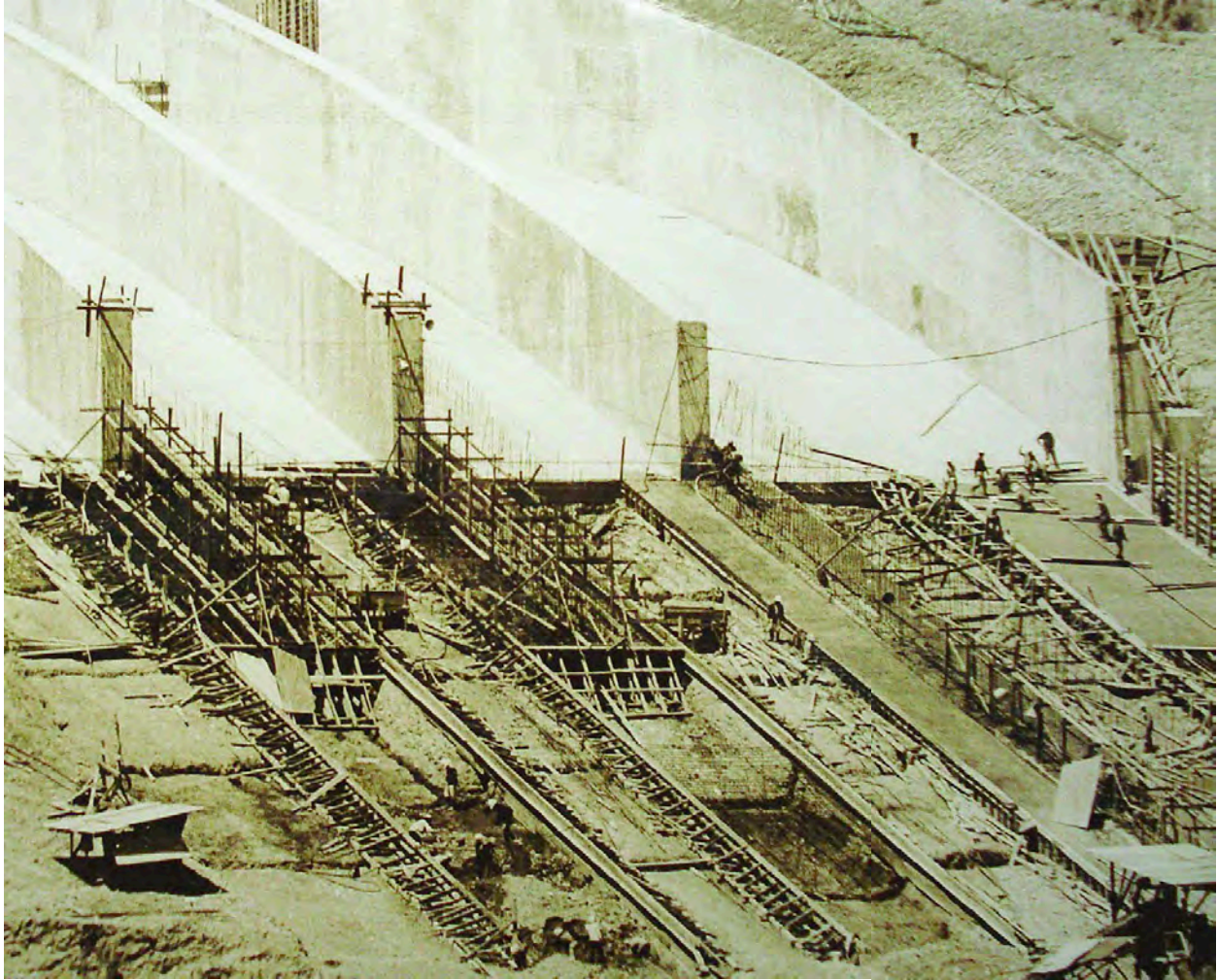


Fig 2.28 Rapid construction of the concrete chute-type spillway of Pantabangan Dam in the 70s. *NIA at 50.*

Fig 2.29 National Irrigation Administration trucks haul away peoples belongings, 1973. amangpintor. *Kasaysayan Ng Lumang Pantabangan | Amangpintor Vlog, 2011.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHmxaug3JmQ&list=PLE1C0F15DD7869FE3&index=2&t=0s>.



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SECRET

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way to a meeting with President Marcos. The league has since become dormant, its members fearing Huk reprisals.

3. Originally the paramilitary arm of the illegal Philippine Communist Party (PKP), the Huks over the years have taken on the appearance of marauding bandits and extortionists, rather than of revolutionaries motivated by Communist ideology. Although there have been recent indications that recruits are again receiving Marxist indoctrination, among the peasantry the Huks maintain a "Robin Hood" image of assisting the poor. In fact, the Huks' separate system of justice in the areas they influence, chiefly in the rice-producing provinces of Central Luzon, appears to be more efficient than the government's slow-moving and often corrupt judicial system. The Huks' decisions, which do not always favor the peasant, seem to be accepted by many landlords as well.

4. The Huks' present ties with the PKP are vague and contradictory. The terrorism that sustains Huk power is not in keeping with the party's purported abandonment of terror for the "parliamentary struggle." Links between the leadership of the two groups appear tenuous. Pedro Taruc, until recently the Huk chieftain, is one of a three-man committee that reportedly has taken over the functions of imprisoned PKP secretary general Jesus Lava.

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[redacted] Taruc has relinquished Huk leadership to Faustino del Mundo, whose Communist leanings are believed none too firm. [redacted]

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[redacted] the imprisoned former party leaders may retain control through intermediaries of both the party and the Huks.

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5. Marcos moved quickly to meet the revived Huk threat. Last June he launched Operation Central Luzon, later renamed the Central Luzon Development Program. The immediate mission of this plan was to implement the land reform code in critical areas of eastern Pampanga Province, Central Luzon, and eventually to construct roads, schools, and irrigation projects, and to improve agricultural methods. So far, results have been modest. To improve security conditions, Marcos has requested funds in the FY-1968 budget to expand and improve the Philippine constabulary.

6. A major stumbling block to reducing Huk influence is the continuing collaboration of local politicians seeking the votes the Huks can deliver. With the approach

-2-

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Fig 2.30 "The Huk Resurgence in the Philippines" INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, Directorate of Intelligence, 18 April 1967
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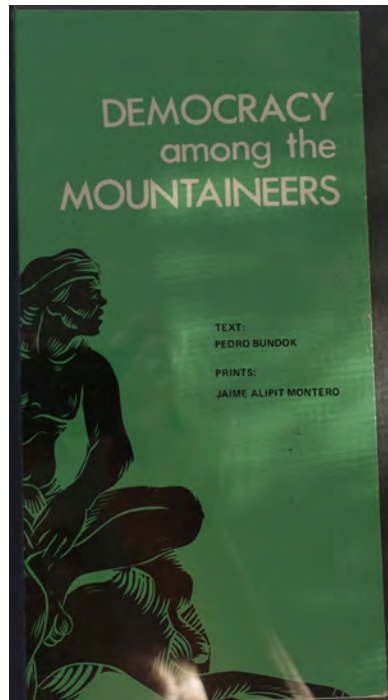
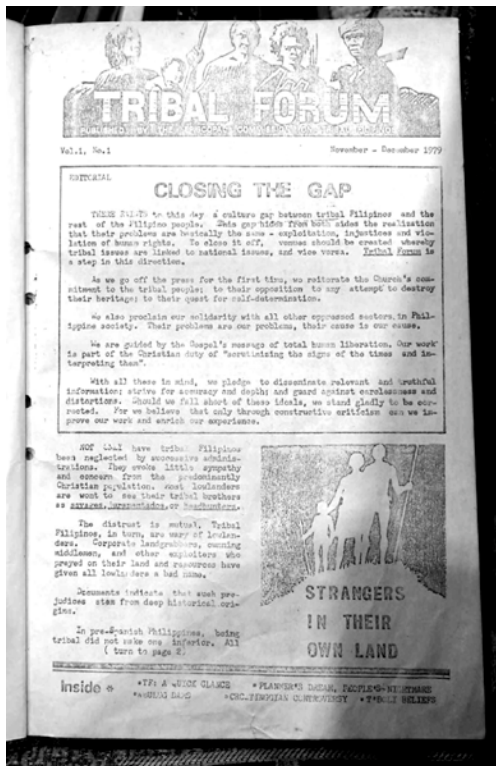


Fig 2.31 Pages from *Democracy among the Mountaineers*, a children's book explaining the political turmoil in the Cordillera in the early 1970s against the backdrop of older folk histories. Pedro Bundok, *Democracy among the Mountaineers*. New Day Publishers, 1973.





Fig 2.32 Manuel Elizalde lands in the mountains, from a profile on Elizalde in "Help for Philippine Tribes in Trouble." *National Geographic* Vol. 140, No. 2, August 1971. 220.



Since its completion in 1974, Pantabangan dam has turned surrounding hillsides to a barren expanse. Pantabangan residents mockingly refer to it as a "cemetery", where 14,000 weary people live in poverty and misery. They have no significant source of employment. Water service is unreliable. The promised two-year food ration from the World Food Program lasted only for a few months. Frequent earthquakes frighten the people, especially after a landslide plunged 100 houses in the valley below.

Dams bring ecological risks in their wake. Water chemistry changes. The soil around loses fertility. Indigenous flora and fauna run to extinction. Great pressure on the earth's crust leads to earthquakes and landslides.

Protesting Mindanao tribes point to another potent danger. Dams in their area will spread schistosomiasis to unstricken places. (Schistosomiasis is a fatal intestinal disease caused by the virus carried by snails, a sure cure for which is yet to be found.)



"Dams mean destruction"

Ambuklao, Binga, and Pantabangan dams have in themselves become the concrete testimonies against dam projects.

Ambuklao dam in Cordillera was built in 1952 at a cost of \$132 million. Expected to last for 62 years, it is already "dying" because of siltation and lack of watersheds. Around 500 (turn to page 6)

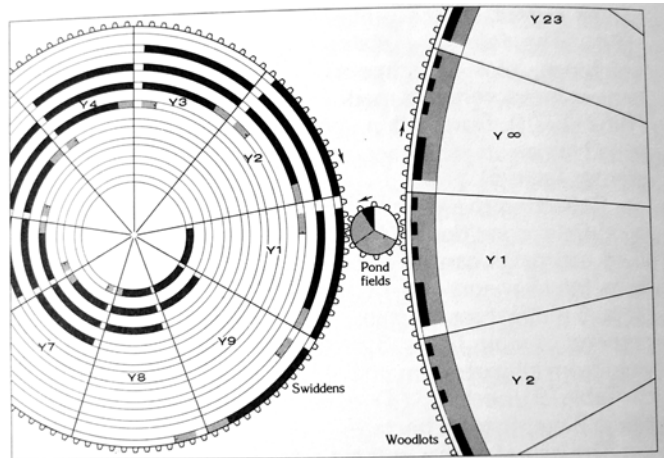
Fig 2.33 An article on Ambuklao, Binga and Pantabangan Dams from the first issue of Tribal Forum, typewritten and mimeographed. An example of the "Mosquito Press" of the Philippines during Martial Law. Courtesy of the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Intramuros, Manila. *Tribal Forum*, Vol. 1 No. 1, November-December 1979.



Fig 2.34 Rice terraces in the Cordillera (Kiltepan and Balugan, Mt Province) 2016.



Terrace hydraulic adjustments and expansion



Interlocking agricultural cycles

Fig 2.35 Images from: Conklin, Harold C, Puggūwon Lupāih, Miklos Pinther. *Ethnographic Atlas of Ifugao: A Study of Environment, Culture, and Society in Northern Luzon*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980, 16–17.

[81] Pond-field terrace composition

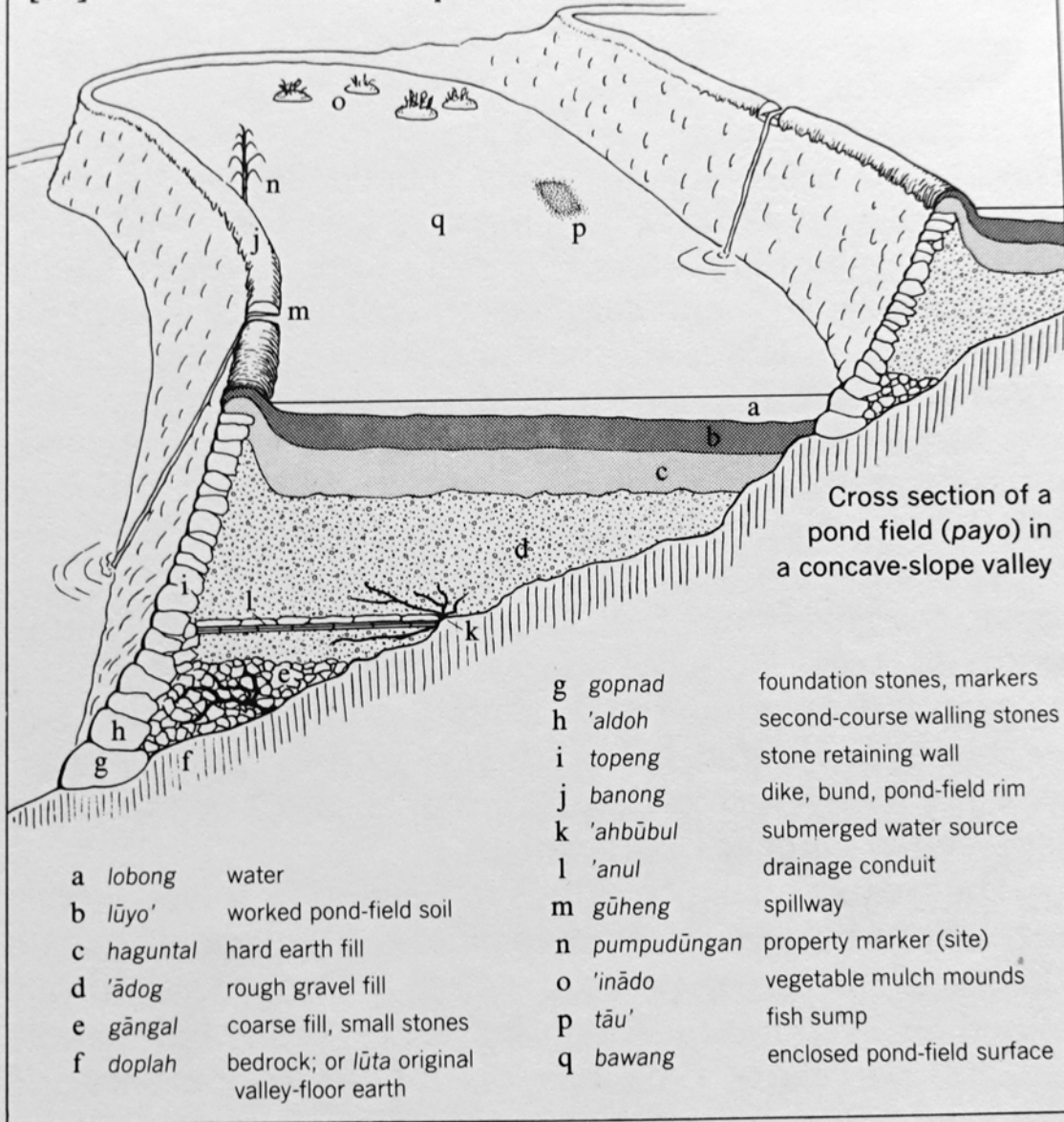


Fig 2.36 Section diagram of Ifugao rice terraces. Conklin, Harold C, Puggūwon Lupāih, Miklos Pinther. *Ethnographic Atlas of Ifugao*, 16.

[36] Hamlet residence and kinship. Spatial arrangements (A), kin groupings (B), and principal genealogical relations (C), among the 12 Bayninan household-family units residing in the hamlet of Buble in 1969.

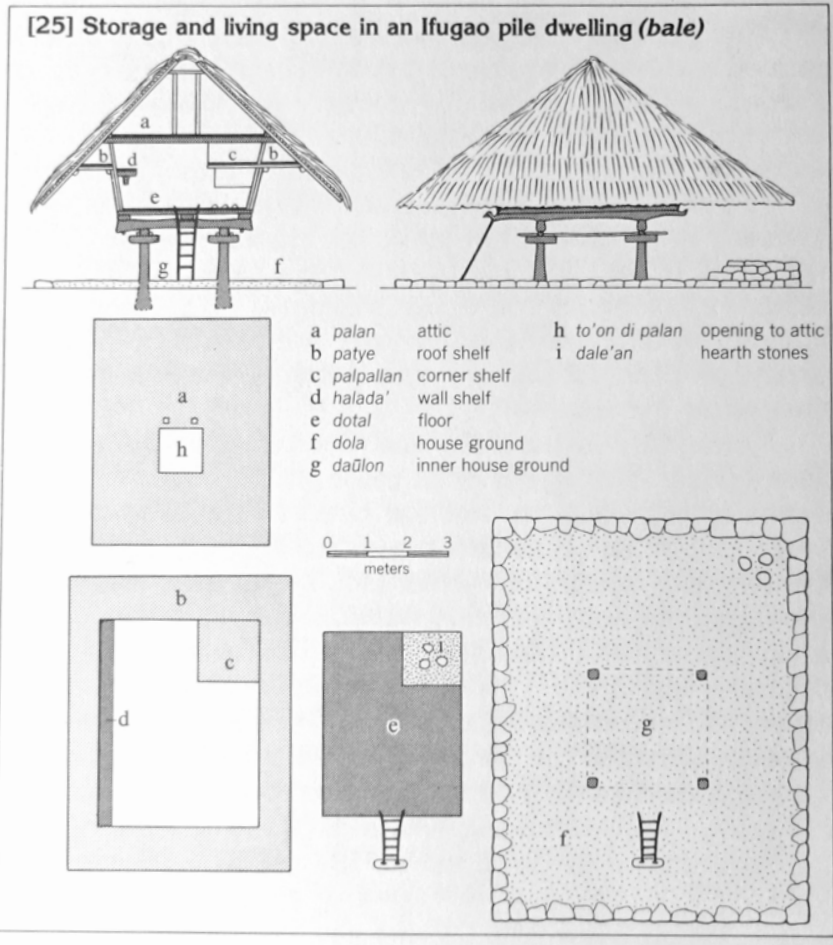
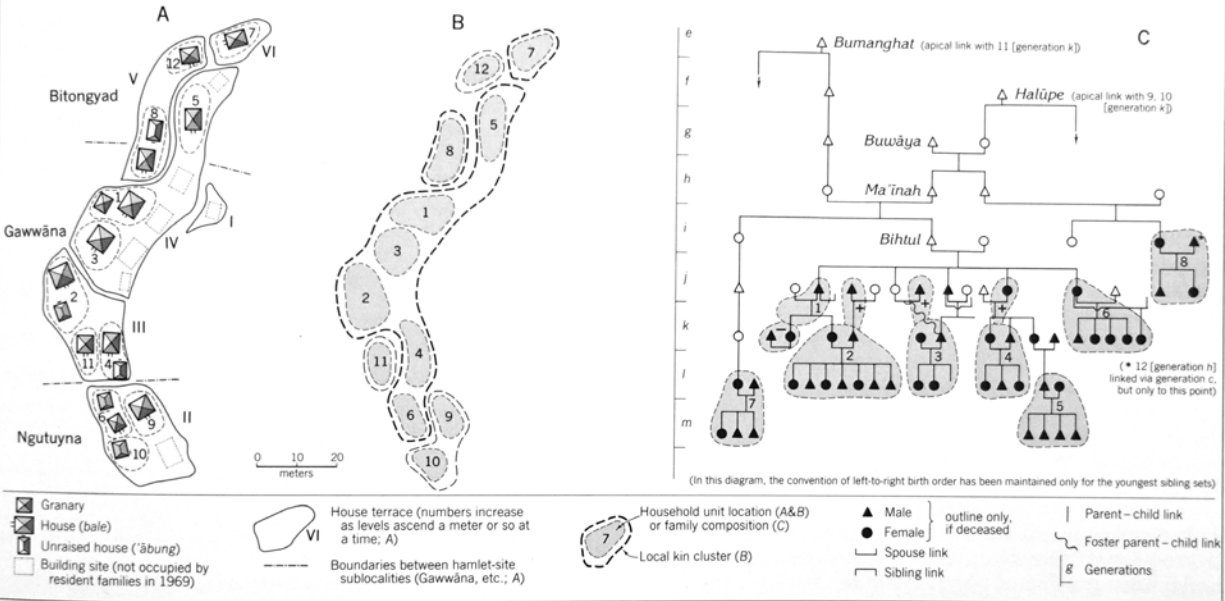


Fig 2.37 Conklin, Harold C, Puggūwon Lupāih, Miklos Pinther, *Ethnographic Atlas of Ifugao*, 5, 7.

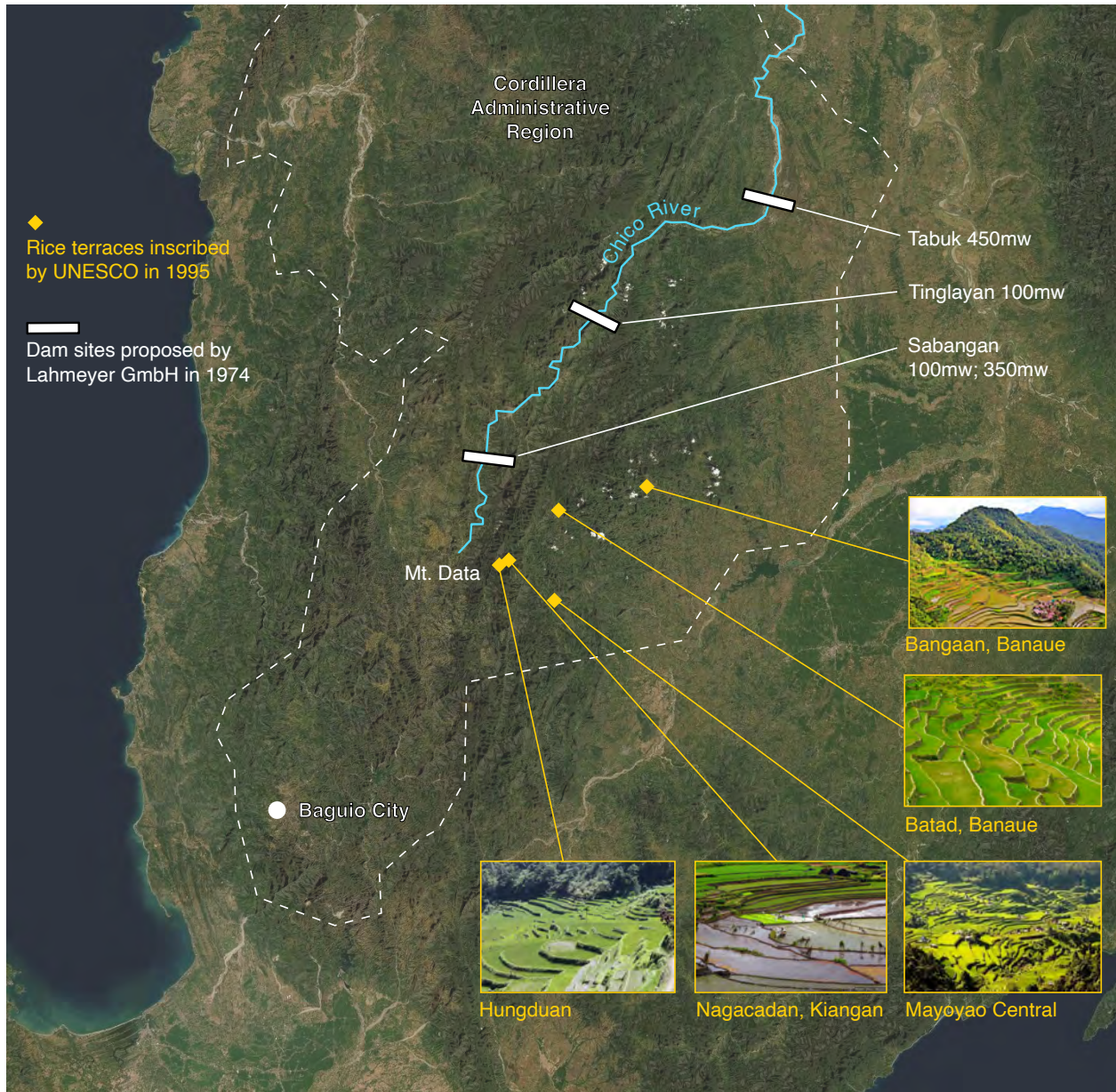


Fig 2.38 Proposed dam sites along the Chico River from 1974 survey by Lahmeyer GmbH, with locations of protected rice terraces inscribed by UNESCO in 1995. Map by the author.

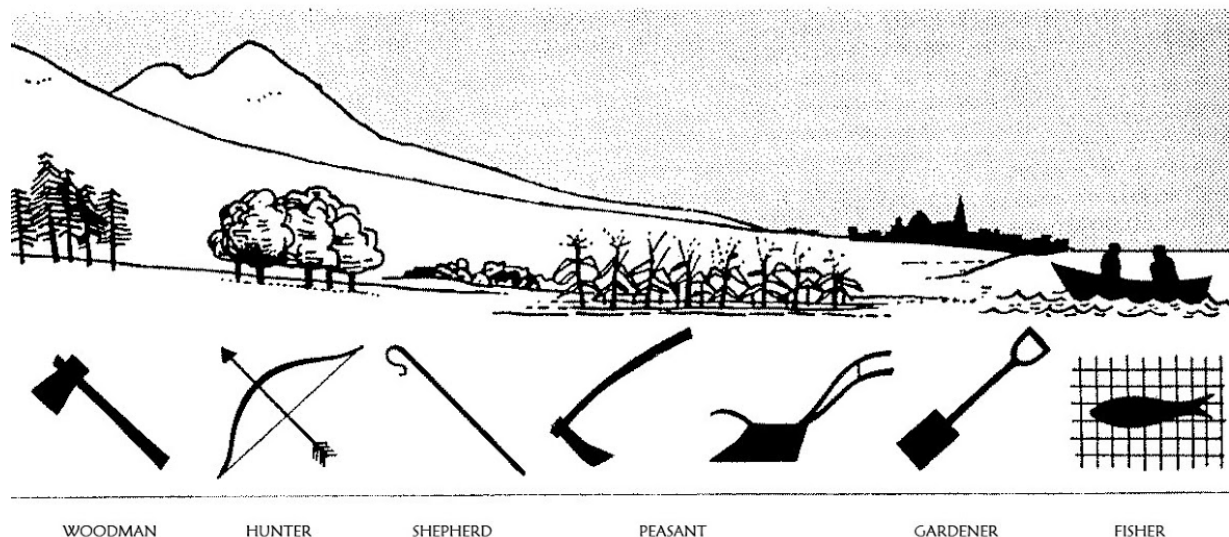


Fig 2.39 Geddes, Patrick. "The valley section from hills to sea." Transcription of one of the lectures given by the author at the New School of Social Research, as published in: Geddes, Patrick (1959) *Cities in evolution*. New and Revised Edition. London: Barnes and Nobles.

Fig 2.40 Kalinga leaders performing a bodong in Bugnay, Tinglayan, Kalinga in December 1978. Macliing Dulag is shown with helmet. *Tribal Forum* Vol. II, No. 7, Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos, September–October 1981, 13.





Fig 2.41 Graffiti on a boulder in Mountain Province. *The Refugee Crisis in the Philippines*. A Publication of the Anti-Martial Law Coalition (Philippines). April, 1977.

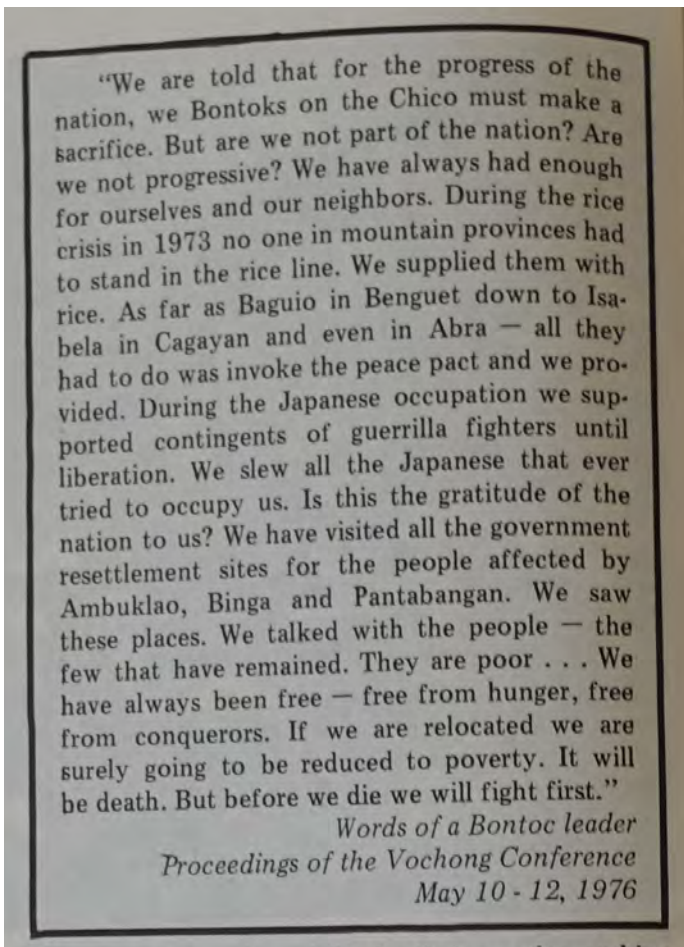


Fig 2.42 Proceedings from Vochong Conference, May 10–12, 1976. *The Refugee Crisis in the Philippines*. A Publication of the Anti-Martial Law Coalition (Philippines). April, 1977.

“We are told that for the progress of the nation, we Bontoks on the Chico must make a sacrifice. But are we not part of the nation? Are we not progressive? We have always had enough for ourselves and our neighbors. During the rice crisis in 1973 no one in mountain provinces had to stand in the rice line. We supplied them with rice. As far as Baguio in Benguet down to Isabel in Cagayan and even in Abra — all they had to do was invoke the peace pact and we provided. During the Japanese occupation we supported contingents of guerrilla fighters until liberation. We slew all the Japanese that ever tried to occupy us. Is this the gratitude of the nation to us? We have visited all the government resettlement sites for the people affected by Ambuklao, Binga and Pantabangan. We saw these places. We talked with the people — the few that have remained. They are poor . . . We have always been free — free from hunger, free from conquerors. If we are relocated we are surely going to be reduced to poverty. It will be death. But before we die we will fight first.”

*Words of a Bontoc leader
Proceedings of the Vochong Conference
May 10 - 12, 1976*



Self-Determination: The Core of the Issue

Rising from the Chico valley these days is an issue that is at the core of the people's opposition to the dams.

It is an urgent prayer, a loud cry of a whole people for the right to self-determination, the right to chart its own future.

It is the aspiration which links together all Tribal Filipinos, from the deep gorges of the Cordilleras, and the steep mountains of the Sierra Madre to the rich forests and fertile plains of Mindanao. The problems facing them, after all are similar: the encroachment of dams, plantations and logging companies into their ancestral lands.

This aspiration they desire to see realized-respected and not suppressed.

The Kalingas and Bontocs in their struggle for survival are helping all of us on the path of a true cultural synthesis, that is the growing together of them and us, as self-determining partners towards national identity.

Confronted with the problems of the Tribal Filipinos, we pledge ourselves once again to the building up of our communities: interdependent yet self-determining.



Fig 2.43 *Tribal Forum*, May-June 1980. Comic strip of the death of the Pangat (leader) Macliing Dulag. Samun, (seated, with child on lap), wife of Macli-ing Dulag, and her children put up streamers in their house in the village of Bugnay in Tinglayan to call for justice over the murder of the Kalinga elder. Ma. Ceres Doyo (1980).



3

Melting into the Jungle

Porosity and Perimeters of Counterinsurgency

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CHAPTER 3

Melting into the Jungle

Porosity and Perimeters of Counterinsurgency

Though “the architecture of US global power” is a metaphor for American influence on international affairs, the actual architecture that undergirded its pursuit to contain communism was built of humble materials. Bamboo spikes, a ditch and a perimeter of barbed wire were the fortifications with which Strategic Hamlets kept communism at bay. If the previous chapter followed the palm through paddy fields and mountains of Luzon, here it is followed, via the same counterinsurgency experts, to its use in rural resettlement campaigns as psywar programs. Resembling fragile containers of lightweight available materials, the programs investigated here were repositories for certain ideological messages and cordons to keep other ideas out. This chapter follows how psychological warfare operatives active in the Philippines and Vietnam contributed to the Agrovilles and Strategic Hamlets (Ấp Chiến lược) programs that were carried out in Vietnam between 1954 and 1962. (fig 3.01, 3.02) Laden with importance, they were evaluated with new and emerging computing technologies by army operations such as the Civic Operations and Rural Development Services (CORDS) and the larger intelligence community through organizations like RAND Corporation. Be that as it may, they were also containers for a Vietnamese political ideology called *Nhân Vị* (Personalism) that, according to the Diệm administration, would “fight the Viet-Cong with their own weapons.”¹ When President Kennedy authorized USAID to fund the deployment of “Strategic Hamlet Kits” (amounting to 13 million

¹ *Viet Nam's Strategic Hamlets*. Directorate General of Information Saigon (Viet Nam Press), February 1963. 20.

USD), it was disguised as development aid. In return, President Ngô Đình Diệm's administration deployed "development projects" disguised as military operations. Was the program a civic modernization campaign dressed up as a military operation in order to receive US funds? Or was covert US military funding being dressed up as a "civic" campaign? Though Diệm his brother Ngô Đình Nhu and the de-facto first lady, Trần Lệ Xuân are often referred to as a "puppet regime" of the US government, who was really playing who through the Strategic Hamlet program? The chapter follows counterinsurgency experts moving between Manila, Hong Kong and Sài Gòn in order to argue that architectural materials codified a fragile perimeter between resettlement and rural communism that was a shifting boundary and, as will be seen, was to be recycled in the context of Mindanao in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

This chapter is a proposal for how architectural history can think through the "psychological" of psywar, not by looking at the architects involved with counterinsurgency experts, but with the latter's conscious emulation of the former.² The real bourgeois struggle to "liberate itself from bureaucratic procedure" happened in the hallways of Washington DC, embassies in Bangkok or Manila, and meeting rooms of Sài Gòn, where counterinsurgency experts engaged in conversation with political leaders on how to organize "civic action programs," code for building new rural settlements and pacification campaigns.³ Along with the continuity of architectural textures, the biography of Lansdale acts as a rough guide for the deterioration of American political influence and the subsequent takeover and Americanization

² See also Ijlal Muzaffar's work on Constantinos Doxiadis. "Boundary Games: Ecochard, Doxiadis, and the Refugee Housing Projects under Military Rule in Pakistan, 1953-1959," in *Aggregate: Governing by Design*, A. Dutta, T. Hyde, and D. Abramson, eds. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

³ I take Mark Jarzombek's claim here of "manifestations of the bourgeois struggle to (pretend to) liberate itself from its own bureaucratic tendencies" through the context of art historical writing (and architectural criticism in the 1980s and 1990s) outward to bureaucratic means. Mark Jarzombek, *The Psychologizing of Modernity: Art, Architecture and History*, Illustrated edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 35.

of the conflict that would become the Vietnam War (for Americans) and the American War (for Vietnamese). With the disintegration of French Indochina after the Geneva Agreements of 1954, the Philippine-American contingent, with their recent success in quashing the Huk Rebellion, were well-poised to continue in their advising operations to the short-lived Government of Vietnam (GVN). Between these governments and individuals, techniques of “villagization” were tested out for their uses as counterinsurgency by quite literally separating the general population from guerrillas—often indistinguishable from one another—by way of fortifying villages. As a military concept, the regions in which it was deployed were completely transformed rural environments.⁴

I

Peripheries and Psychologizing (other) Modernities

As a branch of military activity that deals with counterinsurgency, the evolution of psychological warfare and psychological operations (psywar or psyops) bear similarities to the propaganda of insurgency movements themselves. Psywar is the operationalization of secret or otherwise covert knowledge through schemes that deal with the general population in order to coerce a result without resorting to conventional warfare. The psychology of psychological warfare was developed, as Ellen Herman has shown, in a post-1945 world in which US Army

⁴ As it came to be known in the colonial African context and in British Malaya. T. N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Lorgen, Christy Cannon. 1999. The experience of villagisation: Lessons from Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Tanzania. London: Oxfam; Rogers, Peter J., and Idris S. Kikula. 1997. Policy implications on environment: The case of villagisation in Tanzania. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

projects “had a mandate to ‘predict and influence’ the process of Third World development” embedding counterinsurgency and special operations in the American political apparatus.⁵ The will to war in an insurgency situation, such as that typified in the Philippines and Vietnam was increasingly carried out through “peacefare” because of the dramatic failures experienced in Vietnam due to the absence of basic cultural comprehension.⁶ Psychological warfare was thoroughly integrated with the media landscape of the 1950s and early 1960s, not only through visual media and the production of pamphlets or radio broadcasts, but scaled-up to the production of space in villages, towns, and influence over city planning.⁷ In these forms of media, psywar was indistinguishable from advertising and political sloganeering, but psychological operations as tools of government very owed their ancestry to the administration of former colonial societies (like Algeria, Malaya and Kenya in the 1950s).⁸ (fig 3.02)

What distinguishes psywar programs from schemes of colonial population control prior to 1950, however, is the psychologizing of communist insurgency that psywar involved. While villagization schemes of Kenya or Malaya were physicalized forms of governance, strategic hamlets faced the challenge of mitigating the influence of communism itself—using walls to defend a population from ideas. Through these schemes, communism ideology itself was

⁵ Herman notes that counterinsurgency became “firmly identified with the Kennedy administration” through the expansion of operations during the war in Vietnam. Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (University of California Press, 1995), 154–155; see also: Pamela M. Lee, *Think Tank Aesthetics: Midcentury Modernism, the Cold War, and the Neoliberal Present* (MIT Press, 2020).

⁶ Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology*, 167.

⁷ Nicole Sackley, “The Village as Cold War Site: Experts, Development, and the History of Rural Reconstruction*,” *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 3 (November 2011): 481–504; Nicole Sackley, “Village Models: Etawah, India, and the Making and Remaking of Development in the Early Cold War*,” *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 4 (September 1, 2013), 749–78.

⁸ The manual of policing in the Philippines, issued by the US Army in 1914, which was reissued in the 1950s and 1960s for the Philippine Constabulary handling insurgency. French “pacification” in Algeria and bidonvilles.

transformed. Apparently, communism was at odds with Christian faith (for American audiences at least), yet in both the Vietnamese and Philippine contexts it showed no such mutual exclusivity to religious doctrine, and happily coexisted alongside Christianity and Buddhism, for example.⁹ The malleability of “communism” in the service of counterinsurgent architecture made attempts at its identification capricious and often fatal. In the words of one visiting agency expert in 1972, “innumerable crimes and absolutely senseless acts of suppression” being committed “against both real and suspected communists and sympathizing villagers.”¹⁰

Under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, by 1954 the Army of Liberation (NLF, *Giai Phong Quan*) was well established across north Vietnam with the end of French Indochina. In Sài Gòn to the south, a fragile Government of Vietnam (GVN) upheld by the remnants of Vietnamese officials that had formerly served the French. Though the agenda of the NLF was, like the Huks, communist in scope, unlike the Huks the resistance movement was not only motivated by agrarian reform (emerging from the farmers movements of the 1930s) but moreover on principles of independence from any colonial or imperial force. Against the GVN, the NLF continued to wage attacks that were heavily influenced by the “fundamental law” of Maoist guerrilla warfare tactics, “the stage-by-stage strangulation of enemy-controlled cities from stable bases in the countryside,” and “arriving unexpectedly and leaving unnoticed” by relying on integration with a dispersed rural populace.¹¹

⁹ See for example the relationship between the Huk leader Luis Taruc and his renouncement of communism in favor of the Catholic church in the 1970s.

¹⁰ Chester Cooper, cited in Thomas Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, 21–22; Chester L. Cooper et al., *The American Experience with Pacification in Vietnam: An Overview* (contract study, Institute for Defense Analyses, Arlington, VA, 1972, 119–120.

¹¹ Writing in 1906 in the journal he helped to found, Vladimir Lenin described “new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.” The journal, *Proletary*, was the illegal mouthpiece for the Bolshevik party and the article proclaimed that forms of urban criminality on nodes of the state could be carried out in ad-hoc, seemingly random yet targeted ways. This was what Lenin called “guerrilla warfare,” and the article of the same title described that it

Strategy in the jungle

In many provinces in South Vietnam the NLF were indistinguishable from the rural populace, among whom the army recruited and lived. With the a supply chain from Hanoi along the ancient network of routes following the spine of mountains bordering Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam that became known as the Ho Chi Minh trail (Đường mòn Hồ Chí Minh), the army was able to exert pressure from both above and below Sài Gòn.¹² (fig 3.02) “In an insurgency situation,” deputy director of the Bureau of Intelligence warned, “this distribution pattern very obviously poses major problems for maintaining security and defense.”¹³ Lê Duẩn, secretary of the Lao Dong Party (Worker’s Party of Vietnam, *Đảng lao động Việt Nam*) describes South Vietnam as a “vast countryside [with] a natural economy not very dependent on towns and an almost exclusively peasant population living on agriculture,” meaning that “the aggressors and their henchmen ruling in urban centers cannot establish a strict control over the rural areas.”¹⁴

could be understood through a “*historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle.” The essay was written shortly after the failed Revolution of 1905, after which Lenin adopted a harder stance on the forms that political action could take, including robbing post offices, railway stations, trains, and banks. Just as urban criminality was characteristically disarrayed, anarchical or unforeseen for the Bolsheviks, so too would rural anarchy follow suit. In Southeast and East Asia, a rural peasantry would be the stand-in for the urban proletariat of Russia, and the countryside was key to the concepts of guerrilla warfare laid out by Mao Zedong.

Lenin, “Guerrilla Warfare,” *Proletary*, No. 5, September 30, 1906; Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, Vol. II. P. 155–156; Nemenzo, Francisco. “Rectification process in the Philippine communist movement.” In: Lim, Joo-Jock, Vani S, and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. *Armed Communist Movements in Southeast Asia*. Aldershot: Gower, 1988: 79.

¹² The relationship between communism, the countryside, and counter-communist guerrilla warfare in South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia is extensive. Jeju Island incident. Maoist-Naxalite insurgency India and Adivasi relationship. China Red Army. Cambodia and Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot learning from tribes. Similarly, the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación (EZLN), commonly known as the Zapatistas in southern Mexico.

¹³ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963, Volume III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*. 197. Research Memorandum from the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Denney) to the Acting Secretary of State. “Strategic Hamlets.” Department of State, S/P Files: Lot 70 D 199. Vietnam 1963. Unclassified.

¹⁴ In South Vietnam in a 1967 pamphlet: Lê Duẩn, *Forward Under the Glorious Banner of the October Revolution*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1967.

This relationship between rurality, the political center and a dispersed armed struggle were the fundamentals of a Maoist communist insurgency, meaning that, as the Pentagon Papers would later put it, “the Viet Cong simply melted into the jungles.”¹⁵

In December 1961, with the NLF controlling much of the countryside of South Vietnam and President Ngô Đình Diệm calling for more US support, “Operation Sunrise” was launched to counteract communist influence in the countryside. The sweeping program grouped villages into “Strategic Hamlets” (Ấp Chiến lược) by fortifying existing communities and building new ones behind a perimeter of barbed wire, bamboo spikes, ditches and watchtowers.¹⁶ (fig 3.03–3.09) By early 1963 the general consensus was that the Strategic Hamlet Program was working. The Pentagon Papers later described that they represented the “unifying concept for a strategy designed to pacify rural Vietnam, the Viet Minh’s chosen battleground,” and they also helped to “develop support among the peasants for the central government.”¹⁷ Larger than simply the construction of villages, the program was broken down into phases, beginning with “clearing the insurgents from an area and protecting the rural populace,” and progressing through to a small-

¹⁵ “VI. THE NATIONAL PLAN EMERGES: “Operation Sunrise.” *The Pentagon Papers*, Gravel Edition. Volume 2 Chapter 2, “The Strategic Hamlet Program, 1961–1963,” Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, 128-159.

¹⁶ “In December 1965, the insurgents were reported to control 56.4 percent of the land area of South Vietnam, or 37,400 square miles of a total territory of 66,200 square miles. Most of the land they controlled was in remote regions such as the Central Highlands, the Plain of Reeds and other sparsely populated areas like those near the border with Cambodia and Laos. So although they held over half of the land area, they controlled only about 24.5 percent of the population, about 3.7 million people. Another 13,000 square miles were considered contested areas.” Elliott, Mai. “Opinion | The Terrible Violence of ‘Pacification.’” *The New York Times*, January 18, 2018, sec. Opinion. The Việt Minh is the former name of the NLF, who officially changed it in 1960. Viet Cong was a derogatory term used by President Diem, an abbreviation of *Việt gian cộng sản*, meaning “Communist Traitor to Vietnam.” Today they are recognized as the People’s Liberation Armed Forces of South Vietnam (PLAF) (*Quân Giải phóng Miền Nam Việt Nam*, 軍解放沔南越南). Việt Minh is an abbreviation of Vietnam Doc Lap Dong Minh (Vietnam Independence League). Ahern, *Vietnam Declassified*, 2010, 377.

¹⁷ Officially titled “Report of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force,” the Pentagon Papers were commissioned by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in 1967 and leaked in parts in 1971. United States, ed. *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam*. The Senator Gravel ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971: 128.

scale democratically elected governmental infrastructure that peasants would “identify” with and participate in through a number of small-scale means.¹⁸

Though often introduced as a discreet entity, the Strategic Hamlets Program was the continuation of at least three rural pacification projects that took place in the 1950s: the French “Pacification” program; the Agglomeration Plan; and the short-lived “Agrovilles” program. It took inspiration from a variety of other villagization campaigns in places either emerging from or still under colonial regimes: New Villages in Malaya and the villagization campaign in Kenya. The colonial French “Pacification” scheme involved building roads, vaccinating schoolchildren, and providing electricity for those in rural areas. Winning the favor of a rural Vietnamese populace for their French colonial administrators would, the program argued, present a viable alternative to the communist insurgency. The program was regarded as futile however because Việt Minh insurgents took over these towns after dark, its failure culminating when soldiers captured the last French strongholds at the town of Điện Biên Phủ in North Vietnam in 1954. Though Diệm authorized the hamlet campaigns, his brother Nhu organized and oversaw the program. All of the schemes had the shared intention of regrouping a dispersed rural populace and containing the movement for national independence spread by the Việt Minh, which, though it was based in Hanoi far to the north, was gaining traction across the south throughout the 1950s.¹⁹

The program drew inspiration from a wide array of both rural community arrangements and counterinsurgency practices alike, from kibbutz programs in Israel, bidonvilles in Algeria to

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Boot, Max. *The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam*. Liveright Publishing, 2018, 401.

New Villages in Malaya and the EDCOR program (discussed in chapter 2) in the Philippines, attempting to translate new and emerging theories of counterinsurgency into reality.²⁰ Of course, across these different countries, the people living in settlements lived very different lives, nevertheless, formulas that were crafted by experts in metropolitan meeting rooms sought to import and export rural programs that were unitary and generalizable.²¹ Among all of these top-down schemes, the overwhelming majority relied on forms of architecture and urban design—materially humble as they may have been—to enact political ideas. In rural places like Central Luzon or South Vietnam, the tools with which to translate political motivations were bamboo spikes, coconut thatch, perimeter ditches, and barbed wire.

Through the interwoven processes of damming and dislocation explored in the previous chapter, the concept of relocating and redistributing rural populations—through the EDCOR program in 1953, the Pantabangan relocations of 1972 and the Chico resistance movement to them after 1974—meant that relocation itself became increasingly resilient as a prominent tool for influencing rural regimes in Southeast Asia. In Vietnam, Edward Lansdale and Charles Bohannon were joined by an international cohort of counterinsurgency experts: the French military officer David Galula brought his experience from Algeria and time spent in the early years of Mao’s China; British general Robert Thompson brought with him experience of the “New Villages” campaigns in Malaya, and Trần Ngọc Châu, a former Việt Minh cadre who

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Third World populations, as Edward Miller notes, did not match the “theoretical formulas crafted in Paris, Nairobi, Santa Monica, or Saigon,” and that the “rendering of Third World populations and spaces as unitary and malleable helps explain the particular strategies and policies that experts designed for particular counterinsurgency wars.” Miller, Edward. “Development, Space, and Counterinsurgency in South Vietnam’s Bến Tre Province, 1954–1960.” Stephen J. Macekura, eds, *The Development Century: A Global History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 152. M. Ijlal Muzaffar, “The Periphery within: Modern Architecture and the Making of the Third World” (2007).

switched sides to become provincial governor of an Agroville—a compressed township integrated with farms—in Kiến Hòa and later head of CIA Rural Pacification programs. In particular, the Agroville scheme and Strategic Hamlets Program were deployed to contain the influence of communism while promoting at least three other political philosophies: democracy, personalism and communalism. The programs ran in parallel to Panamin projects in the Philippines in the late-1960s (discussed in the next chapter), and a number of generals were involved in the processes in both countries. In this sense, the material discussed here provides a comparative reading for the ways in which rural-urbanization strategies of counterinsurgency played out. The consequences of bringing these figures into architectural history is not to complicate the muddy intellectual terrain of the 1950s and 1960s with figures exterior to the discipline of architecture. Rather, it is to deepen the criticality with which architecture can deal with its own cognitive boundaries. Galula, Lansdale, Bohannon, Châu and their interaction with the Diệm regime remain household names in counterinsurgency studies and the literature covering the era that led up to the war in Vietnam. However, less remarked upon are the ways that portents of their proposals were interwoven with, and often diverted from, President Diệm’s rural reconstruction program. Their proposals and ideas were based on firsthand experience of warfare and politics, overlapping geopolitical agendas and terse multilingual negotiations, with schemes for the urban reconfigurations that had consequences for many hundreds of thousands of lives in South Vietnam and the Philippines.

“Traps of various kinds:” a symposium

If there was one thing that the twelve participants could agree on, it was the effectiveness with which resettlement campaigns had in cutting off resources to guerrillas and quelling an insurgency. The voices gathered together in April 1962 by RAND Corporation were discussing

techniques of counterinsurgency, and among this small group of men were accumulated experiences of rebellions in Algeria China, Greece, Kenya, Laos, Malaya, Oman, South Vietnam, and the Philippines.²² Galula gave a definition to the assembled group for the basic difference between insurgency and counterinsurgency, being that “the insurgent starts out with nothing but a cause and grows to strength,” while for the counterinsurgent (his job) it is more difficult, who “starts with everything but a cause and gradually declines in strength.”²³ Finding a cause was crucial to these counterinsurgent experts—earlier that year “Operation Ranch Hand” had begun, in which the US Air Force sprayed jungles along the Ho Chi Minh Trail with the chemical defoliant Agent Orange—the impatience shown by other generals leading inevitably to further military escalation.

On the final morning of the symposium the officers were discussing more “peaceable” methods of resettlement and civilian counterinsurgency operations. They listened as a British Army General described the successes of “villagization” in Kenya. Another British Army general from Malaya agreed, noting that initially villagers “hated having to live in the reserves,” however, realizing the advantages of “good schools for their children,” chose not to leave even

²² The US and allied officers and civilian officials who were invited to the conference table were:

Charles T.R. Bohannon, Lieutenant Colonel, AUS-Ret.
Wendell W. Fertig, Colonel, USA-Ret.
David Galula, Lieutenant Colonel (French Marine Corps)
Anthony S. Jeapes, Captain (British Army)
Frank E. Kitson, MBE, MC, Lieutenant Colonel (British Army)
Edward Geary Lansdale, Brigadier General, USAF
Rufus C. Phillips, III
David Leonard Powell-Jones, DSO, OBEY Brigadier General (British Army)
John R. Shirley, OBE, Colonel (British Army-Ret.)
Napoleon D. Valeriano, Colonel (formerly with the Armed Forces of the Philippines)
John F. White, Colonel (Royal Australian Army)
Samuel V. Wilson, Lieutenant Colonel, USA

²³ RAND Corporation, “Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, April 16–20, 1962,” 4.

when free to do so. Galula agreed, whose experiences in Algeria led him to believe that “the main support for resettlement had come from women, who enjoyed the more varied social life of these villages.”²⁴ Not only could social structures be re-organized through villagization, but the changing shape of social relations relied on the gendered components of village life. Such a strategy was part of “compartmentalizing” areas previously under enemy control. Led by a commander “familiar with the area and in touch with its people” compartmentalization happened more through social connections than military strategy. (fig 3.28) Posts for compartmentalized commanders were chosen according to the “politically and administratively most important villages rather than positions that are strategic only from a military point of view.”²⁵ Galula gave an overview of this strategy with a visual: a series of overlapping squares, a “contaminated area” each with a single dot in the middle of the square depicting the territorial commander, who should remain undisputed chief. However, at this point in the symposium a Filipino general (Colonel Valeriano, who worked with Lansdale and Bohannon in the Huk campaign) interjected, asking how one distinguished a “genuinely peaceful farmer from the seemingly peaceful one who was a part-time armed guerrilla at night”? To which Galula retorted that in a counterinsurgency situation there are “many shades of feelings” in the general population, however of chief importance is disarming active guerrillas and creating new political organizations.

²⁴ RAND Corporation, “Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, April 16–20, 1962,” 130; The “FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency” or, Field Manuel, by General David Petraeus was based on Galula’s work. Of the works on counterinsurgency, wrote Petraeus, “perhaps none was as important as *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*.” Ann Marlowe, *David Galula: His Life and Intellectual Context* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2010): iii.

²⁵ RAND Corporation, “Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, April 16–20, 1962,” 16.

Strategies of coercion and persuasion emerged as crucial to counterinsurgency in this symposium. Political scientist Stuart Schrader has described how political participation borrowed ideas from the history of counterinsurgency in the US context, where “pacification remains a useful way to understand efforts to finely tune a balance of devolved self-help development programming with coercive security measures by channeling energies away from protest or other incipient forms of insecurity.”²⁶ Well aware of the benefits of a seemingly virtuous political campaign for the social organization of pacification in Luzon, Bohannon and Lansdale had established a front organization in Vietnam for recruiting paramilitary forces called “Freedom Company.” Bohannon, who trained as an anthropologist and archaeologist, was adamant that counterinsurgency, short of “extermination or resettlement,” was more than anything else an act of persuasion, “a contest, a relationship, between individuals that touches on every sphere, every form of human relations.”²⁷ Freedom Company held initial strategy sessions in Manila to train South Vietnamese troops in guerrilla warfare using the same soldiers that fought the Huks, building on Bohannon’s belief in the “value of different cultures working together.”²⁸

It would appear that even while there was consensus that counterinsurgency was purely psychological, it required physical form, village structures and moments of architectural embellishment. In a May 1962 meeting, President Diệm told the USAID Mission Assistant Director in Vietnam Rufus Phillips that “the strategic hamlet is a state of mind,” yet they still required fortification, and as a military device, the strategic hamlet was still required to be

²⁶ Stuart Schrader, “To Secure the Global Great Society: Participation in Pacification,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 227.

²⁷ Bohannon, “Antiguerrilla Operations.” 1962; Jason S. Ridler, “Combat Anthropologist: Charles T. R. Bohannon, Counter-Insurgency Pioneer, 1936-1966,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 31, no. 2 (February 17, 2020): 274.

²⁸ Ridler, “Combat Anthropologist,” 277.

instated first for it to occur in the mind.²⁹ At the symposium, these were called “ancillary devices” and “barrages.” (fig 3.29) Galula described one such barrage in Algeria in the counterinsurgency program against the FLN as a series of wired and mined entanglements, a border 40 meters in width that contained a 5000-volt electric fence as its centerpiece. Similar fortifications were constructed around strategic hamlets, in a report for RAND, three types are described in 1961. The first type is the heavily fortified hamlet found in the “Operation Sunrise” area around Sài Gòn.

In these strategic hamlets, at least the main residential areas of a single hamlet, or group of hamlets, are largely or entirely surrounded by extensive earthworks. These include a ditch about 5 feet deep and 10 feet wide at the top, and a rampart of corresponding dimensions, both studded with bamboo spears that project about 1-1/2 feet. In addition, outside the ditch they usually have a fence of cut bamboo or wooden pickets, though occasionally there will be a barbed-wire fence strung between concrete posts instead. (In some cases the bamboo fence obstructs the fields of fire from the hamlet.)³⁰

Combining local building technologies—earthwork, bamboo, thatch (3.25)—with imposed, hardening strategies—barbed wire and concrete posts—introduced a militarized veneer to rural life concomitant with the mixed strategies that produced them.

²⁹ Marlowe, “The Picture Awaits,” 71–71. Rufus Phillips worked for MAAG as the psychological warfare advisor to the army of South Vietnam.

³⁰ John C. Donnell and Gerald C. Hickey. “The Vietnamese “Strategic Hamlets”: A Preliminary Report” Memorandum RM-3208-ARPA, RAND Corporation, August 1962: 4–5.

II

Circularities and Containment Across Context

One of the first resettlement campaigns to be launched was the 1957 “new land development centers” (*Khu dinh dien*), which Diệm hoped would create a strategic “human wall” along the frontier of South Vietnam. The government had created 84 centers with a population of 125,000 by the middle of 1959.³¹ However, Diệm’s mounting problems found the scheme to be insufficient, and the government launched the “Agroville” (*ap tru mat*) program in July 1959. Also known as the “Rural Community Development Program,” it was planned with the intention of relocating the peasantry to large, fortified townships that could be shielded from NLF propaganda. It was similar to the French approach of the “Pacification” program, except Agrovilles were planned as new units of space, a “barrack-like design” that Laleh Khalili argues facilitated both surveillance and movement of security forces.³² However, in addition to Agrovilles being demarcated areas controlled by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, built in to the program was a civic reorganization program, visible in the scale of the aerial views and scale models shown to visiting American ambassador in 1961. (figs 3.10–3.12) The large-scale aspect of their urban plans was crucial both to their initial impressive cohesive structure, and also their demise as an expensive attempt at rural reform.

When Trần Ngọc Châu was made provincial governor of a large Agroville that oversaw the region of Bến Tre [Kiến Hòa] in 1962, he described the region as a “hotbed of

³¹ Philip E. Catton, “Counter-Insurgency and Nation Building: The Strategic Hamlet Programme in South Vietnam, 1961–1963,” *The International History Review* 21, no. 4 (December 1, 1999): 920.

³² Laleh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (Stanford University Press, 2012), 179–182.

antigovernment activity” and the “cradle of the insurgency,” since the underground resistance had been well established there prior to the official launch of the NLF in 1960.³³ Far to the southeast of the country, Bến Tre is the delta of the Mekong River, where the soil is rich with minerals and silt brought by south the river as it winds down from China through Myanmar, Laos, Thailand Cambodia and Vietnam. Bến Tre is therefore an important agricultural region, as well as sitting on the main trade artery flowing through the peninsula into the South China Sea (or the “Eastern Sea” as it is known in Vietnam).³⁴ However, like Central Luzon and the Cordillera, the region of Bến Tre has a much longer history of insurgency that stretches back into the nineteenth century beginning when the Nguyễn dynasty ceded it and the Mekong Delta to France in 1867. Many Vietnamese opposed, a government official committed suicide, and his two sons led an army of rebels in an insurgency against the French regime. With the foundation of the Vietnamese Communist Party in 1930 another spell of anti-regime activity rippled across the region, culminating in the first attempt to overthrow it in 1940 with the “Southern Uprising” (Nam Kỳ Khởi Nghĩa).³⁵ At the time of his taking the post as provincial governor in 1962, Châu recognized that among the populace lived memories of at least four generations of insurgency, against the French, Americans, and the socially stratified scholar “Mandarin” class of Vietnamese politicians who had served as lackeys to and benefitters from foreign regimes—of which many peasants considered the Diệm administration to be. Châu was different, however. A former Viet Minh guerrilla who switched sides and by the mid-1950s was well-known among

³³ In 1956 the Government of South Vietnam changed the name of Bến Tre to Kiến Hòa province. After the war, in 1975, the province was reverted back to Bến Tre, its original name. Chau, *Vietnam Labyrinth*, 165.

³⁴ Edward Miller, “Development, Space, and Counterinsurgency in South Vietnam’s Bến Tre Province, 1954–1960,” in *The Development Century: A Global History*, ed. Erez Manela and Stephen J. Macekura, Global and International History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 156.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

CIA counterinsurgency circles.³⁶ As commander of the Civil Guard and Self Defense Forces for the seven eastern Mekong Delta provinces, “already centers of great unrest and Viet Cong strongholds,” Châu set up an effective training program for the Civil Defense based on his experience of Viet Minh tactics.³⁷

Drawing on British tactics employed in Malaya, Agrovilles were intended to be “self-help” in scope, and under Diệm’s insistence—recalling the “embryonic economic entrepreneurship” in Kenya—villagers would be required to build the Agrovilles themselves. Indeed, the Agrovilles were intended to be settlements that could be the engines for a new society. The centrally organized Agrovillage of Ba Tri, viewed from above (figs 3.10–20) provides some indication as to how Diệm foresaw the vast, centrally organized agricultural community as constituting “the economic units which will play an important role in the future development of the country.”³⁸ This in-between settlement, not quite teeming city life, nor placid rural existence, was the compromise of a commune that would, inadvertently (and perhaps ironically) suppress the influence of communist infiltration. They would be a turning point for a mostly agrarian society, *ville charnières*, a “hinge city,” were the rural populace could be transformed into a semi-metropolitan one. As the Minister of the Interior put it, “the population, especially in the South, is living in such spread-out manner that the government cannot protect them and they are

³⁶ As teenager Tran Ngoc Chau undertook seven years of training to become a Buddhist monk, and volunteered as an intelligence cell courier in the resistance movement against the Japanese occupation of Vietnam during the Second World War. In the four years following the war, Chau was a Viet Minh guerrilla fighting the French for Vietnamese independence. Then, after becoming a distinguished officer, he changed sides, joining the Vietnamese forces under Emperor Bao Dai, at the time, believing that the French would grant independence. After the Geneva Agreement of 1954 he remained an officer for South Vietnam, serving the Diem government and the American anti-communist effort as head of the CIA pacification program. Châu insisted that Vietnamese officers and agents take leadership positions in the field while Americans stay in the background.

³⁷ Chau, *Vietnam Labyrinth*, 165.

³⁸ Joseph J. Zasloff, “Rural Resettlement in South Viet Nam: The Agrovillage Program,” *Pacific Affairs* 35, no. 4 (1962), 327.

obliged to furnish supplies to the Viet Cong. Therefore, it is necessary to concentrate this population.”³⁹ In a scale model and aerial views of Ba Tri Agrovillage in Bến Tre province, the scale of the circular pre-planned town is vast. (figs 3.12, 3.14) Ba Tri is *architecture parlante* par excellence, recalling the circular perimeter combining agriculture and industry of Ledoux’s Royal Saltworks at Chaux, a ring of paddy fields around a centrally organized town and small hillock, except in this case the director’s house is replaced by a small mountain with religious sites. Ever the architectural allegory for a political message, the Agrovillage, as with the Saltworks, contained the message of modernity for the visitor. Yet the construction program barely lasted into 1961.

Visiting three Agrovillages in 1960 as part of a university group studying provincial administration, Joseph Zasloff wrote that the reasons for abandoning the plan were “never officially stated,” but his evaluation of the program was scathing.

It was clear that the peasant disliked the program. He was compelled to abandon a traditional pattern of life for a fresh start in an uninviting site; he was obliged to build a new home, plant young trees, and till a fallow plot which he had not chosen, but was required to buy. [...] The new living arrangement brought him closer to his neighbors but also subjected him to tighter government surveillance [...] the southern peasantry have preferred more dispersed dwelling arrangements; a hut located on a river or stream is usually separated widely from that of the next neighbor. [...] There is little doubt that the fortress-like quality of the agrovillages, as well as the improved roads, could provide greater physical security, but this had to be balanced against the demoralizing effect of a community disturbed by labor demands, moving, constructing new homes, and plotting a new work-pattern. The disruption and resentment caused by the agrovillage program offered fertile ground for Viet Cong recruitment and support.

The labor of construction itself was one of the major factors of upset, but regrouping a rural population into denser living arrangements in order to cut off NLF support, while supposedly

³⁹ Ibid, 328.

providing new forms of economic and social development, ironically provided the necessary government resentment that could be easily transformed into recruitment.

Even if the program did promote physical security, its much-touted provision for economic and social development remained questionable. The promised social services—schools, maternity clinics, dispensaries—could have been easily provided, in most cases, to the people in their traditional living arrangement. [...] To expect "spontaneous" enthusiasm among the peasantry for the agrovilles and to count on implementation of so vast a program in three years were gross miscalculations which suggest that the government had a badly-distorted image of reality. The belief that competent cadres for administrative posts would emerge and that ardent, energetic youth would be inspired to rural leadership by the agrovillage program was part of the same pattern of gross self-delusion.⁴⁰

This resentment can be felt in the Việt Minh's understanding of the program. A letter sent to a hamlet youth leader (who had the duty of recruiting workers for the agrovillage at Tan Luoc, which Zasloff visited) in Binh Minh district, who was ordered by the Việt Minh to cease his activities. The letter, dated as March 19, 1960, reads that "facing failure the Americans and Diệm have more dangerous plots." The agrovilles are "big prisons and hells on earth" that, on completion "concentrate the peace loving, patriotic families there in order to exploit their wealth."⁴¹ The intention of villagers self-building as fostering a sense of ownership and village community was not met, once removed from their homes villagers were forced in what seemed like labor gangs to build new homes themselves, further fomenting peasant suspicion of a heavy-handed

⁴⁰ Zasloff, 338–339.

⁴¹ "While facing failure the Americans and Diem have more dangerous plots. They are building agrovilles everywhere. Agrovilles are big prisons and hells on earth. When these agrovilles are completed, they will concentrate the peace loving, patriotic families there in order to exploit their wealth and to draft young men so that they have enough forces to start the invasion of the North, causing bloody killing among brothers... You are very efficient in recruiting workers for agrovilles. In this undertaking, you and the hamlet chief accept bribes from the people. [...] On behalf of the revolution and the people, we, the commanding staff of Company 256 of the Battalion Ly Thuong Kiet, once again order you to stop your servant job. If you violate this order, the revolution and the people will not guarantee your life nor your property." Cited in: Joseph J. Zasloff, "Rural Resettlement in South Viet Nam: The Agrovillage Program," *Pacific Affairs* 35, no. 4 (1962): 337.

government.⁴² It is hard not to see the similarities between Zasloff's account and how the Việt Minh perceived the Agroville Program. Not only was the government a distant place, but the only interaction that the peasantry would have was via officials who likely spoke through a translator and the army.

"Could we not try the same idea?" New Villages in Malaya

"We should have been as capable as the Communists" Châu thought, "if we and the Americans had realized that at heart this war was less about battalions and more about the political cultural feeling of the people in hamlets who were the rural backbone of the nation."⁴³

These views were further reinforced when Châu was visited by a diplomatic envoy in 1958 and met a British general called G.K. Thompson, who had built his experience of rural pacification in British Malaya during the "Emergency" during the decade prior (1948–1958). Thompson explained to Châu the "three fundamental factors applied in defeating insurgency in Malaysia:"

(1) the hierarchy of command must include political, legal, and military structures, in that order; (2) all anti-insurgent measures, especially those that impact the public, *must* be conducted lawfully and within the legal structure cited in point 1; (3) all information provided to the public must be accurate, never falsified. Those three elements were practically ignored in Vietnam.⁴⁴

Immediately after his appointment as governor of Bến Tre, Châu was summoned by Diệm to visit the recently formed Malayan Federation to study the British scheme of "New Villages," a

⁴² Seth Jacobs writes in *Cold War Mandarin* that "counterproductive was the fact that the peasants grouped into agrovilles had to abandon their ancestral lands. In a culture like Vietnam's, where people were deeply attached to home and village, such uprooting was traumatic, and many South Vietnamese resented it.

Kevin Ruane, *The Vietnam Wars* (Manchester University Press, 2000); Seth Jacobs, *Cold War Mandarin: Ngo Dinh Diem and the Origins of America's War in Vietnam, 1950-1963* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

⁴³ Tran Ngoc Chau, Daniel Ellsberg, and Ken Fermoye, *Vietnam Labyrinth: Allies, Enemies, and Why the U.S. Lost the War*, 1st edition (Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech University Press, 2012), xviii-xix.

⁴⁴ Chau, *Vietnam Labyrinth*, xxiii.

counterinsurgency method where, according to Diệm, “whatever they are doing seems to be effective.”⁴⁵ Guided by Thompson, what Châu found there was a powerful legal system and “the British attitude that any information made public should be true [...] a totally different attitude from that of the Vietnamese government officials and the Americans.”⁴⁶ The next part examines this scheme a little more closely.

Head of the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam, Sir Robert G.K. Thompson was hired on the basis of his experience in Malaya during the “Emergency” of 1951–1954, in which the Malayan People’s Anti-British Army (later the Malayan National Liberation Army) fought an insurgency against their colonial administrators, who for their part were ordered to restore the colonial status quo after the Japanese occupation.⁴⁷ Thompson was brought to Vietnam through the British Advisory Mission (BRIAM) in 1959, then later as campaign as an advisor in 1969 to President Nixon, yet each time the lessons of counterinsurgency in Malaya and Kenya were false precedents.⁴⁸ Mao’s dictum that the guerrilla “must move among the people as a fish swims in the sea,”—many officials were familiar with this saying—yet stumped as to how to separate the one from the other. The “Briggs Plan” was the British attempt at isolating the fish from the sea,

⁴⁵ Chau, *Vietnam Labyrinth*, 165.

⁴⁶ Chau, *Vietnam Labyrinth*, 168.

⁴⁷ The Malaya Emergency, named such after the High Commissioner Sir Edward Gent declared a “State of Emergency” in 1949 in order to quell the fears that London-based insurers of plantations would not pay out in the case of civil wars, but would cover losses incurred in riots or civil disorders. The British like to pride themselves on the success of the anti-insurgency campaign fought in the Malayan Emergency, where the “hearts-and-minds” approach was first put into action, and the lessons have been incorporated into counter-insurgency campaigns well into the early 2000s. Michael Burleigh, *Small Wars, Faraway Places*. 2012. 162.

⁴⁸ Thompson was hired on the basis of his critical book *No Exit from Vietnam* (which faulted the US approach to the war of overly military, relying on technology and firepower over civilian issues). The book however resulted in Thompson’s being hired as an advisor to the Nixon administration who ascertained that the president should listen “to those who tell him what he needs to hear.” David Fitzgerald, “Sir Robert Thompson, Strategic Patience and Nixon’s War in Vietnam,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 6–7 (November 10, 2014), 1004. Richard M. Nixon, “Address to the Nation on Progress Toward Peace in Vietnam,” December 15, 1969.

and part of Thompson's role in the pacification program was creating hundreds of "New Villages," a relocation program that moved 500,000 people into a network of heavily fortified isolated resettlement camps on donated agricultural lands. Each family received an 800-square-yard plot within the perimeter of the New Village, and a two-acre field from jungle clearings beyond.

Influences for the program came from the British experience of Japanese camps during the occupation, who "put barbed wire around Titi and Pertang, garrisoned these towns with troops and made all Chinese of the locality live within the defended areas" as one Officer Howe put it, "could we not try the same idea?"⁴⁹ The task of forcibly transferring complete village populations from existing homes to new locations was left to British soldiers, at the time a diverse group from around the waning British Empire, and the operation was carried out quickly, with over 423,000 being moved by the middle of 1951.⁵⁰ A few New Villages were designed to be model settlements, exploited for propaganda purposes (of which it is likely that Châu was brought to on his tour of the program in 1959) but the vast majority were squalid. The doctor and author Han Suyin, who visited one of the settlements on a medical tour in 1952 wrote:

The dirt road was a new red gash across the jungle. There, at the edge of a fetid mangrove swamp, between the thrusting mangrove spikes like a field of spears for miles, the jungle rearing its somber menace behind and the barbed wire manned by a police post, was the "new village," spreading itself into the swamp. Four hundred beings, including children, huddled there; foot-deep in brackish mud. There were some atap [nipa thatch] huts with rusty zinc roofs, obviously brought from elsewhere. I shall never forget the pale and puffy faces: beriberi [Thiamine deficiency], or the ulcers on their legs. Their skin had the hue of the swamp. They stank. There was no clean water anywhere.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: The End of Britain's Asian Empire* (Penguin UK, 2008), 173.

⁵⁰ Field Marshall Gerald Templer, who was brought to Malaya in 1952 described the British army there as a multiracial force including Africans from Nyasaland, Gurkhas, Indians and Fijians, Australians, New Zealanders and white Rhodesian SAS men. Burleigh, *Small Wars*, 179.

⁵¹ Suyin was brought there by Officer Winslow, who was in charge of a number of settlements, and she describes how he admonished the peasants (via a Chinese interpreter who translated into Techew dialect) for "passing food to

In addition to the New Villages strategy, other forms of rural stratification and destruction included the use of the chemical defoliant Agent Orange and sodium trichloroacetate to clear vegetation from roadsides. While the program was later found to be in violation of the Geneva Conventions (which stated that the destruction of property must not happen unless rendered absolutely necessary by military operations) the project remained touted as an example of successful counterinsurgency.⁵² Perhaps this is owing to the British propaganda efforts when guiding tours of the New Villages to visitors. In an Advanced Research Projects Agency report for the RAND Corporation prepared in 1972, the author recounts the “successful counterinsurgency effort” as owing partly to the speed at which it was undertaken.⁵³ “Actual resettlement was carried out as a military operation; surprise was essential so that the insurgents would not be forewarned. After an area was cordoned off by troops at first light, people were moved as short a distance as was consistent with security.” Robert Komer, head of pacification efforts after 1967 who prepared the report, describes how,

Resettlement’s success was also owing to the fact that, in strong contrast to the later Strategic Hamlet program in Vietnam, it was carried out with undue haste. By the end of 1950 only 82 new villages with 117,000 people were complete or close to completion, and 58 more were in the pipeline. By end-1951 the number had risen to 429 villages with 395,000 people. By the end of 1952 there were 509 new villages with a population of 462,000.⁵⁴

bandits.” “Now they must work hard to redeem themselves. “What will they work at?” I asked. Expansively Mr. Winslow gestured, showing the swamp and the jungle. “They’ll find something, they always do...” Suyin Han, *My House Has Two Doors* (New York: Putnam, 1980), 66.

⁵² Christi L. Siver, “The Other Forgotten War: Understanding Atrocities During the Malayan Emergency,” SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, 2009).

“While some Malayan villagers, primarily Chinese squatters, posed challenges for British officials because they supplied food or other materials to the insurgents, they did not pose an imminent threat.” (5)

⁵³ R.W. Komer “The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of A Successful Counterinsurgency Effort” RAND Corporation. R-957-ARPA, February 1972, 55.

⁵⁴ Ibid

When Châu returned to Vietnam after his six-week tour of the Malaysian Federation he recounted to Diệm an extensive report of his visit. Châu took up some of the lessons in Bến Tre, where, supported by Lansdale (“who seemed to grasp the intent of my policies and their goals quickly and accurately”), received radio equipment.⁵⁵ Châu felt that a radio station could be used to communicate with the populace and was more valuable than troops, that way, “the peasants could check the facts for themselves and learn I was telling the truth [...] a huge step in getting them to trust and support the government side.”⁵⁶ Though a seemingly insignificant detail, the step of acquiring a radio was an early recognition of the power of synthetic networks in village programs, which were being noted in other contexts where resettlement was being carried out. The most significant of these was how the psychology of resettlement played a part in the “villagization” schemes in Kenya, also carried out by the British Government.

Villagization in the global village

Over eight-hundred new villages were built in Kenya to quell the Mau Mau Rebellion in 1953, creating what Mark Crinson calls a “compartmentalized world” that was “reinforced, reshaped, and made police-able.”⁵⁷ Crinson follows the villagization program via the writing of two Kenyan authors, Jomo Kenyatta (whose work preceded the villages) and Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s 1967 novel, *A Grain of Wheat* which followed the experience of “hut and village environments” as “dynamic psychological arenas, theatres of contestation with colonial ways of

⁵⁵ Chau, 183

⁵⁶ Chau, 184

⁵⁷ Crinson, “Compartmentalized World” 263

understanding.”⁵⁸ Also considering the psychological dimensions of this process from a different angle, Ginger Nolan, on the other hand, follows how the psychiatrist John Colin Carothers, who was summoned to Kenya in the 1950s, recommended villagization as a psychiatric buffer, “protecting Kenyan agriculturalists from the effects of modernization and urbanization.”⁵⁹ Villagization was in this sense a middle ground between remote agricultural life and a disorienting metropolitan existence. Nolan is brought, via the Colonial Liaison Officer in Building Research G.A. Atkinson, from the *kampung baru* in Malaya to the program’s implementation in Kenya with the same colonial mandate: crush a rebellion, in this case that being waged by the Kenya Land and Freedom Army (KLFA).⁶⁰ The process provided a “spatial, political and economic blueprint for coordinating a global peasantry in the midst of decolonization movements,” herded into the present by colonial shepherds like Atkinson, for whom self-help housing was the psychological backdrop of an “embryonic form of economic entrepreneurship.”⁶¹ Through these “permanent villages” of 1955 alongside network theories of Carothers’ colleague Marshall McLuhan, Nolan arrives at the notion of colonial villagization not merely a means of warfare but a leitmotif of “techno-semiotic” governance, relying on “urban-rural electronic connectivity,” the essence of the global village.⁶²

⁵⁸ Crinson, “Compartmentalized World” 264

⁵⁹ Ginger Nolan, “Quasi-Urban Citizenship: The Global Village as ‘Nomos of the Modern,’” *The Journal of Architecture* 23, no. 3 (April 3, 2018), 448.

⁶⁰ For Atkinson’s own description of his work and review of British colonial building policies, see his 1957 lecture “Housing and Building in the Commonwealth,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 105, no. 5004 (1957): 535–54.

⁶¹ Nolan, 448.

⁶² Nolan, 450. “McLuhan’s idea of an electronically interconnected ‘global village’ suggests that villagization should be regarded not exactly as reproducible typology but as a potent instantiation of a newly globalizing form of semiotic-spatial power.” (451) “For Carothers, Africans’ semiotic unfitnes—and thus cognitive unfitnes—for self-rule mandated the expansion of villagization, which was to operate as a spatial device mediating between Africans’

Surveying these alternating interpretations of villagization it is clear that there is no typical template for either the intentions behind such schemes or their outcomes, despite their regimented physical appearance. In many ways the project of an electronically networked “global village” already existed by the time of McLuhan’s pronouncement in 1962, not as a triumphalist account of the daily production and consumption of media, but under the guise of surveillance, coercion, propaganda and forced relocation. The specificity of the Vietnamese context provides an example in which globalized policing and the increasing prominence of computer networks would become a test site for counterinsurgent techniques. The Civic Operations and Rural Development Services (CORDS), explored further down, becoming the primary vehicle in which the “heat” of the Cold War could be examined with high-tech means. Where these ill-fated attempts to contain eventually successful anti-colonial movements can be compared is their emphasis on moving a mobile populace around into empty containers. Agrovilles and Strategic Hamlets were more complex in that they proposed a “third way” of political mobility and citizenship through their schemes (epitomized by the fictional character of Alden Pyle in Graham Greene’s *The Quiet American*, the archetypal meddling “expert” that proliferated in an era where economic aid and military coercion became entwined.)⁶³ Indeed, spatial regimes of counterinsurgency like Agrovilles and strategic hamlets lent themselves

enthrallment to magical thought and nascent self-regulatory forms of political subjectivity (ie, ‘independence’).” (454, 464)

⁶³ Real characters that the fictional Pyle is based on have been frequently identified in American foreign policy after 1945. “Economic hitmen” that took down democratically elected foreign leaders or its failure to do so (Iran, Guatemala, Cuba, Congo, Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Iraq, Venezuela), and the war in Vietnam between 1963–1975 remains a disastrous example of the consequences political meddling. In *The Quiet American*, Pyle works for the Economic Aid Mission, though really he is a covert CIA agent. Many comparisons have been drawn between Edward Lansdale and Alden Pyle. Though Greene’s novel was not directly based on Lansdale, there are many similarities, and the comparison speaks more to the prevalence of American “experts” in Southeast Asia propagating intellectual ideals on democracy or, in Pyle’s terms, a “third way” (between communism and capitalism). Graham Greene, *The Quiet American* (New York: Penguin Books, 1955).

propaganda motivated through a language of benevolence. A leaflet produced by 246th Psyop company advertises “food, shelter and medical care,” and urges villages to “protect your lives and properties [...] resettle in the New Life Hamlets” to avoid the “thousands of firebombs” that would be dropped outside the borders of the hamlet. (fig 3.26) In contrast to the Malayan, Kenyan and Philippine examples of counterinsurgent villagization, the psychological effects that undergirded the strategic hamlets campaigns in Vietnam were laden with more complex political messages that internalized and reproduced the propaganda campaigns of both the NLF and CORDS. The fictional character of Pyle is something of a patron saint of the chapter in his seemingly innocent propagation of a “third way” between communism and capitalism. Greene used the figure of Pyle to ridicule the highfalutin theoretical approaches of intellectual American advisors, however, the “third way” that Pyle promoted would actually become a reality for the Diệm regime in that it sought to internalize the lessons of revolutionary communism while espousing the democratic tradition from within the hamlets themselves.

Politics of containment in the agroville

There are two key differences between the Kenyan and Malayan campaigns when compared to the Strategic Hamlets program in Vietnam. For one, in both Kenya and Malaya the campaigns were carried out with little in the way of a political or ideological message. Secondly, villagization to counter the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya and New Villages in Malaya to avert the “Emergency” were both building operations waged by a colonial administration that came from external guidance in London on policing foreign places. These two aspects are combined with one another inasmuch as the colonial administration’s only message to be contained was “don’t join or aid the other side.” While the same advisors were brought in from these

campaigns, Vietnam differs on both counts, firstly because the Agrovilles and Strategic Hamlets were so heavily laden with political ideology as to be incomprehensible, and secondly because even while they were heavily influenced by American and other foreign advisors, the Diệm regime had its own prerogatives that existed in parallel to foreign advice (sometimes unnoticed) and well in place before the campaigns got underway.⁶⁴

Like the Philippines under Spanish and American control, villagers in French colonial Vietnam learned to think of the government as a distant organization that occasionally collected taxes or demanded young men for the military—nationalism, as it was being fleshed out in the mid-century, was an alien concept.⁶⁵ Châu described how the set of allegiances with which the peasants felt aligned contrasted strongly with the government view. “To the peasantry, Bac (“uncle”) Ho was a mythic figure, the hero who fought the Japanese and defeated the French.”⁶⁶ Those cadres who were left behind in the south after the war with the French remained true to Bac Ho, indeed, the government functionaries were, as Châu describes, “for the most part the same people who oppressed them during the French colonial period.”⁶⁷ On a tour of rural provinces in 1960 at Diệm’s behest, Châu discovered that the main government organs—administration, police, security and paramilitary—were occupied by the same individuals that had served the French until 1954. As a general rule, the GVN apparatus “treated as suspected

⁶⁴ Philip E. Catton, “Counter-Insurgency and Nation Building: The Strategic Hamlet Programme in South Vietnam, 1961–1963,” *The International History Review* 21, no. 4 (December 1, 1999): 918–40.

⁶⁵ Arnold, James R. *Jungle of Snakes: A Century of Counterinsurgency Warfare from the Philippines to Iraq*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010: 183.

⁶⁶ Châu, *Vietnam Labyrinth*, 172

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Viet Cong the large rural majority that had participated with the Việt Minh in the war against the French.”⁶⁸

Zasloff was writing in the middle of its rolling out, prior to its closure in late 1961 and the beginning of the strategic hamlets program, therefore he does not offer any in-depth analysis of the new program, but takes note some of its more striking features:

The most elaborately fortified hamlets have been surrounded by a mud wall, topped with sharpened bamboo staves and barbed wire, and encircled by a water-filled ditch. This construction has been carried out by peasants drafted from the region. Other hamlets rely less on walls and ditches, but have warning devices and obstacles, such as spiked boards which are planted around the hamlet and moved intermittently, in order to injure the feet of an unsuspecting attacker.⁶⁹

Only twenty agrovilles were ever built, with 50,000 people moved into them rather than the original estimate of half a million. Owing partly to the degree of planning and construction that their coordination took, by peasants who were forced to build against their will. Yet some of them were still deemed a success.

The bureaucratic structure that had previously served French commands now faced a different group of clerics with different demands. American “expert advisors” funneled into Vietnam en masse during the mid-1950s. Like Lansdale’s experience in Luzon, it was not the issue of metropolitan politics that posed a threat to “democracy in the east,” but communism in the countryside that imperiled the legitimacy of Diệm and the interests of the US in stemming the “red tide” moving south from China. Part of the effort to create a diplomatic bulwark against communism in Southeast Asia was through the creation in September 1954 of SEATO, a Southeast Asian Treaty Organization to mirror its hemispheric double, the North Atlantic Treaty

⁶⁸ Ahern, 127. The Việt Minh, the former name of the NLF in the first Indochina War against the French. The name was officially changed in 1960, the NLF is interchangeable with Viet Cong (a derogatory term).

⁶⁹ Zasloff, 340.

Organization (NATO).⁷⁰ The structure of SEATO (fig 3.09) illustrates the emphasis on military organization with which it was conceived, with a military advisory group directly below the umbrella of the SEATO Council. Eisenhower underlined that the US entered the treaty “which plainly warned that an armed attack against this area would endanger our own peace and safety and that we would act accordingly,” the treaty would later be seen as a major legitimating factor in deploying ground forces in Vietnam.⁷¹

Galula dismissed Lansdale’s work in the Philippines, writing to Praeger, his publisher that “the insurgent has a cause that the counterinsurgent can espouse without unduly endangering his power,” referring to the *Lupa sa Walang Lupa* (Land for the Landless) campaign that undermined the entire Huk political message—and simultaneously launched the Secretary of Defense, Ramon Magsaysay, into a presidency in 1953 and defeating the Huks, with Lansdale at his side all along.⁷² “This was, as we have seen, the situation in the Philippines during the Huk’s insurgency. All the counterinsurgent has to do is promise the necessary reforms.”⁷³ Lansdale didn’t take the critique lightly, retorting,

⁷⁰ Originally called the Southeast Asia Security Treaty, the countries of the SEATO treaty ironically included only two countries actually within the region: Australia, France (on the basis of their relinquishing of French Indochina under the Geneva Agreements of July 1954), New Zealand, Pakistan (including Bangladesh, then East Pakistan), the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom (on the basis of its administering Hong Kong, North Borneo and Sarawak) and the United States. The other countries of Southeast Asia remained non-aligned: Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, China, Taiwan. Laos, Cambodia, South and North Vietnam were prevented from entering any military agreements under the Geneva Agreements. Later, SEATO would put Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam under their treaty, legitimating the use of US military intervention, often considered one of the main justifications of the war in Vietnam.

⁷¹ The Pentagon Papers. IV. A Evolution of the War. 1. NATO and SEATO: A Comparison. 1971.

⁷² Galula in a letter to Praeger, op cit. A. A. Cohen, *Galula: The Life and Writings of the French Officer Who Defined the Art of Counterinsurgency* (ABC-CLIO, 2012), 224.

⁷³ Praeger publisher wanted Galula to write another book on insurgency for RAND: “The second book should be a description of Chinese Communist insurgency and its exportable qualities. I believe that the Chinese having discovered the farmer-intellectual combination, in contrast to the Soviets’ proletariat-intellectual, makes the Chicom doctrine the one which we will up against in country after country for years to come.” Although Galula refused initially, he did write a book that discussed communist insurgency, however a novel written under his pseudonym Jean Caran (an allusion to his favorite brand of drawing—according to Ruth Galula he was constantly sketching—

I wish he had had more perception about the Huk campaign in the Philippines, which only looked simple because so many hard-to-do things went right. Beyond the blood, sweat, and tears which there were, as elsewhere, there were some strong political lessons which I have yet to discover a Frenchman understanding. I had hoped that Galula would be an exception. It's the winning ingredient he almost touches.⁷⁴

The mocking tone in Lansdale's retort is easy to discern, alluding to the colonial shadow that still ran across landscapes of French foreign extraction or was in the process of being eradicated in the early 1960s. Was it an illusion? Did Lansdale really "succeed" with electoral reform in the Philippines? Lansdale was behind the creation of the National Movement for Free Elections that led to the election of Ramon Magsaysay, "America's Boy," be that as it may, perhaps it was, as Pacific historian Nick Cullather writes, an illusion? "Had the 1957 campaign only deepened Magsaysay's obligations to his Filipino clients, U.S. officials might have been forced to realize that Magsaysay had given them only the illusion of influence."⁷⁵ Similarly, between the separate counterinsurgency strategies of Lansdale and Galula, were strategic hamlets really a successful counterinsurgency tactic waged with the support of the US?

The decade that followed Lansdale's arrival to Sài Gòn in 1954 was one in which a crescendo of counterinsurgency schemes were operationalized, both under the influence of American advisors and—to the chagrin of US advisors—of the GVN's own initiative. Lansdale worked alongside Charles Bohannon and his Filipino colleague Colonel Napoleon Valeriano using their counter-guerrilla experience with the Huks to deploy schemes that attempted to adopt the Philippine experience of counterinsurgency to Vietnam. One of the first operations was to

Caran is a pen name that is also a pen name.) *Les Moustaches du Tigre* (published in English as *The Tiger's Whiskers*). Jean Caran, *Les Moustaches du tigre* (Flammarion, 1992); Cohen, *Galula*, 225.

⁷⁴ Lansdale in a note to Praeger after the publication of *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* in 1964. Cohen, *Galula*, 225.

⁷⁵ Nick Cullather, "America's Boy? Ramon Magsaysay and the Illusion of Influence," *Pacific Historical Review* 62, no. 3 (1993): 338.

train covert operatives in Vietnam and creating a cover “Freedom Company” to do so.⁷⁶

Launched in 1954, the success of the Freedom Company (in Lansdale’s eyes) was due to its ability to reform Vietnamese veterans and make them “staunch anticommunists,” and it was primarily based on the EDCOR resettlement campaign.⁷⁷ Indeed, their experience with the Huks still stood, as Filipino historian Roland Simbulan observes, as “the CIA’s prototype in successful covert operations and psychological warfare,” Lansdale’s early efforts in 1950s Vietnam reflected the impulse to re-create the Philippine activities through Filipino contacts in this new context.⁷⁸ On his being sent to Sài Gòn, American Defense Secretary John Foster Dulles had instructed him to “find another Magsaysay”—a puppet president that could carry out US anti-communist bidding—just like Ramon Magsaysay, whom Lansdale had groomed into presidency in the Philippines in 1953.⁷⁹ President Diệm however was not appointed by Lansdale, and diverged from the profile of Magsaysay in a variety of ways. Crucially, Diệm came from a line of “mandarins” bureaucrat-scholars who served the imperial dynasty and French colonial regime.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Simeon Man, *Soldiering Through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific* (Univ of California Press, 2018), 64.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 67.

⁷⁸ Noted by the retired CIA operative Thomas Ahern. They would later teach at the School of the Americas, a US-backed training institute for counterinsurgency in Latin America. “A Brief Look at the CIA in the Philippines,” Roland G. Simbulan. Positively Filipino | Online Magazine for Filipinos in the Diaspora, accessed January 18, 2021, <http://www.positivelyfilipino.com/magazine/a-brief-look-at-the-cia-in-the-philippines>. Lesley Gill, *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas* (Duke University Press, 2004). Thomas Ahern. *CIA and Rural Pacification*. Recently declassified documents by office of the CIA Historian. Ahern served in Vietnam from 1963 to 1965 in a tactical intelligence program known as Border Surveillance in Da Nang, later working in Saigon.

⁷⁹ Ahern, 4.

⁸⁰ A “mandarin,” he had had a French-Catholic education studied at the best French schools in the country and was in line to be a colonial official, serving in the royal library in Huế.

“Operation Brotherhood,” another program launched through the Philippine-GVN relationship aimed to reinforce links between the countries, with the Philippines sending doctors and nurses to help with the refugee crisis that began in 1954. Under the same scheme, the Philippine Civic Action Group (PHILCAG) program was authorized in 1967 by President Ferdinand Marcos to send “a Civic Action Group consisting of engineer construction, medical, and rural community development teams” which should undertake “socio-economic projects mutually agreed upon by the governments of both countries.”⁸¹ PHILCAG efforts were under the command of Brigadier General Gaudencio V. Tobias, who was both a veteran of the anti-Japanese resistance, and after the war joined the government to become a compadre of Lansdale during the anti-Huk campaign.

PHILCAG’s work is described by Miguel A. Bernad, a Jesuit priest that visited Vietnam throughout 1967.⁸² Bernad describes the process of clearing a large forest called Thanh Dien for the construction of a resettlement center.

Every day the bulldozers pushed the jungles back. As the area was cleared, the engineers moved in with their other equipment to create the roads and lanes of the new community. This new community now consists of a residential area of one square kilometer, with provision for church sites, shopping centers, government buildings, and park land. The rest has been divided into residential lots of 300 square meters, to be distributed to some 2,000 homeless families from other provinces. Beyond this residential area, each settler will be given several hectares of farmland. Thus, what was jungle six months ago may be a flourishing and productive community in a few years. [...] Six months later, in August 1967, I could hardly believe my eyes as the helicopter circled for a landing. What had been a dense forest was now a huge settled area, with streets at right angles; each family living in a rough cottage, surrounded by a sizable yard, sufficient for a well, a truck garden, and a poultry or pig pen.⁸³

⁸¹ REPUBLIC ACT 4664; Bernad, 136.

⁸² Bernad was ordained as priest at Woodstock College in Maryland in 1946, received a doctorate from Yale in 1951 and post-doc at Harvard 1961.

⁸³ Ibid: 146–147

His 1968 article on PHILCAG appeared in *Philippine Studies* (an academic journal of which he was editor in chief) where he draws several comparisons between the guerrilla activity in Vietnam and the Philippines' own experiences of guerrilla warfare with the Huk forces in the decade prior (in a report to the President's Special Counsel, General Tobias is reported to have said that "compared to the VC, the Huks were amateurs"⁸⁴).

The program was touted as a success by the Philippine contingent. "Soldiers are ordinarily instruments of death" Luis Moreno Salcedo, the Philippine Ambassador in Viet Nam is recorded saying, "but our Filipino soldiers in Viet Nam have come not to destroy but to build."⁸⁵ PHILCAG constructed 37 miles of roads, two concrete bridges over the Tay Ninh River and dug over 200 wells.⁸⁶ The construction of infrastructure and strategic hamlets was key to PHILCAG's operations, the largest of which was built at Phuoc Dien just over a mile outside Tay Ninh. While the equipment and food rations were supplied by the US, it was the Philippine government that paid the salaries of the 2000 soldiers sent.⁸⁷ The program ended when Marcos declared martial law—ostensibly to protect the country from the same communist threat as that faced in Vietnam—recalling all of the aid workers in 1972.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Memorandum from the President's Special Counsel (McPherson) to President Johnson, Washington,

13 June 1967, *FRUS*, 5:497. Cited in: Jagel, Matthew. "'Showing Its Flag': The United States, The Philippines, and the Vietnam War," July 11, 2013: 34.

⁸⁵ Bernad, 151.

⁸⁶ Jagel, 38

⁸⁷ Bernad, 137–138.

⁸⁸ Jagel, 40.

III

Polarities and Paradoxes of Containment

As optimistic as the programs may have appeared for those working between both countries, the ideologies that undergirded were at odds with the geopolitical history of Vietnam. Duy Lap Nguyen describes how the Strategic Hamlet Campaign was a strategy toward a kind of democracy that was different to Lansdale's experience in the Philippines.⁸⁹ According to William Nighswonger, who produced a 400-page report on the situation for ARPA of RAND Corporation in 1966, the popular support "won against the Huks in the Philippines" was in contrast to what Nhu actually wanted, who was "apparently dreaming of a new era of popular support for the regime drawn from the grassroots by the same techniques of human engineering the communists had employed in China."⁹⁰ Lansdale's skill in public relations, which was adapted from advertising to psychological warfare, and engineered the campaign behind the election of Ramon Magsaysay.⁹¹ EDCOR, a rural resettlement campaign for reformed Huk guerrillas, was based on the premise of removing individuals from a sphere of operations into a new environment, essentially to start over. Yet, Lap Nguyen writes, such strategies "completely diverged from the one that Nhu had in mind in designing the Strategic Hamlet Campaign." This campaign was designed to keep people rooted, to some extent, in place. Instead of transforming through removal, it was transformation through personal change.

⁸⁹ Duy Lap Nguyen, *The Unimagined Community: Imperialism and Culture in South Vietnam*, 1st edition (Manchester University Press, 2019), 105.

⁹⁰ William A. Nighswonger, "Rural Pacification in Vietnam: 1962-1965" (American University, Washington DC, May 1, 1966), 286.

⁹¹ Nick Cullather, "America's Boy? Ramon Magsaysay and the Illusion of Influence," *Pacific Historical Review* 62, no. 3 (1993): 305–38.

For Nhu, the aim was [...] committed to creating a real democracy from the base, freed from the inalienable liberties of the egoistic individual, which served only to ratify the alienation of labor inherent in the Occidental structure of capitalism. The aim, then, for Nhu, was not to win rural support for the South Vietnamese state, as it developed toward becoming a stable, representative government, but to supersede the liberal stage of democracy through the establishment of a democratic (and anti-capitalist) infrastructure of communal production. This goal, moreover, would not be accomplished, as in American-style democracy, through a public relations campaign to influence the South Vietnamese peasantry. Rather, Nhu's democracy at the base would be established through the same dictatorial methods employed by the Communist Party.⁹²

This structure of rural reorganization was a world away from the expectations of US democracy experts that abounded during the 1960s, who may have been aghast at Nhu's ideas if they comprehended what they would truly imply. Such small-scale democratic structures within the hamlets included post boxes for villagers to anonymously drop off suggestions for the local community. (fig 3.27)

Diệm's political party was called the *Cần Lao Party*. A shortening of *Cần lao Nhân vị Cách Mạng Đảng* or *Đảng Cần lao Nhân vị*, the Personalist Labor Revolutionary Party based its political doctrine on "personalism" (*Nhân Vị*), doctrine of the dignity of man, a Catholic teaching of the value of individual dignity inspired by the writings of French Catholic philosopher Emmanuel Mounier. The Vietnamese version of *Nhân Vị* also combines the ethical concerns of Confucianism (sometimes referred to as "oriental personalism") and the Ngo family's *Nhân Vị* "sought a middle way between liberalism and Communism" or "third way" between the French colonialism and Viet Minh communism to create a road to modernity.⁹³ As a guiding philosophy, it would gradually work its way into the construction campaigns and propaganda materials surrounding the Strategic Hamlets program, rising more prominently after the Agrovillage

⁹² Nguyen, 105.

⁹³ Catton, 919–920; Suzanne Labin, *Vietnam :An Eye-Witness Account*. (Springfield, Va., 1964), 52.

Program. Historian Philip Catton writes that Diệm saw the hamlets as a way to mobilize this political philosophy, and encourage the population to follow, an “ideological inspiration” for the large-scale rural projects that fell in line with the government’s plans to modernize the Republic of Vietnam.⁹⁴ Separating rural peasantry from the NLF was only one component of the architecture of counterinsurgency. The political philosophy of *Nhân Vị*, was adapted to the Strategic Hamlet program spiritually and spatially through the notion that the grouping of villages was a part of Vietnamese folklore.

Hamlets, historical time and Madame Nhu

Trần Lệ Xuân, more often referred to as Madame Nhu, was the wife of Ngô Đình Nhu and de-facto first lady of the country described in a magazine article in 1964 the way in which *Nhân Vị* could “protect that freedom against external subversion and internal abuses,” a solution that could be found “not in the vague heights of a superstructure, but on the *Nhân Vị* scale; the human scale which is the most accessible to man. This scale is that of the *Strategic Hamlet*.”⁹⁵

She continues,

In order to avoid the risk of exploiting the individual as does Communism, the community work in the Strategic Hamlet is done on the *Nhân Vị* scale, which is the human level accessible to each individual. Here the State provides the materials and the people the labor; but the result of this community work must be of immediate benefit to the worker. [...] The *Nhân Vị* scale which is the closest to the individual, the Strategic Hamlet, is the only one capable of facing both the cold subversive war which can easily undermine a democratic society with conspiratorial means, and also the hot subversive, or guerrilla war.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Philip E. Catton, “Counter-Insurgency and Nation Building: The Strategic Hamlet Programme in South Vietnam, 1961–1963,” *The International History Review* 21, no. 4 (December 1, 1999): 919.

⁹⁵ *The Wanderer*, June 4, 1964; Suzanne Labin, *Vietnam :An Eye-Witness Account*. (Springfield, Va., 1964), 52–53.

⁹⁶ Suzanne Labin, *Vietnam :An Eye-Witness Account*. (Springfield, Va., 1964), 54.

In almost religious undertones, the strategic hamlets program is framed through *Nhân Vị* in terms that are both definitive and vague; quotidian yet exceptional. Counterinsurgency, through a “hedge of barbed wire or locally improvised stakes of sharpened bamboo,” as a form of spiritual statecraft.⁹⁷

Through agrovilles and strategic hamlets, Diệm was able to mobilize a language of democracy to further the aims of *Nhân Vị*. Yet while agrovilles program was deemed unsuccessful, the strategic hamlets program seemed to gain ground much more quickly. By the end of 1962, over 4000 hamlets were built, and by the time of overthrow of the Diệm regime in November 1963, 8000 had been established, either built anew or by fortifying existing villages.⁹⁸ In a February 1963 GVN booklet describing the strategic hamlet program, “problems of democracy have been much more concerned with the press and parliaments than they have been with the countryside,” goes the pamphlet, alongside images of cordons of bamboo spikes surrounding rows houses in an unidentified cleared forest in the Vietnam Highlands.⁹⁹ (figs 3.03–3.06) “Among the first steps taken after the establishment of a strategic hamlet is the election of the hamlet committee [...] the basic end of the Strategic Hamlet Program is to implement democracy in rural areas.”¹⁰⁰ They are described as weapons against both subversion and food insecurity.

Paradigms of Vietnamese history were explored in other articles, *The Nation* (Rangoon, Burma; now Yangon, Myanmar) describes how,

⁹⁷ Labin, *Vietnam*, 56.

⁹⁸ Boot, *The Road Not Taken*, 402.

⁹⁹ Viet Nam Press. *Viet Nam's Strategic Hamlets*. Directorate General of Information Saigon, February 1963, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

the strategic hamlet concept has its antecedents in ancient Vietnamese history itself. It was used successfully by the Vietnamese in their progressive settlement of the country. Fortifying clusters of hamlets aided in the defense of the settlers not only against hostile tribesmen but also against the periodic armed intrusions of the Chinese from the north.¹⁰¹

The pamphlet fits the new program into a timeless history of the country, “through political upheavals and many other changes, the structure of the hamlet has retained its essential character [demonstrating] the strength of its organization and the permanence of this basic unit.”¹⁰² The mass exodus of Montagnards fleeing bombing and war in the highlands of Vietnam bordering Laos and Cambodia were, in addition to being recruited by CIA self-defense projects, incorporated into the strategic hamlet program as they sought respite in the lowlands, given special “Montagnard Hamlet” (fig 3.25).¹⁰³ Moving Montagnard populations was an active attempt to streamline the population into a containable center, indeed, even if the individual—as *Nhân Vị* prescribes was important—simply bringing more people to the lowlands would have also had the economic advantage of increasing the country’s agricultural output. Yet in this forced migration, they were subject to further theorizing and philosophizing in Suzanne Labin’s 1964 *Vietnam: An Eye-Witness Account*,

Historically, their decision was as important for their people as that which their ancestors took when they fled the Hindu invasion, in the first century, Anno Domino [...] to resist Chinese colonialism, two thousand years ago, they [the Montagnards] took refuge in the deserted High Plateaux where they have been isolated from the refining influences of civilization. They have remained rough and superstitious, practicing a blend of sorcery and animism.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ *The Nation* (Rangoon), October 8, 1962.

¹⁰² Viet Nam Press. *Viet Nam’s Strategic Hamlets*. Directorate General of Information Saigon, February 1963, 3.

¹⁰³ “Montagnards,” meaning indigenous peoples of upland Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; the name a holdover from French colonialism, montane

¹⁰⁴ Labin, *Vietnam*, 58.

Neither the indigenous peoples, nor the prehistory of Vietnam itself was exempt from the treatment of Strategic Hamlets philosophizing that abounded in the first years of the 1960s.

Aspects of the “strategic” hamlet agenda—rather than “combat” hamlet as they were initially termed—after the failure of the agrovilles, sought to scale down political participation, meaning in hamlets themselves local leaders were democratically elected.¹⁰⁵ This was very different to the rigid structure of the Agrovilles where mayors and officials were selected from Sài Gòn. Indeed, Diệm’s brother and right-hand man, Ngo Dinh Nhu was fascinated by the form of revolutionary mass mobilization that the communists had perfected and wanted to use similar mobilization against them.¹⁰⁶ In a GVN booklet describing the program, the organization of the chapters are based around the idea of revolution in military, political, economic and social terms, culminating in chapter three, “Strategic Hamlets, Basis for Total Revolution,” based on a speech by Ngo Dinh Nhu in August 1962. “Our forces, adopting guerrilla methods, will fight the Viet-Cong with their own weapons,” whether Nhu means revolutionary warfare or bamboo spikes is unclear, but the GVN was, for Nhu “taking advantage of the war created by the Communists to implement democracy.”¹⁰⁷ In this way, the program would reshape the narrative of counterinsurgency for the regime. Rather than relying on expensive military equipment and numbers of personnel, hamletization relied on a citizen-militia, with provincial military forces offering a supporting role, “our forces are now able to conduct guerrilla warfare” Nhu said in a

¹⁰⁵ The regime named the scheme “strategic” (*chien luoc*) rather than (*chien dau*) which documents had earlier used, Bui Van Luong, secretary of state for the interior, explained that the word “combat” implied a narrow concern with security. Nhu’s address in March 1962; Catton, 925.

¹⁰⁶ Catton, 922

¹⁰⁷ Viet Nam Press. *Viet Nam’s Strategic Hamlets*. Directorate General of Information Saigon, February 1963. 20.

speech to students in 1962, “while the Communists are forced to fight a conventional war.”¹⁰⁸ In theory, it would relieve the GVN of relying on foreign aid, and in turn foreign intervention in political decisions. Among these various guises, a variety of approaches to counterinsurgency were being built-in to the general terminology of the strategic hamlet.

Personalism and the political

A political agenda to undergird the strategic hamlet program was perhaps to be expected, however the US strategy was not convinced that this was necessarily part of the war effort. There was “some disagreement between what the US considered needed to be done and what President Diệm knew very well he was doing” remarked the Pentagon Papers,

He was using the Strategic Hamlet Program to carry forward his “personalist philosophy.” As brother Nhu visibly took the reins controlling the program and began to solidify control over the Youth Corps it became increasingly clear that Diem was emphasizing government control of the peasantry at the expense (at least in US eyes) of pacification.¹⁰⁹

However, US observers seemed to agree that the program was working, at least to the degree that it stymied the influence of the Viet Minh in South Vietnam. An anonymous telegram to Kennedy in 1962 (later turned out to be Paul Vann) noted that the major weakness of the program was the “hit and miss construction with the insufficient integration of hamlet defenses into over-all district and provincial security plans. Hamlets thus vary considerably in vulnerability to VC attack.”¹¹⁰ Thus it is no coincidence that the following month, Kennedy authorized over 1500 “Strategic Hamlet Kits” worth over US 13 million, were funded by USAID, complete with

¹⁰⁸ Ngo Dinh Nhu, address to the students of the National Institute of Administration, August 23, 1962.

¹⁰⁹ Pentagon Papers, “Strategic Hamlets Program 1961–1963. IV.B.2, 30.

¹¹⁰ “An American Observer” [Roger Hilsman] CIA REPORT. July 11, 1962, Saigon. NARA 176-10038-10005, 6.

“building materials, barbed wire and stakes, light weapons, ammunition, and communication equipment.”¹¹¹

Inasmuch as the US provided support for the program through supplying barbed wire and building materials, this would hardly account for the rapidly and widespread taken up nature of the scheme by local officials. Indeed, sometimes taken up spontaneously. George Denney’s 1963 description of the program describes the ad-hoc nature of its being taken up,

It grew out of a variety of security and political measures adopted by local officials, acting to a considerable extent on their own initiative to defend their areas from the growing Communist campaign of guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and intimidation. The government of President Ngo Dinh Diem, recognizing the effectiveness of these scattered efforts, responded quickly and threw its entire resources behind the development of a national strategic hamlet program, drawing on its knowledge of the Communist insurgencies in Malaya and Indochina and even the Kibbutz program in Israel.¹¹²

If local governance was taking up these ad-hoc measures in ad-hoc incidences, the architectural-political models too were applied after the fact from Sài Gòn. Designing a “democracy from the base,” Duy Lap Nguyen notes, required models that the political establishment could manipulate into “a modernized form of the traditional Vietnamese commune,” which “included the Israeli kibbutz or workers’ cooperatives.”¹¹³ This form of socio-spatial organization, meaning “gathering” or “clustering” was informed by a tradition of agrarian, Jewish anarchist thought, with an antagonistic relationship to capitalism that made sense to Nhu and Diem. The Strategic Hamlet Program represented an “anti-capitalist form of post-colonial modernization” that,

¹¹¹ In August 1962 “Secretary McNamara agreed to undertake the financing for 1500 kits (US13 million).” United States, ed. *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decision-making on Vietnam*. Volume 2: Chapter 2, “The Strategic Hamlet Program, 1961–1963,” The Senator Gravel ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, 29.

¹¹² 197. Research Memorandum From the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Denney) to the Acting Secretary of State. Department of State, S/P Files: Lot 70 D 199. Vietnam 1963. Unclassified, 437–438.

¹¹³ Duy Lap Nguyen, 101.

according to Nhu was “better than the Indian system of trying to get progress as a gift of the capitalist societies.”¹¹⁴ Somewhat bizarrely, Nhu and Diem’s fascination with kibbutzim would mirror widespread interest in the idea among hippies later in the 1960s, where it resembled what Felicity Scott calls a “paradigm of communalism and with the founding of a new country.”¹¹⁵ The relationship between state-building and land-settling represented in the communal, dispersed, fortified strategic hamlet is the issue at stake (as Ayala Levin has explored in the context of Zionist settler-ideology that undergirded the Israeli state’s “doing Zionism” in African countries during a similar timeframe).¹¹⁶

Trần Ngọc Châu drafted a report for Diem on the kibbutz system, which was described to him by his colleague General Xuan who went with an official delegation tour of the system in Israel in 1958–1959, to find “what elements of this program, if any, could be adapted to our country.”¹¹⁷ Châu’s report also combined data from a US State Department expert on Israel and its kibbutz program. Diem had been impressed with the report and realized similarities in how the system could work in Vietnam.¹¹⁸ Encompassed in this idea was a stateless democracy, a decentralized system of “communes,” (a “commune of communes” says James Horrox) embodied by the strategic hamlets, as opposed to the centrally organized state of the Communist

¹¹⁴ Duy Lap Nguyen, 102 and *Readers Digest*, 1962, op. cit. Nighswonger, 73.

¹¹⁵ Felicity Scott, *Outlaw Territories*, 109.

¹¹⁶ Ayala Levin, “Exporting Zionism: Architectural Modernism in Israeli-African Technical Cooperation, 1958-1973” (Columbia University, 2015), 11–13.

¹¹⁷ Chau, *Vietnam Labyrinth*, 156.

¹¹⁸ Ahern, CIA 127

Party to which all were subsumed, and all must adhere.¹¹⁹ Political scientist Gabriel Kolko explains that this is also part of the nature of a dispersed rural populace at odds with

Part of the Communist Party's fundamental problem from its origins down to the present time is that the vast space and lack of communications, inherent in any comparable Third World nation, always made it extremely difficult for it to impose its tightly centralized and disciplined ideals on Vietnam's complex social and physical realities.¹²⁰

While the US administration in Sài Gòn may not have fully perceived the political scope of the Strategic Hamlet Program as imagined by Diem and Nhu, as a counterinsurgency tactic they admitted in 1963 that, "on balance, however, the strategic hamlet has been a success." Both in the low success-rate of armed attacks, and judged by the reaction of North Vietnam, who roundly denounced the campaign as "concentration camps" into which "people are forcibly herded."¹²¹

These two perspectives are clearly illustrated in the propaganda produced by the North and the US/GVN. The pamphlet "Celebrating rural life at the Ap Tan Sinh hamlet" encouraged people to move to the hamlet and focused on the school materials and agricultural tools (bottom left image) available to workers if they acquiesced. (fig 3.28) Published in December 1963, the photographs of beaming schoolchildren and contented farm workers make a stark difference from the *Steel Flame* poetry volume, depicting a burning strategic hamlet with cheering crowds in the background, and in the foreground a Viet Minh cadre throwing a bundle of barbed wire at a cowering American general and South Vietnamese politician.¹²² (fig 3.34) Through their propaganda, the NLF fixated on the strategic hamlet scheme as a form of concentration camp, an

¹¹⁹ James Horrox and Uri Gordon, *A Living Revolution: Anarchism in the Kibbutz Movement*, (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009).

¹²⁰ Gabriel Kolko, *Vietnam: Anatomy of a Peace* (Routledge, 1997), 4.

¹²¹ Denney, Department of State, S/P Files: Lot 70 D 199, 438.

¹²² Produced by the Joint US Public Affairs Office, denoted by the "SP" in the code, meaning Special Project. Sergeant Major Herbert A. Friedman, Psyops.

easy critique to make given that the areas surrounding them were often deadly free-fire zones, confining villagers within their walls. A 1962 booklet, *Let us Develop the Fighting Spirit to Destroy the Americano-Diem Strategic Hamlets*, was distributed in a run of 6000 as an anti-strategic hamlet training manual,

The enemies consider the failure of the strategic hamlets as the failure of their decaying regime [...] Angry with the cruel enemy plot, the brave and unyielding South Vietnamese people continuously rise up and destroy almost all of their strategic hamlets... In just 20 days last September, 72 hamlets in 42 villages in Central Vietnam were destroyed. The enemies build the hamlets; we destroy them until they abandon the project. Some strategic hamlets have been destroyed 12 or 16 times [...] As everyone knows, the so-called “Strategic Hamlet” is used as a jail with all the necessary characteristics, not only with barbed wire fences and guard towers, but also with an oppression machine inside it. That is the highest and most inhuman cruelty of the Americans and Diem....¹²³

The flexibility with which they were identified for American military intelligence mirrored the experience of the NLF. The same world within the fragile cordon that was so laden with democratic optimism for Diệm and Nhu was a “jail with all the necessary characteristics” and an “oppression machine” within. The syntactical similarities to each side of the propaganda movements are hardly a coincidence, owing to Nhu’s consternation that the GVN could adopt guerrilla methods and “fight the Viet-Cong with their own weapons,” including that of resettlement.

¹²³ The booklet was published by the Communist Liberation Printing Office at Bac Lieu as anti-strategic hamlet training material for party members and cadres. “PSYOP of the Strategic Hamlet in Vietnam,” accessed January 21, 2021, <http://www.psywarrior.com/VNHamletPSYOP.html>; Howard Jones, *Death of a Generation: How the Assassinations of Diem and JFK Prolonged the Vietnam War* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 187–188.

IV

Porosities and Digitizing the Ditch

As both a flexible village structure and military architecture, strategic hamlets were complicated to categorize. What constituted a bona fide hamlet could mean different things, and in order to reconcile these differences of identification in 1971 CORDS developed a computer program to standardize the nuances between them. With the “Hamlet Evaluation System,” military personnel could assess the progress of pacification effort in hamlets and villages in South Vietnam according to a system. (fig 3.33) The HES would be recorded by a District Senior Advisor visiting a number of hamlets each month, entering HES questions and responses on his HES “Hamlet and Village Ledger Cards.” In turn, these could then be submitted to CORDS and were plotted into a computer system, constituting, according to their operation manual, a “highly integrated man-machine interface.”¹²⁴ The definition of a “Hamlet” offered by the HES describes an amorphous administrative unit:

In some districts, hamlets are identified as geographic areas with surveyed boundaries which are contiguous throughout a village. In other areas, hamlets are identified only as an area of massed population without clearly defined boundaries.

Accordingly there were two options for how to categorize a hamlet: in terms of boundary lines, and in terms of the number of people gathered together. These definitions were as amorphous as the bureaucratic structure required to accommodate them,

Hamlets exist for the purpose of internal village administration, and the number of hamlets within a specific village may fluctuate over a period of time according to the administrative needs of the village.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ CORDS MACV A-3, HES Command Manual. NARA Reference RG-472.3 (fig 3.33)

¹²⁵ Glossary, CORDS MACV A-3, HES Command Manual. NARA Reference RG-472.

Hamlets, according to the manual, are not discreet units of physical space, but administrative boundaries of places that may fluctuate and change over time. The evaluation system, forced to accommodate “changing conditions in the countryside as the insurgency increased or diminished” presented a challenging array of possibilities. (fig 3.33) However, the HES Command Manual asserted that “this flexibility allows the system to be readily modified when new functional areas within pacification are identified and in need of measurement,” providing that measurement of personal perspectives, fortifications of barbed wire, or socio-economic programs appeared to fit into the stratified logic of the system.¹²⁶ According to the HES system flow chart, a given HES rating could result a dizzying array of possible outcomes. Reading the chart left to right, a HES rating, would split into either the Security or Community Development option, which in turn would multiply into further Military, Political or Social Programs, further divided into Friendly Military or Enemy Military; Enemy Political or Friendly Political. The final level of “sub-models” ranged from law enforcement to psyops to social welfare programs. The same challenges presented to the experts present during the RAND symposium on counterinsurgency in 1962 were ratified according to a HES Model Hierarchy of all-encompassing categories—to accommodate bamboo spikes, political opinions, barbed wire or dug out perimeter ditches.

In addition to rating the outcomes of strategic hamlets themselves, the HES also had the output capacity to plot “VC levels of activity” as a translucent overlay onto province maps, in order to map both location of rated hamlets and changes during a requested timespan. (fig 3.34) Resembling bombing maps, the series of plotted out “Activity of the VC infrastructure in the village” and “inhabitants per square mile,” example maps supplied in the Command Manual

¹²⁶ HES Command Manual, 7.

appear to present a cohesive overview of a situation. However, on a read of the Key and HES Rating the appearance of a systematized village is rendered vaguer. Given that “regular overt activity day and night,” number “3” on the map, Is almost every single grid point, one wonders how activity was actually defined. CORDS was overseen William E. Colby, the American Ambassador in Sài Gòn and future director of the CIA. Colby deemed that security was the necessary precursor to development, based on the idea that political affiliations, particularly in the countryside were not fixed identities.¹²⁷ Considered in this light, the computerized pacification techniques used by CORDS to analyze to what extent a given village was influenced by NLF activity created a networked global village (of McLuhan’s dreams, forged through warfare), in which the network represented the occupying force while the units and data represented people and small rural villages. Barry Weisberg’s *Ecocide in Indochina* saw the irony of the system, essentially flattening the units it sought to comprehend, saying:

another statistical miracle was announced to buoy up the pacification effort. A recent report from the computerized Hamlet Evaluation System claimed that over 85% of the population was “secure.”¹²⁸

The highest possible available technology of the time was used to analyze and oversee the most meager of means, humble of materials, and people living under the threat of death from above.

A perimeter of perspective

In attempting to comprehend the way that designed techniques of village counterinsurgency evolved and circulated between Manila, Washington DC and Sài Gòn

¹²⁷ As Stuart Schrader has shown, “pacification” in the eyes of Colby, CORDS and insurgency experts of the day, “was based on cognizance that ‘loyalties and allegiances were up for grabs.’” Stuart Schrader, “To Secure the Global Great Society: Participation in Pacification,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 7, no. 2 (2016): 226, 241.

¹²⁸ Barry Weisberg, *Ecocide in Indochina: The Ecology of War* (Canfield Press, 1970), 30.

between 1950 and 1970, I expected this chapter to follow a linear narrative through the biographies of counterinsurgency experts themselves. These lines of investigation frayed however when they encountered the political reality of Vietnam circa 1960. In this regard, there are two conflicting modes for understanding strategic hamlets: first, a militarized hybrid architecture of bamboo and barbed wire disguised as a civic action program; and second as an agrarian reform program disguised as a counterinsurgency scheme. In the case of the former, following the English language paper trail left behind by RAND Corporation, the CIA, CORDS and the myriad other Washington DC-Manila organizations present an apparently cohesive genealogy with which to understand how strategic hamlets became absorbed by foreign personnel in Vietnam, and later (in the next chapter), in Mindanao. However, for the latter, the strategic hamlets program was consolidated with a complex political philosophy, *Nhân Vị*, that both internalized certain aspects of the North Vietnamese revolutionary perspective and espoused language on democracy borrowed from the occupying Americans.

These two aspects do not reconcile easily with one another, a fact demonstrated by the acutely confusing HES Command Manual. More than any other item discussed in this chapter, the HES system was the exact opposite of a cohesive system. The smooth lines of flow charts and meticulously shaded population charts can also be read as a visualization of the breakdown of communication between military strategy and environment. Rather than consider the success or failure of counterinsurgency strategies, the major takeaway from this chapter is the entanglements with which strategic hamlets muddle the narrative of counterinsurgency. In *Time in the Shadows*, Laleh Khalili grapples with the paradoxical nature of humanism and warfare as an “unmentioned axis” around which counterinsurgency revolves. “Paradoxically, the very ‘humanization’ of asymmetric warfare and the application of liberal precepts to its conduct have

legitimated war making as political intervention.”¹²⁹ Yet just like the liberalization and digitization of humanistic knowledge that floated between the university, the halls of power, to the crater-laden paddy field, theorizing could easily be and often was lost in translation. The activities of government think tanks like RAND Corporation promoted ideology as policy in what Pamela Lee calls a “pattern recognition” of Cold War hermeneutics.¹³⁰ The patterning of architectural forms around cultural traits was clearly caught between two vying political systems in South Vietnam due to the inconsistency of objectives: the US government’s funding a pacification program, disguised as an agrarian reform “personalism” agenda of the GVN. But the aspect that sent these political and military systems most into disarray was the importance of the village as a shifting unit of rural space.

¹²⁹ Laleh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (Stanford University Press, 2012), 3.

¹³⁰ To extend Khalili’s terminology somewhat, from humanism to the humanities, Pamela Lee has described the activities of RAND Corporation that promoted ideology as policy, an anthropology of warfare that was built into Cold War hermeneutics that Lee calls “pattern recognition.” Rendering the connection between art, anthropology and the Cold War decisive. Pamela M. Lee, *Think Tank Aesthetics: Midcentury Modernism, the Cold War, and the Neoliberal Present* (MIT Press, 2020), 90.

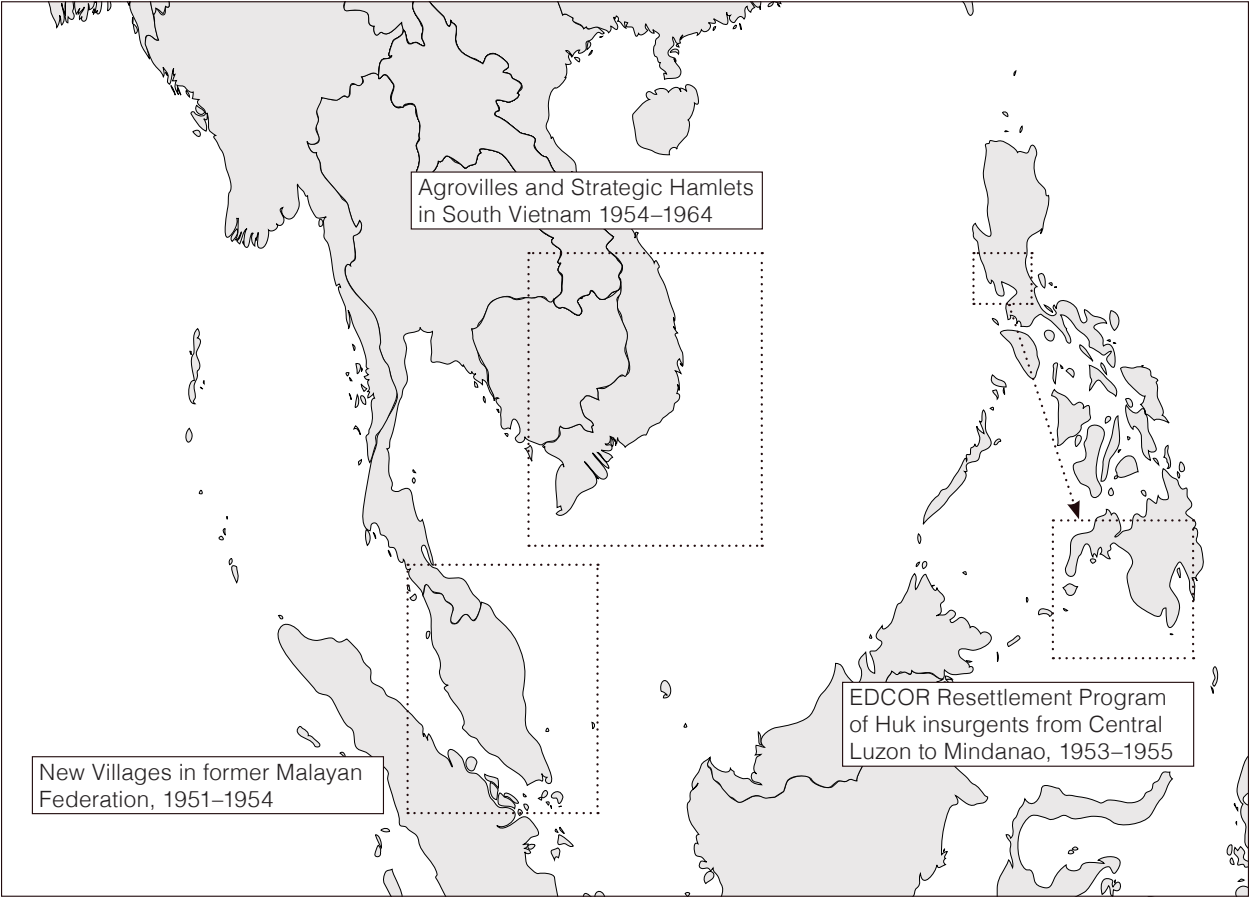


Fig 3.01 Resettlement, villagization and hamlets discussed in this chapter, 1950–1965. Map by the author.



Fig 3.02 Strategic hamlets and Ho Chi Minh Trail in South Vietnam, 1963. Map by the author. Information compiled from: Thomas Ahern. *CIA and Rural Pacification*. Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Historian, 100; 139 and ESRI/ARCGIS; Environment & Society.

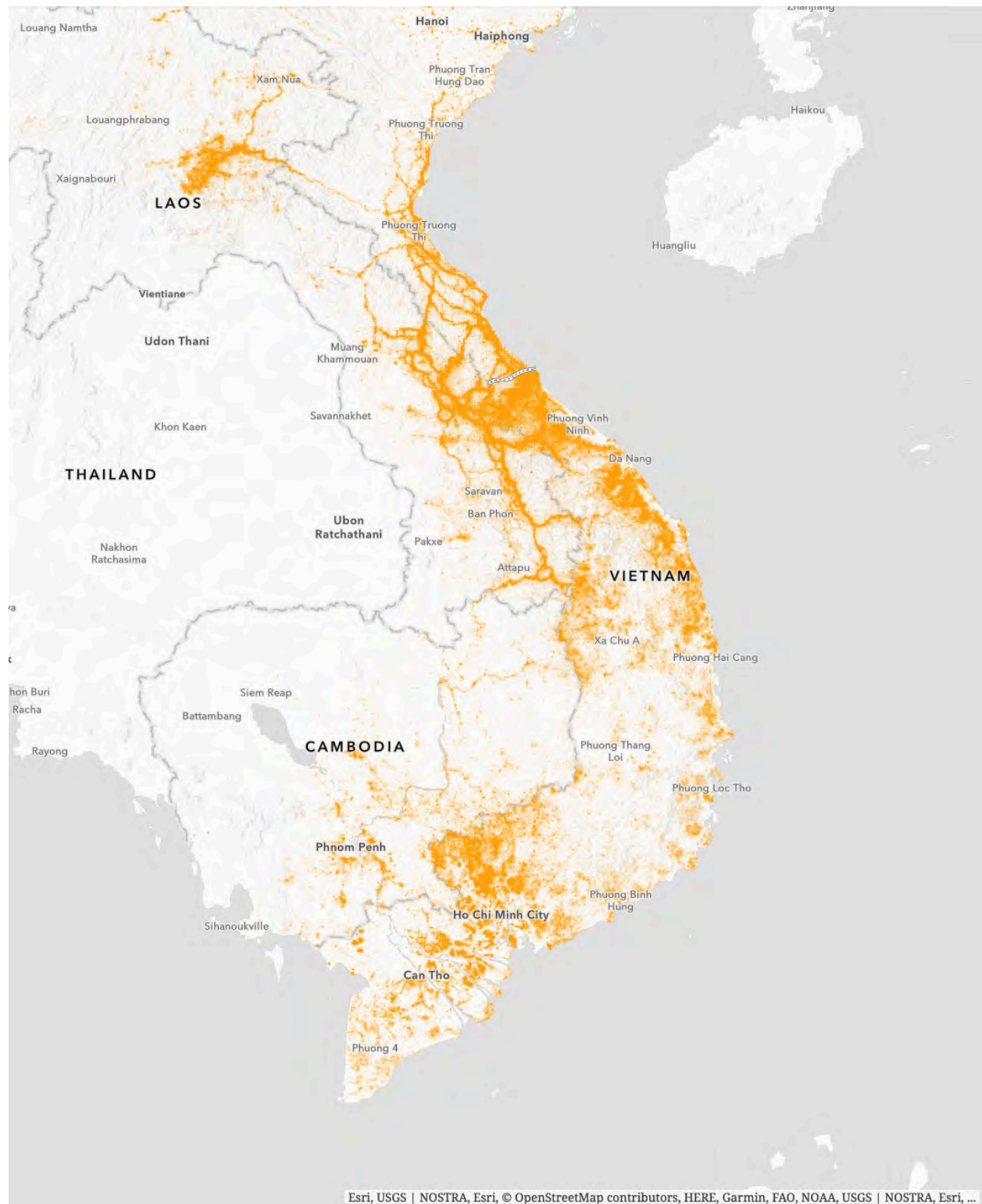


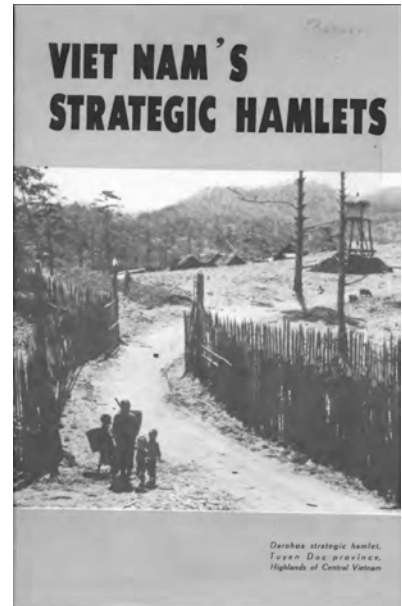
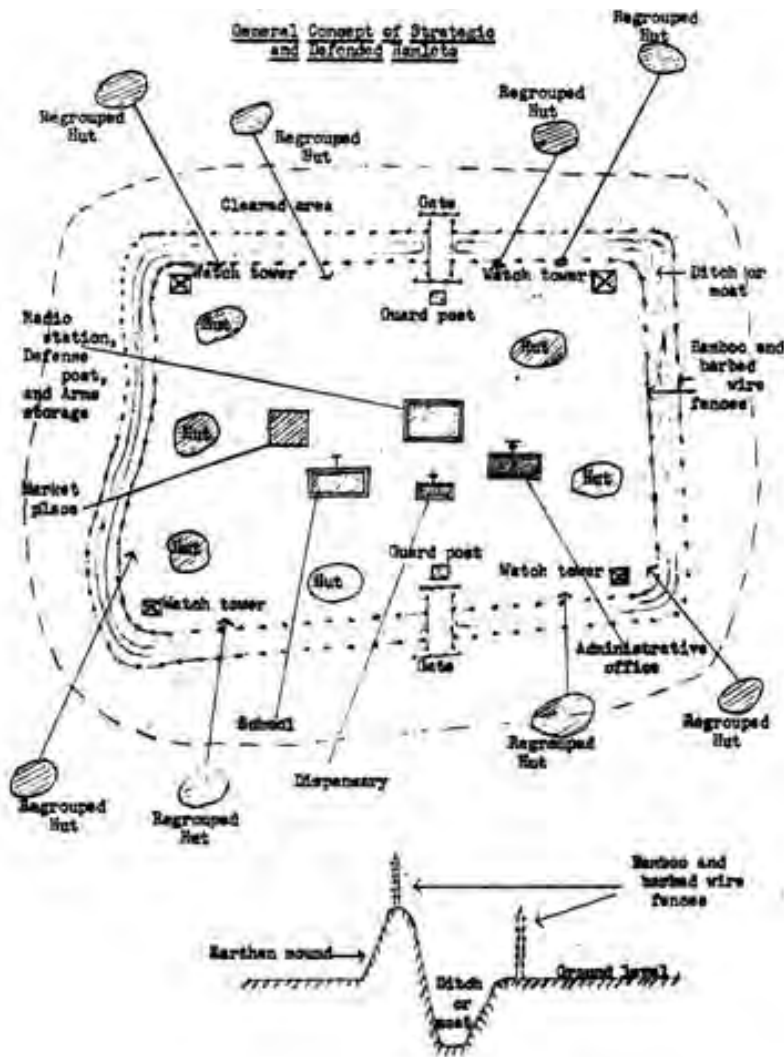
Fig 3.03 “Bombing Missions of the Vietnam War,” ESRI, ARCGIS. Cooper Thomas, Esri Story Maps team. <https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2017/vietnam-bombing/>.



Fig 3.04 "Montagnard Strategic Hamlet" at Vũng Tàu, Thành phố Vũng Tàu, unidentified photographer, 1961.

Fig 3.05 *Viet Nam's Strategic Hamlets*, Viet Nam Press, Directorate General of Information, Saigon. February 7, 1963

Fig 3.06 Sketch of Model Strategic Hamlet, Department of State Research Memorandum. July 1, 1963.



Darakeh strategic hamlet, Tuyen Duc province, Highlands of Central Vietnam

PROVINCE OR CITY	Number of Strategic Hamlets			Total population of Province or City	Population of the Strategic Hamlets
	planned	completed	under construction		
Ba Xuyen	565	58	154	573.547	201.838
Phong Dinh	169	66	53	395.437	130.392
Phuoc Thanh	28	5	11	49.414	16.325
Binh Duong	151	51	46	302.654	98.696
Thua Thien	432	98	137	451.821	145.926
Bien Hoa	180	53	65	235.468	70.997
Tuyen Duc	69	16	10	32.981	9.750
Quang Tin	309	79	60	348.724	95.646
Kien Giang	246	89	61	354.476	95.526
Kon Tum	242	76	166	102.261	26.336
Quang Nam	537	102	127	573.742	133.011
Plei Ku	229	26	61	153.038	31.741
Kien Hoa	582	74	50	537.343	105.389
Chuong Thien	235	59	6	269.921	52.630
Long An	400	70	35	492.946	73.906
Phuoc Tuy	162	23	83	136.977	18.697
Phuoc Long	69	32	37	44.729	5.443
Phu Bon	147	11	72	49.545	4.102
An Xuyen (1)					
Da Lat	42	36	6	49.574	31.002
Saigon	430	223	99	1.275.000	661.086
Da Nang	27	18	8	110.630	36.826
Hue	24		7	106.102	



Fig 3.07 Viet Nam's Strategic Hamlets, Viet Nam Press, Directorate General of Information, Saigon. February 7, 1963.

Fig 3.08 Suzanne Labin, *Vietnam: An Eye-Witness Account*. (Springfield, Va., 1964).



Sharpening prongs for the hamlet fence



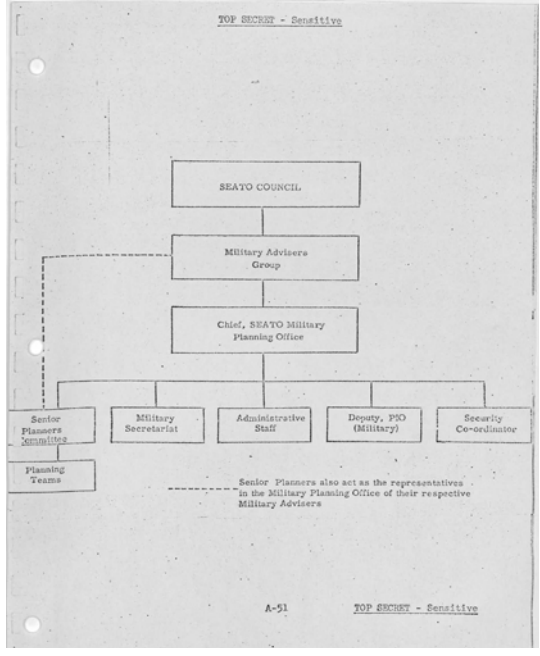


Fig 3.09 Organizational chart of SEATO. Evolution of the War IV.A.1. NATO and SEATO: A Comparison, 1961-1963. Pentagon Papers (Declassified 2011).

Fig 3.10 "Before" Model of Ba Thé Agrovillage, Kiến Hòa Province, April 1961. Truman Library, Arthur Z. Gardiner Papers. Accession Number: 2014-2097.

Fig 3.11 "After" Model of Ba Thé Agrovillage, Kiến Hòa Province, April 1961. Truman Library, Arthur Z. Gardiner Papers. Accession Number: 2014-2097.

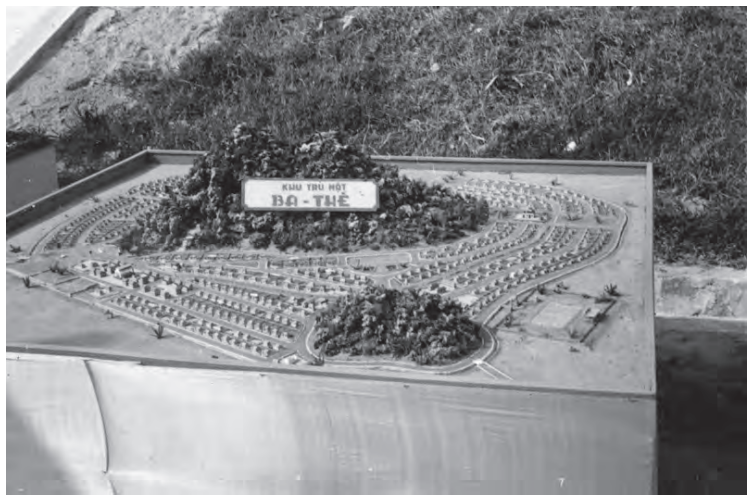




Fig 3.12 Aerial views of Ba The' Agrovillage, Ba Thé Agrovillage, Kiến Hòa Province. 1962.
Truman Library, Arthur Z. Gardiner Papers. Accession Number: 2014-1988, 1992.





Fig 3.13 Market at Ba The' Agrovillage. 1961, 2014-2099, TL.



Fig 3.14 Farm machinery along the Ba The' Agrovillage Canal. 1961, 2014-2110, TL.

Fig 3.15 Barbed wire fence, trench and wooden fence with structures in the background at Vo Dat Agrovillage. April 1962. 2014-1969, TL.





Fig 3.16 Aerial view of Vo Dat Agrovillage, Vietnam. April 1962. 2014-1968, TL.

Fig 3.17 Guard tower at the Vo Dat Agrovillage in Vietnam. 1962. 2014-1970, TL.

Fig 3.18 Unidentified New Village, Malaya, Ministry of Information, Imperial War Museum, K13796.





Fig 3.19 New Village settlement at Petaling Jaya, 1957. Part of the Briggs Plan. National Army Museum.

Fig 3.20 New Village u.d., Ministry of Information, Imperial War Museum, K13796.

Fig 3.21 Han Suyin, *My House Has Two Doors*, 1988.





Fig 3.22 "Montagnard Strategic Hamlet" at Vũng Tàu, Thành phố Vũng Tàu, unidentified photographer, 1961.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/15693951@N00/albums/72157650463205044>.



Fig 3.23 Poetry Volume: *STEEL FLAME*
Strategic hamlet. Issue No. 2, My Tho Artists Group
Undated. Source: Sergeant Major Herbert A. Friedman,
PSYOPS.

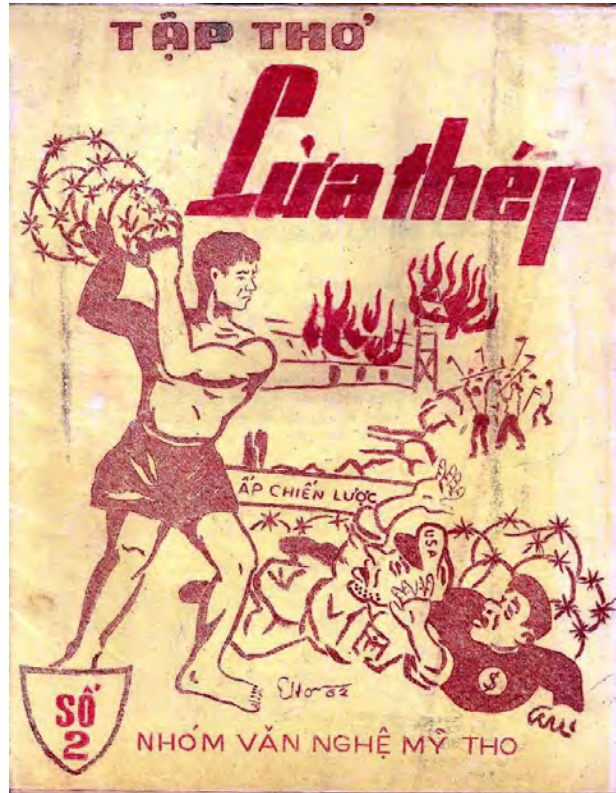


Fig 3.24 Leaflet SP-71: "Dear Community Friends,
Celebrating rural life at the Ap Tan Sinh hamlet." Undated.
Source: Sergeant Major Herbert A. Friedman, PSYOPS.

**CÙNG ĐỒNG BÀO
THÂN MẾN**

Tỉnh sống Cách-Mạng ngày 1-11-63 đã chính thức chấm dứt chế độ độc tài gia đình trị Ngô-Văn-Diệm. Toàn dân đã hoan hoan đón mừng ngày Cách Mạng lịch sử 05.

Nhân dịp này, Hội-Đồng Quận-Nhân Cách-Mạng và Chính-Phủ Lâm-Thời về cùng quan tâm đến đời sống nông thôn, nhất là các bạn ở các Ấp Tân Sinh.

Do đó, Thiếu TÀI LÝ TRƯỜNG NGƯỜI, Tỉnh Trưởng Vĩnh Bình sẽ [ba lượt] chào ghi đến các con em trong Ấp, những dụng cụ học sinh như sách, vở... và một số dụng cụ sinh hoạt (cưa, đục...) cho những đứa Ấp nào có thành tích khá quan trọng trong công cuộc kiến thiết nông ấp để gửi là một chút quà tưởng thưởng của Chính Phủ Việt Nam Cộng Hòa.

Một em học sinh ở Ấp Tân Sinh ở tỉnh Đồng Tháp, một em ở trường học mới của Ấp.

Các em học sinh ở trường mới của Ấp Tân Sinh ở thành phố Tân Cảng thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Các em đang học tập và làm việc cho công tác Chính Phủ Việt Nam trong công việc học tập và học sinh trong Ấp để chúng ta có thể giúp đỡ các em ở những trường học mới.

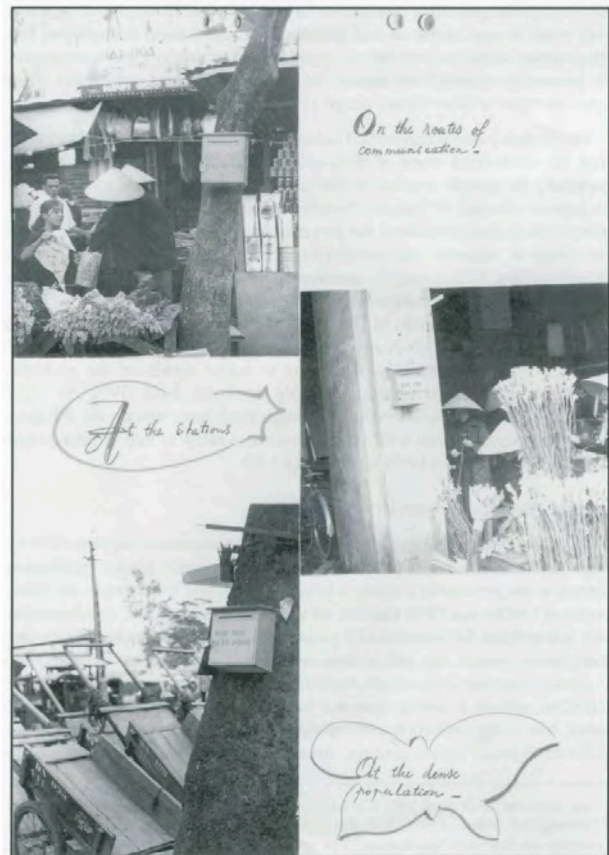
Dùng cụ sinh hoạt và dụng cụ học tập của những Ấp Tân Sinh có thành tích khá quan trọng. 32 loại dụng cụ khác nhau sẽ được gửi tặng trong những kế hoạch tiếp theo.

Chú Minh: Học sinh ở Ấp Tân Sinh ở Tỉnh Đồng Tháp. Chú Minh còn được phái cho tập học nhận dụng cụ khác ở trường học mới của Ấp. 31 loại học được gửi tặng trong năm 1963 và nhiều lớp khác được gửi tặng trong năm sau.



Fig 3.25 Leaflet 246-93-67 "The Duong Minh Chau area is a Viet Cong hide-out. When you move to a secure area you will be given food, shelter and medical care. To the people living in the Duong Minh Chau area: To protect your lives and properties, you must immediately move out of the Duong Minh Chau area and resettle in the New Life Hamlets or in any resettlement area of Phuoc Ninh and Phu Khuong Districts. This area will be bombed day and night; thousands of fire bombs will destroy the Duong Minh Chau area. Death is threatening this area...." 246th PSYOP Company
 Source: Sergeant Major Herbert A. Friedman, PSYOPS.

Fig 3.26 Pages from briefing book on Strategic Hamlets Program prepared by CIA and Vietnamese staff, Da Nang, 1967. Images show suggestion boxes for villagers to anonymously drop off. Thomas L Ahern, *Vietnam Declassified: The CIA and Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 139.



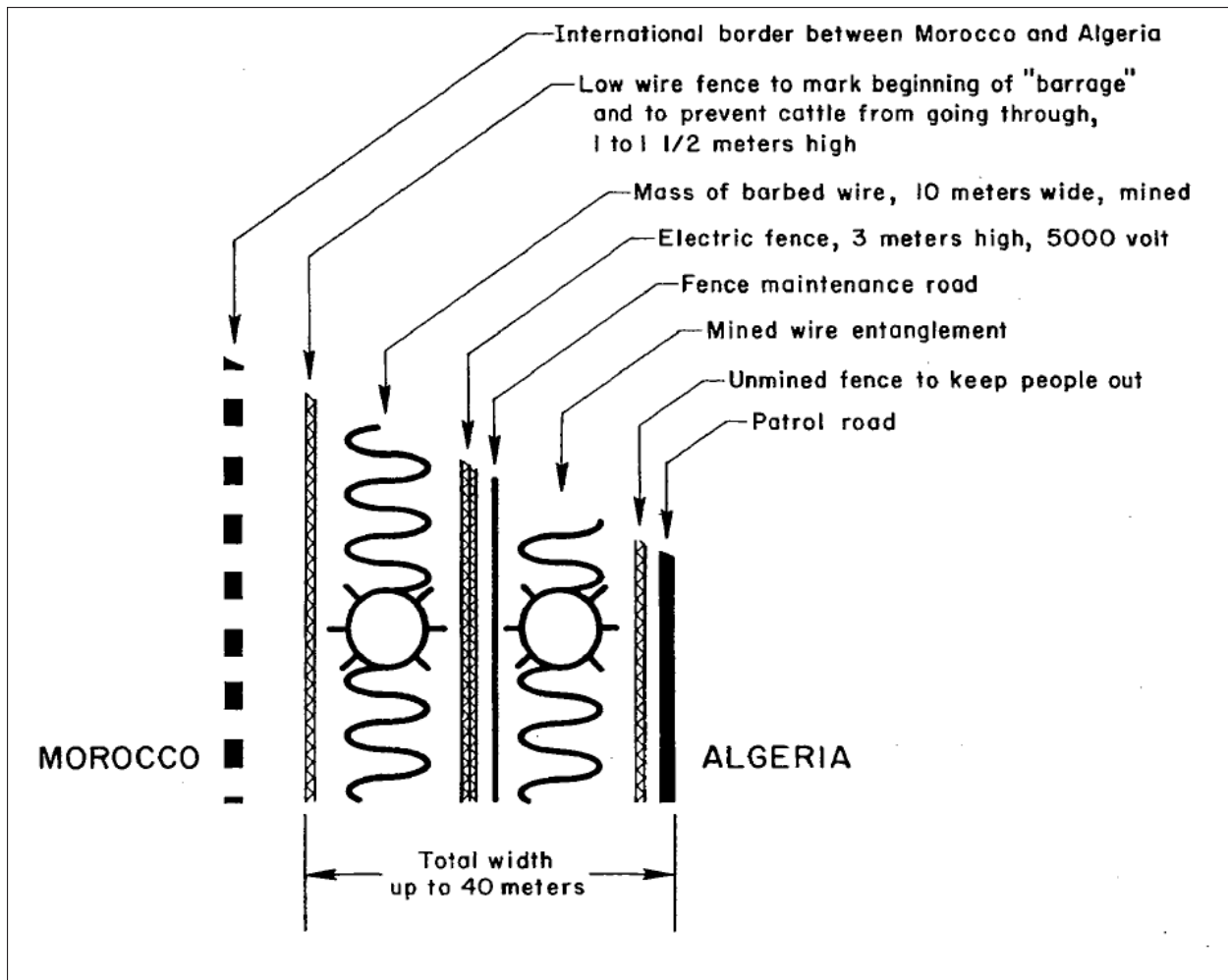


Fig 3.27 "Typical Complex of Fence Barriers on Moroccan-Algerian Border"
Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, RAND Corporation, 1962, 45.

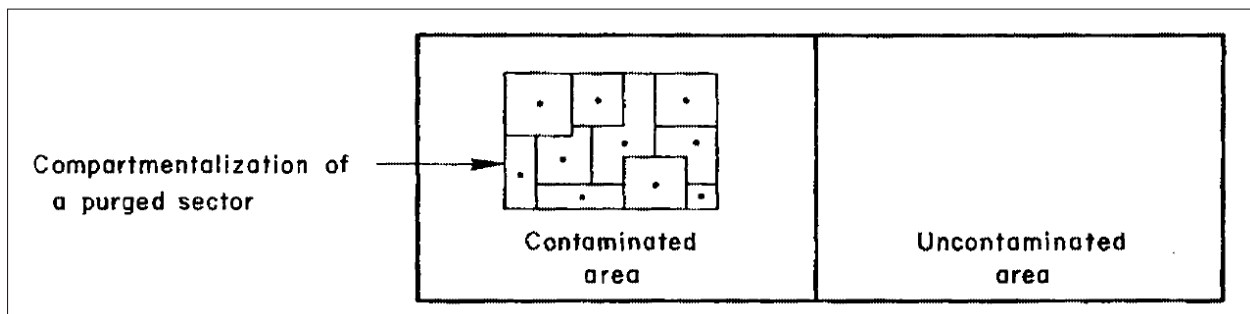


Fig 3.28 "Compartmentalizing Area of Control in Postmilitary Phase"
Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, RAND Corporation, 1962, 16.

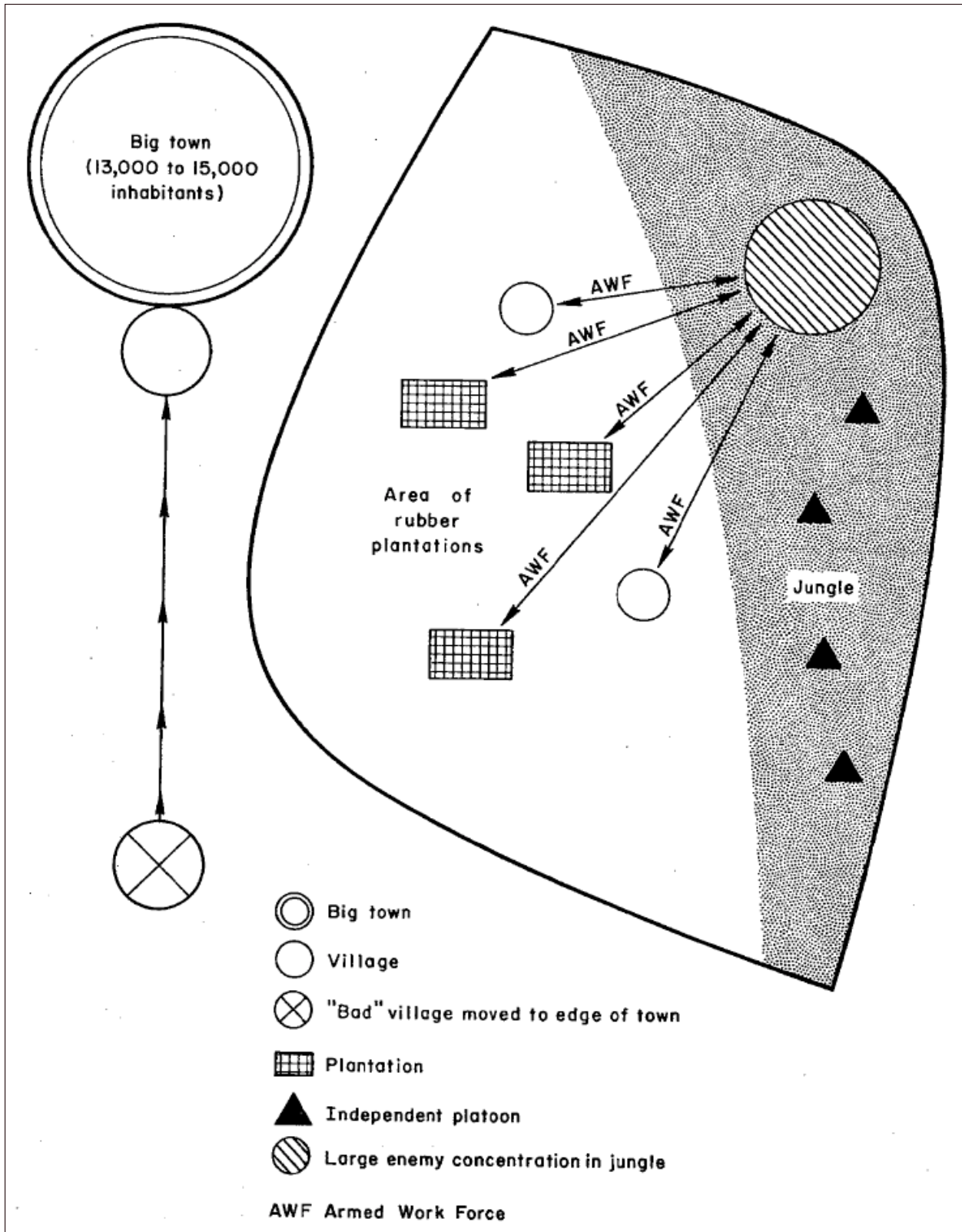


Fig 3.29 "The Modus Operandi on the Jungle Outskirts of Malaya"
Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, RAND Corporation, 1962, 94.

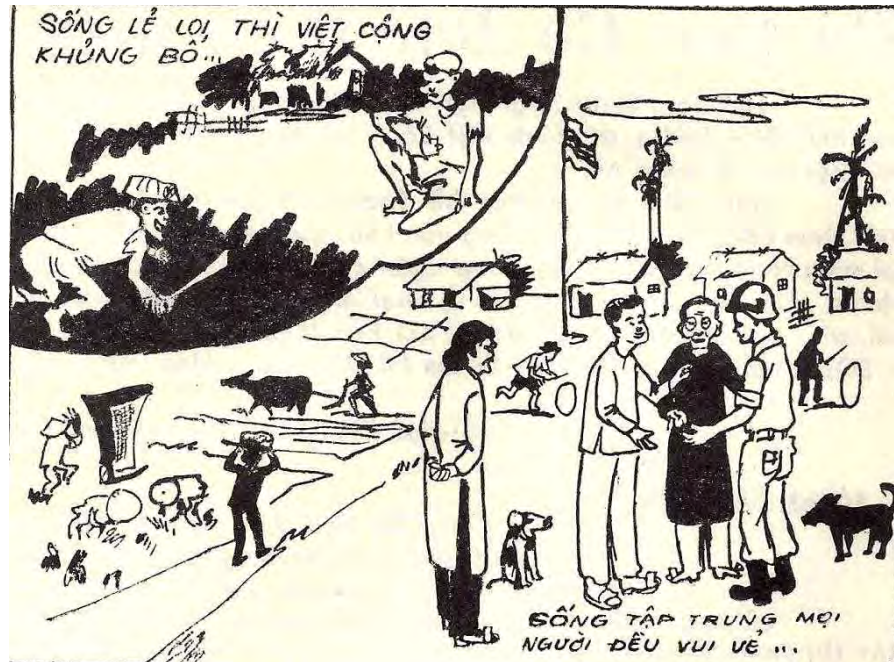


Fig 3.30 Leaflet 1046 "You will be terrorized by the Viet Cong if you live by yourself. Gathered together you will have a good life. Gathering in one place the Army and the Government will protect you. The Viet Cong dare not come and terrorize your life; and your property is protected. To live in peace and prosperity, dear countrymen, you have to gather in a large group. The Army and the Government are ready to help you and insure your safety." Undated. Source: Sergeant Major Herbert A. Friedman, PSYOPS.

Fig 3.31 Leaflet 3064 "ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS. This is the declaration of Lieutenant Colonel Vu The Quang, Mayor of Can Ranh...From 12 and 20 December 1968, more than 191 families have been resettled at My Ca Village, 15 kilometers from Cam Ranh City. This resettlement shows that the righteous cause of the Government of Vietnam has beaten the dictatorial regime of the Communists." Undated. Source: Sergeant Major Herbert A. Friedman, PSYOPS.



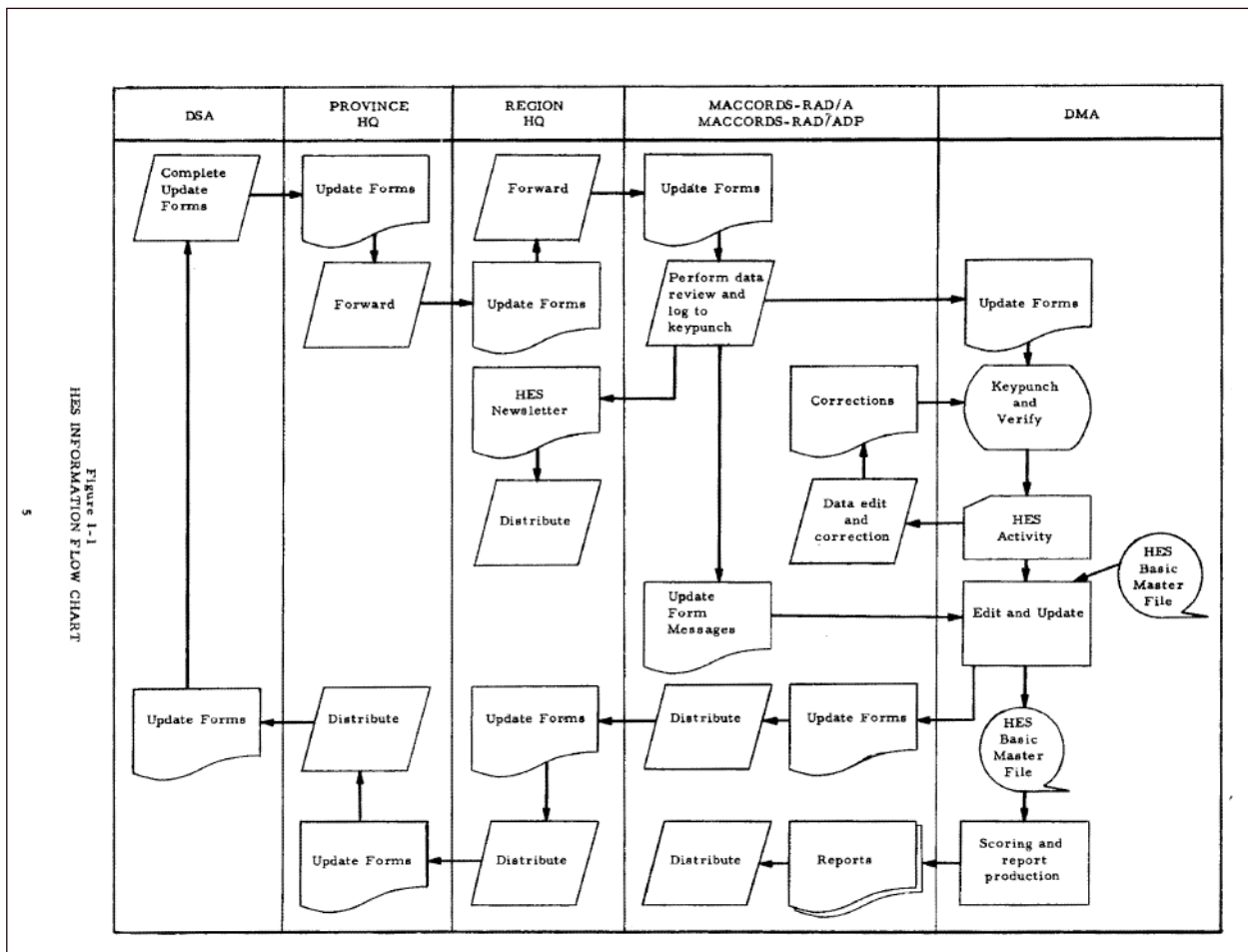
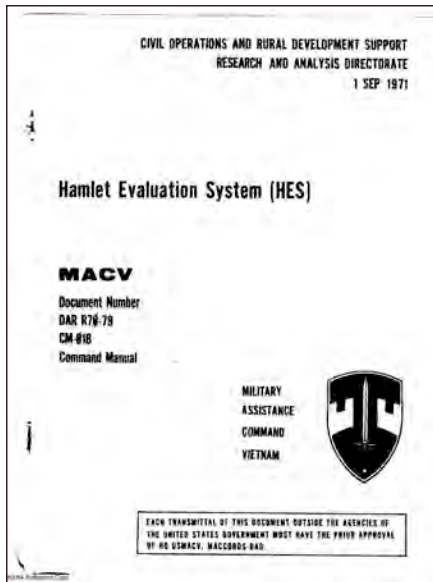


Fig 3.32 Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) Military Assistance Command Vietnam. CORDS. September 1, 1971.

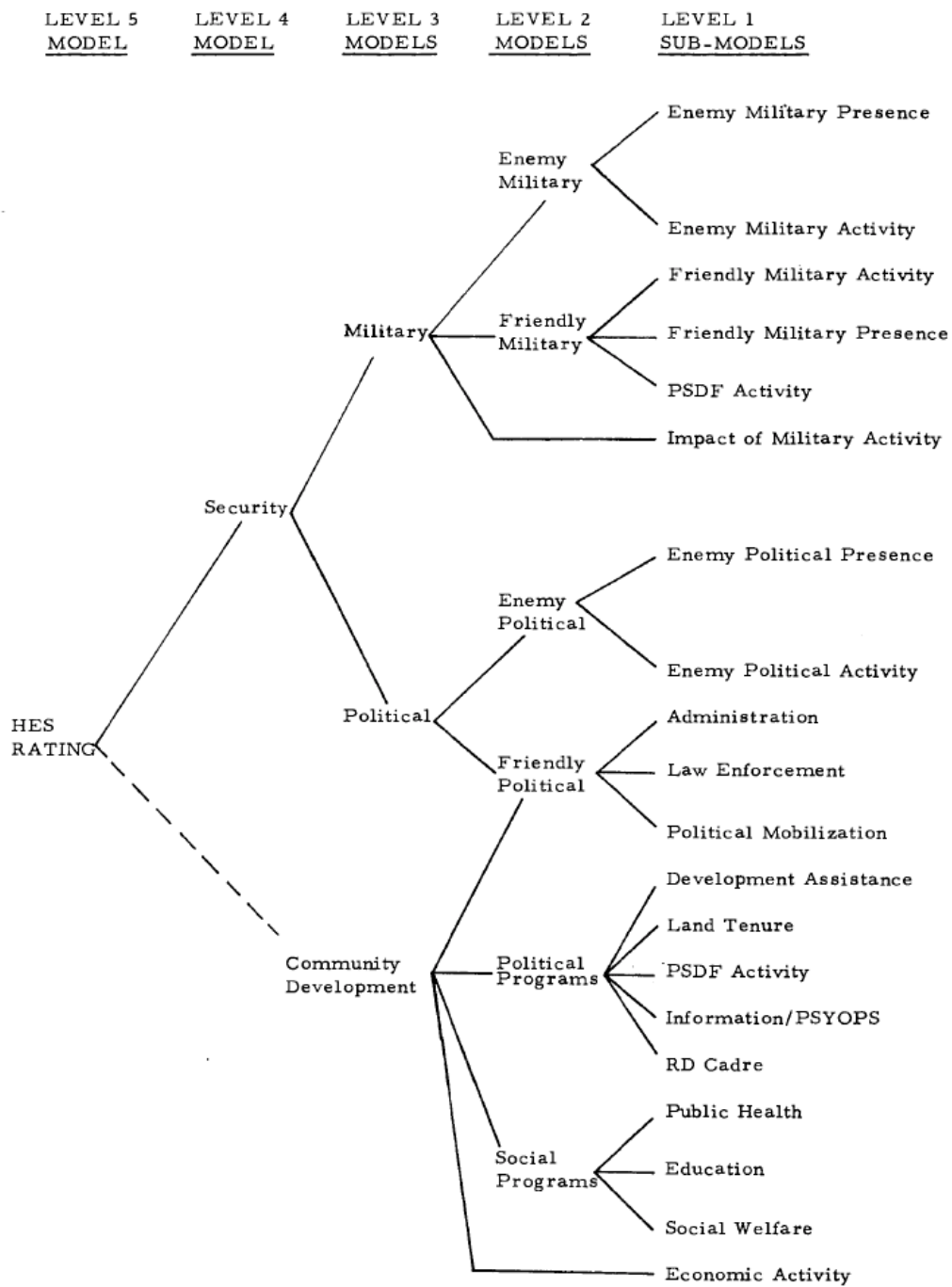


Figure 1-2
HES MODEL HIERARCHY

Fig 3.33 Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) Military Assistance Command Vietnam. CORDS. September 1, 1971.

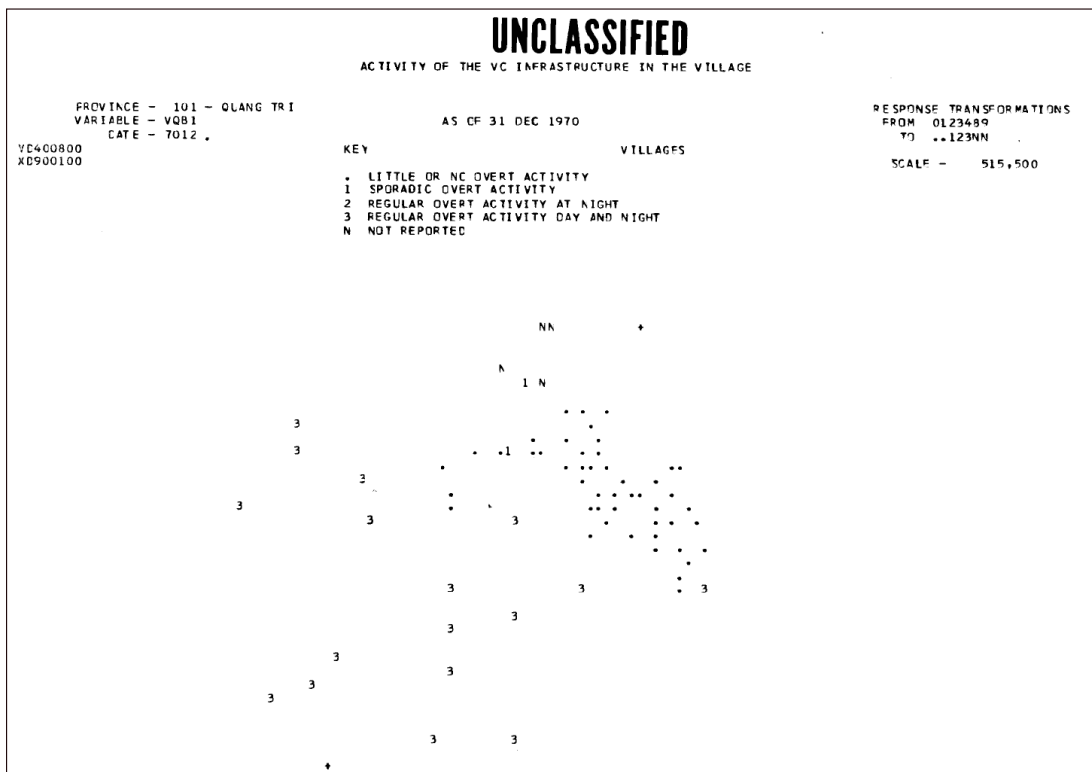
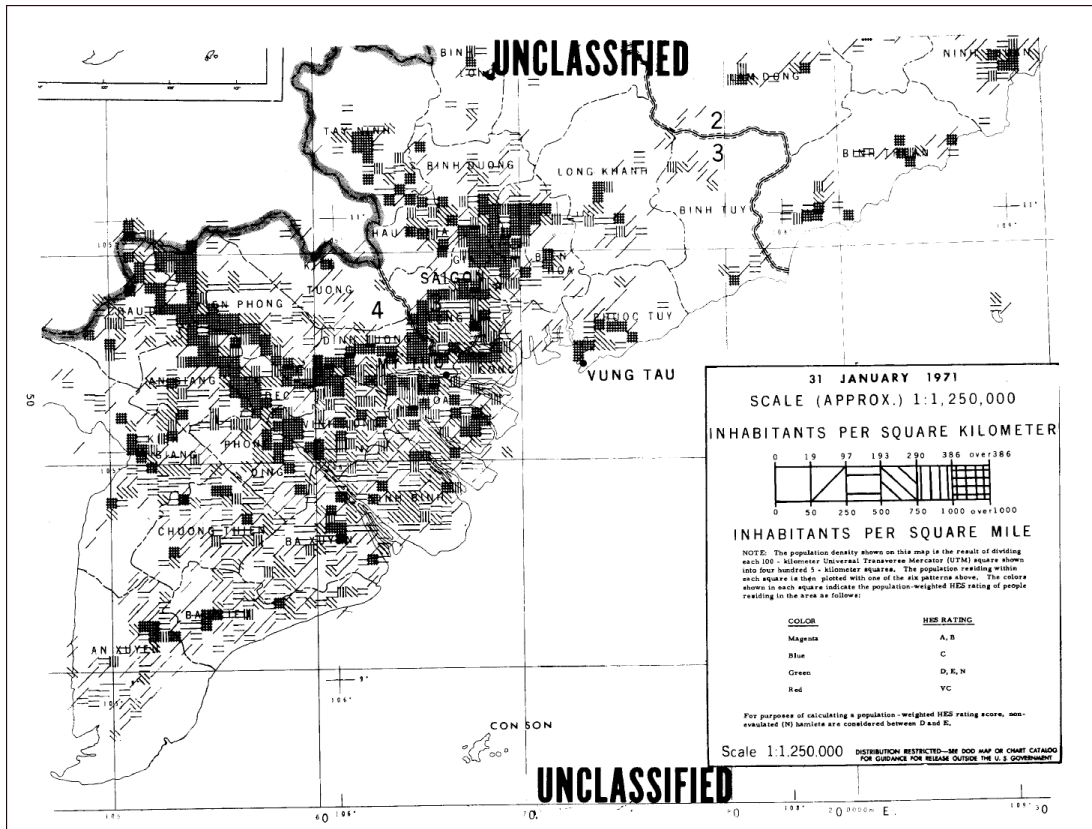


Fig 3.34 Map plotting inhabitants in terms of main strategic hamlet settlement areas (above) and "Activity of the VC Infrastructure in the Village" plotted in terms of activity level (below). HES Evaluation System. Military Assistance Command Vietnam. CORDS. September 1, 1971, 50-51.



4

If the Land Could Speak

A Political Economy of Indigeneity in Mindanao

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CHAPTER 4

If the Land Could Speak

A Political Economy of Indigeneity in Mindanao

I love these people. I would die for them.¹

Manuel Elizalde, 1971

In 1983, Manuel Elizalde Jr. fled the Philippines. Three years later his boss, the ousted President Ferdinand Marcos, did the same. Elizalde left behind the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (Panamin), a government agency tasked with protecting the 4.5 million Indigenous peoples of the Philippines (12% of the population).² Panamin's influence on government policy resembled the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the US, but its aesthetic campaign was more akin to a charity offering humanitarian aid. While it was founded as a tax-exempt private foundation in 1967 "with the primary role of keeping people alive," Elizalde was appointed by Marcos as the presidential assistant on national minorities in 1969, it was gradually integrated with government over the following years, until it was fully a government entity by 1975.³ This allowed Panamin a large degree of autonomy in how it handled civilian matters, an

¹ Manuel Elizalde, Jr. quoted in *National Geographic*, Vol. 140, No. 2. August 1971, 255.

² At the time, Indigenous peoples were referred to by the government as "cultural minorities," however, in a series of conferences organized by the Catholic Church Commission on Tribal Filipinos in the late 1970s, tribal delegates chose the phrase "tribal Filipinos" to refer to themselves instead of cultural minorities. Panamin in particular chose to name tribal Filipinos "national minorities" rather than cultural. In terms of nomenclature, I follow the convention of capitalizing Indigenous unless discussing a particular, specific historical moment in which "tribal" was used in accordance with the historical moment at hand.

³ Today there remains a dearth of resources available on Panamin, in part due to their dismantling and absorption into a myriad of opaque government entities with the end of the Marcos regime. The umbrella National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) is the overall government body that manages Indigenous Peoples' affairs today. In

aspect that is crucial to understanding how the nature of their work evolved. It is an undisputed fact that Panamin was detrimental in almost every way for the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples across the archipelago. Elizalde, born to one of the five wealthiest families in the Philippines, used the agency as a front for securing mineral and resource-rich agricultural lands for access to his and his associates' multiple agribusiness ventures. Between 1967 and 1983, the Philippine countryside changed drastically, both through the hydropower projects of the government's National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the many private rural extractive industries: mining, logging, monocrop plantations among others. (figs 4.01, 4.02, 4.03) With its purview over the nation's Indigenous peoples, Panamin played an instrumental role in this change. They were resettled into Panamin "model" reservations, signed up to become part of a locally available labor force, or integrated into "Civil Home Defense Forces" (CHDF), basically armed militias, ostensibly for protection from encroachment, land disputes and the ongoing guerrilla war being fought by the armed wing of the communist CPP-NDF-NPA.⁴

Panamin's work was not met unchallenged. Human rights groups already began to raise the alarm by the mid-1970s with increasing abuses under martial law, which began in 1972. However, from the very beginning of Panamin's work, it was the Philippine Church that formed the most powerful resistance network to their projects. Even prior to martial law, the church was suspicious of Panamin and the government's energetic outreach programs. In 1971, two of the largest church networks grouped together in to assert their role in "radical restructuring of the

Mindanao, PANAMIN was replaced by the Office of Southern Cultural Communities under the Aquino regime. The archives of PANAMIN, supposedly held at the Carlos Romulo Library in Manila, if they exist at all, remain inaccessible. More information can be found at alternative archives and through anti-government publications produced during the martial law years. Oona Thommes Paredes, "Higaûnon Resistance and Ethnic Politics in Northern Mindanao," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 8, no. 1 (1997): 278.

⁴ Communist Party of the Philippines, National Democratic Front, New Peoples Army.

present unjust social order in our country,” forming the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP).⁵ With censorship, disappearance and torture of the political opposition, “semi-legal” papers began to circulate that decried the abuses of power of the Marcos administration. By 1975 the AMRSP was publishing *Signs of the Times*, whose production was constant, restless and urgent. Mimeographed weekly issues comprised articles sourced from banned foreign periodicals as well as reports from local churches and social action networks concerned with human rights violations. Unless they were by overseas authors, articles that appeared in *Signs* were seldom accompanied by names due to fears of government reprisals against the clergy. While it was supposedly intended only for distribution to religious congregations, the spread of *Signs* was wide and far, and as such a part of the “mosquito press”—a name these publications earned for the irritation they caused the Marcos dictatorship.⁶ The front page of each issue of *Signs* doubled as the contents page, and an average issue describes an itinerary of dispossession: “Marcos’ Mindanao Pacification Drive,” “Government Set to Snuff Out Culture of Igorots” and “Igorots vs. Government Men: A Matter of Life and Dams” which is stamped “*FOR RELIGIOUS USE*” at the bottom.⁷ (fig 4.04)

By December 1976 and fifteen publications later, *Signs of the Times* was closed down, along with two radio stations owned by the Catholic church in Mindanao (one in Davao, the

⁵ Comprising 2500 Catholic Priests and 7000 nuns, the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP) is the joint forum of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of Men in the Philippines (AMRSMP) and the Association of Major Religious Superiors of Women in the Philippines (AMRSWP). <https://www.facebook.com/amrsp.org/>; Robert L. Youngblood, “Church Opposition to Martial Law in the Philippines,” *Asian Survey* 18, no. 5 (1978): 506.

⁶ Tan, Michael L. “Turning 30,” December 16, 2015. Accessed June 24, 2018. <http://opinion.inquirer.net/91205/turning-30>.

⁷ These are the articles printed in the January 23, 1976 issue.

other in Bukidnon) and a local church newspaper, *Ang Bandilyo*, “The Town Crier.”⁸ It was not long however before the church founded new organs for explicating government harassment. In December 1978, *Tribal Forum* was launched, this time by the Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos (ECTF), rallying the clergy around articles authored both anonymously and by international watchdogs. The titling of *Tribal Forum* indicated their more specific focus on the issues of tribal Filipinos with the aim of “closing the gap” between them and the rest of the Filipino people.⁹ To close off the gap, the editors of *Tribal Forum* insisted, “venues should be created whereby tribal issues are linked to national issues, and vice versa.”¹⁰ Though it was a venue for urgent resistance to the Marcos dictatorship, *Tribal Forum* was more than simply a publication for government abuses. As this chapter tells, *Tribal Forum* was a place for the expression of larger changes between Indigenous peoples, the church, and their collective relationship to the land, with the church affirming their role as protectors in both the ecological and cultural survival of Indigenous peoples.

Reformulating Indigenous peoples into a singular, sometimes nationally distinct cultural entity was both a goal and a by-product of the displacement struggles of the 1970s. The result, what I call a political economy of indigeneity, was an identity both imposed from outside and created from within, and in this chapter I investigate its emergence through the overlapping work of Panamin and the church. Furthermore, the recognition of Indigenous peoples as a prominent social group and cultural entity was a distinctly international affair for these organizations, and the material that each produced in their campaigns for protection (in the case of Panamin) and

⁸ The two radio stations were closed on November 18, 1976, one in Tagum, Davao, the other in Malaybalay, Bukidnon. *Ang Bandilyo* was also based in Malaybalay, where Bishop Francisco Claver’s parish was based.

⁹ “Closing the Gap.” *Tribal Forum*, Vol. 1, No. 1, November–December 1979.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

resistance (in the case of the church) is examined for both commonalities and discrepancies in the way they produced a political economy of indigeneity. Church advocacy was already associated with social justice in the 1930s, however by the 1960s and 1970s, Christian liberation theology encountered the way that ecological destruction threatened Indigenous peoples.¹¹ Indeed, both Panamin and the church recognized the ecological threat and founded campaigns of protectionism based on definitions for how Indigenous peoples in the countryside were ecologically entwined. It was Panamin's resettlement programs, an overt form of media in that they were also a communication campaign, that prominently forced these definitions into a larger conversation on indigeneity and its political economy.

Displacement and the forms of resistance to it have encountered the technical problem of how to name resettlement. Since resettlement took a variety of forms through a number of frameworks it is important to distinguish the ways in which it differed between contexts. Indeed, the comparisons that can be drawn between Strategic Hamlets, New Villages, and Panamin model settlements—each deployed to different ends in Vietnam, Malaya and the Philippines respectively—provide a definition for the militarization of rural spaces through architectural means. Though similar architectural strategies were employed in these hastily-built structures and enclosures, comparisons fall short when considering the populations and geopolitical terrain at hand. Chapter 2 of this dissertation discussed insurgency and resettlement within the scope of Kalinga resistance to the Chico River Dam Project, while in Chapter 3, I examined Agrovillage and

¹¹ William Holden and Dan Jacobson, "Ecclesial Opposition to Mining on Mindanao: Neoliberalism Encounters the Church of the Poor in the Land of Promise," *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 11 (June 1, 2007): 155–202. Cooper's entry for "liberation theology" in the 1996 *Dictionary of Christianity* defines it as: "Originating in the climate of extreme poverty and social injustice, it also opposes the oppression of the laity by a rigid sacramental system and the exploitation of the people by oppressive regimes, maintaining that the gospel of Christ is first and foremost concerned with the poor and oppressed." J. C. Cooper, *Dictionary of Christianity* (Routledge, 2013), 156.

Strategic Hamlets programs in South Vietnam. This chapter takes lessons from these previous chapters to investigate the political economy of indigeneity through the architectural logics of the Panamin reservation and the paper media that accompanied them. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are contextually interwoven through Panamin's recruitment of military veterans of the Montagnard Strategic Hamlet Program and PHILCAG to build "Socio-Economic Development Projects and Demonstration Settlements" for five groups in the Visayas in Mindanao, an early example of forced relocation cloaked in the language of benevolence. Outside of urban centers there is an emerging discussion of architecture's relationship to rural modernization, however, definitions for how architecture transformed tropical places in the latter half of the twentieth century remain limited.¹² In the antagonistic relationship between Panamin and the church, this chapter takes up the issue of indigeneity in the context of displacement and resettlement. The effects of ecological damage that Indigenous peoples foresaw and experienced during this era was due to their bearing the brunt of rural industrialization and extraction that these new capitalist relations with the countryside caused. Through media campaigns waged both by Panamin and the church, and the resistance movement the church facilitated, the chapter identifies how Indigenous peoples maneuvered between new technical terms—ancestral domain, hydroelectricity, agribusiness—however, far from passive victims, they created new terms to describe Indigenous landscapes and a resistance movement that defended them.

¹² Ayala Levin and Neta Feniger edited the "Modern Village" issue of *The Journal of Architecture* which includes a number of discussions of twentieth century architecture at the scale of village planning outside the west. Petros Phokaides, "Rural Networks and Planned Communities: Doxiadis Associates' Plans for Rural Settlements in Post-Independence Zambia," *The Journal of Architecture* 23, no. 3 (April 3, 2018), 471–97; Ayala Levin, "The Village within: An Alternative Genealogy of the Urban Village," *The Journal of Architecture* 23, no. 3 (April 3, 2018), 392–420. See also: Nicole Sackley, "The Village as Cold War Site: Experts, Development, and the History of Rural Reconstruction*," *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 3 (November 2011), 481–504.

The distribution of Indigenous peoples in the Philippines is well illustrated by the country's uneven topography, where more remote mountainous areas are more densely inhabited by a larger variety of tribal groupings, predominantly in northern Luzon and Mindanao. (fig 4.05) The Lumad (a Cebuano term meaning Indigenous) of Mindanao comprise a large number of different Indigenous peoples, with concentrations in the remote Bukidnon Plateau and the Tiruray Highlands of Cotabato. These regions, as diagram 4.01 illustrates, were the sites of rich resources. Gold, copper, tin and primary forest provided the impetus for mining and logging operations by subsidiaries of Elizalde & Co., and though businesses answered to the holding company's headquarters in Manila, extractive agribusinesses were distributed in line with this topographic pattern throughout the country. (fig 4.06) Mindanao, the largest southern island in the Philippine archipelago, is where the bulk of this chapter takes place. Mindanao has one of the largest densities of Indigenous populations in the Philippines, owing to a range of historical factors. Under Spanish colonial rule, the distribution of lands to friars focused on the flat and low-lying provinces in the Visayas and Luzon, where sugar cane and later rice were easy to cultivate. Mindanao was also the home to what the Spanish called "Moro," the Muslim inhabitants of Mindanao and the Sulu Sea. Several powerful sultanates prevailed in Mindanao until American rule, into which they were never fully absorbed, giving rise to the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Well into the twentieth century, much of Mindanao was inhabited by Filipinos who followed an entirely different set of beliefs (be they Indigenous or Muslim).¹³ For Manila urbanites, Mindanao appeared as a faraway frontier territory, remembered as the place where the martyred national hero José Rizal spent two years in exile prior to his execution by

¹³ Patricio N. Abinales, "The Good Imperialists? American Military Presence in the Southern Philippines in Historical Perspective," *Philippine Studies* 52, no. 2 (2004): 179–207.

Spanish troops in 1896.¹⁴ In the 1950s, it was the main site of relocation for Huk insurrectionists who were provided with farm-lots during the EDCOR program (discussed in Chapter 2). As such, the social, political and ecological makeup of the island is particular and quite different not only to the archipelago, but to Southeast Asia in general.

Two overlapping processes are at the core of this chapter. Panamin resettlement projects, which were later developed as “strategic hamlets” by the Armed Forces of the Philippines; and the church advocacy campaigns that decried their abuses in the name of Indigenous protection. At the center of this overlap was the question of land, and the political economy of indigeneity that emerged as a result of the intensity of campaigns that revolved around Indigenous life and the lands they occupied. In the Philippines, indigeneity carries specific political implications that were only legally defined as recently as 1997 with the passing of the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act, providing constitutional recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ rights.¹⁵ Before then, pamphlets and pastoral letters reoriented the image of tribal lands, with church publications such as *Signs of the Times* and *Tribal Forum* invigorating how people understood a landscape that was drastically changing. These publications provide the archive from which I draw a majority of the materials for this chapter. While such pamphlets were part of the “mosquito press,” the propaganda campaigns of Elizalde for Panamin and the “New Society” (Bagong Lipunan) of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos provide ample documentation of the government’s self-perception during this era.

¹⁴ At Dapitan, a small bay on the northern coast of the island.

¹⁵ Philippines Indigenous Peoples ICERD Shadow Report for the consolidated fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth Philippine ICERD periodic reports. Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination 73rd Session, 3rd to 28th of August 2009, 15.

Panamin: No Word for War

One day, before the first rice harvest, in the month of June, a big iron bird descended from the sky and landed near the village of Basao. When the motor of the iron bird stopped, a white man appeared. He was guarded by four uniformed soldiers. He spoke through an interpreter and this was what he said: “My name is Manuel Elizalde. I come as the representative of President Marcos. The dams are projects of our government. If you oppose the dams, you oppose the government. If you oppose the government, you will be arrested and put to jail.”¹⁶

This is how Ama Yag-ao recounts his story of meeting Manuel Elizalde, sometime in 1970–1971 in an oral history described to the priest and activist Manny Lahoz. Yag-ao was Kalinga, one of the many groups of Indigenous peoples in the Philippines threatened by government development projects during the Marcos dictatorship. Elizalde was more than a messenger and more than simply a representative of Marcos. He was the director of Panamin, the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities, an organization founded and initially self-funded in 1967 with the objective of providing aid and resources to tribal Filipinos.¹⁷

According to Elizalde, the idea for Panamin was begun on his honeymoon in Palawan in 1963. There, he and his wife discovered the “pitiful plight of the national minorities,” who, “driven to isolation by exploitation and neglect, were subsisting from day to day under the most deplorable conditions.”¹⁸ Heir of the fifth-wealthiest family in the Philippines, Elizalde was

¹⁶ Ama Yag-ao tells his story in: Manuel C. Lahoz. *Of Tyrants and Martyrs: A Political Memoir*. University of the Philippines Press. 2017: 172.

¹⁷ “Tribal Filipinos,” “national minorities,” “cultural minorities” and “Cultural Communities” are used interchangeably in most published material from the Philippines during the 1970s and 80s. I use this terminology when discussing Panamin and other organizations’ treatment of those groups, in all other cases I use the term Indigenous peoples or the specific name of the tribe or region in question. Indigenous (and Aboriginal) are identities, not adjectives, and are therefore capitalized.

¹⁸ Panamin Foundation, *PANAMIN Reports to the People* (Makati: The Foundation, 1970).

convinced he ought to do something, to “put into focus,” as one reporter put it “all those lectures in sociology he had listened to at Harvard in the nineteen-fifties.”¹⁹ (fig 4.09) He launched the “Presidential Advisor on National Minorities” as a non-profit, the name was misleading in that it was more Elizalde’s bid for government cabinet membership, a wish that would come true however in 1967 when he became “assistant” rather than “advisor” to the president in 1967. When Marcos declared martial law in 1972, Panamin was absorbed into the government as an official state-funded body, and government propaganda touted its agenda whose pilot projects included medical services and “model settlements” as a gift to Indigenous peoples in upland or remote regions around the country.²⁰ (fig 4.10, 4.11) At first these efforts were lauded, ostensibly selfless in approach, at its most basic Panamin provided a framework through which the government could gain better purview over the populations of otherwise remote places. Panamin tethered relocation to medical access and protection, and in the process assumed the role of patron, and sole redistributor of “tribal wares.” Allocated prime space in magazines and carefully curated, laudatory articles in mainstream presses, Panamin were the arbiters of the hut, the weave, and the gong were, through Panamin’s aggressive schemes, transformed into cultural commodities that could be made publicly available and readily exchangeable on the market (specifically, the Nayong Pilipino museum and theme park discussed in chapter 5). Tribal

¹⁹ Alden Whitman. “Philippine Tribes Struggle to Survive.” *The New York Times*, August 1970, 1, 14.

²⁰ In 1975 the Commission on National Integration (CNI) who had previously been in charge of integrating the country’s Indigenous peoples into the mainstream public was replaced by Panamin. Elizalde had been a cabinet member as Presidential Advisor since 1968, though Panamin was until 1975 a private non-profit foundation. ICL Research Team. The “Muslim problem” which by the mid-1970s was a full-scale rebellion waged by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Mindanao and Sulu was put in the hands of the Southern Philippine Development Authority, while Panamin was to be in charge of all non-Muslim Indigenous peoples under PD 719. Marcos, Ferdinand and Ileana Maramag, *To Move a Nation to Progress: Achievements of President Ferdinand E. Marcos* (Manila: Biblio-Filipino, 1970): 55.

fungibility—exchangeable, disposable—was the economic rubric around the kind of integration on which Panamin strategies hinged.

To acquire the position of sole arbiter of Indigenous affairs, Elizalde took advantage of his family's ownership of three of the main media outlets in the country, reporters and journalists were frequently a fixture on Panamin's missions.²¹ In its early days, Panamin medical missions enjoyed front-page treatment in international publications like *The New York Times*, and profiles in *Life*, *Esquire* and *National Geographic*. The resulting articles took on tones both concerned and patronizing. "Tribal minorities" noted a *New York Times* reporter along for a Panamin excursion in 1970, were "roughly similar to that of the American Indians," however, "there is an important difference in the Philippines [...] the tribal peoples are related by language and history, and perhaps by blood, to those who are battling them."²² These trips were carefully curated by Panamin officials, however, there were still hiccups. A telling incident occurred—and an early indication of what was really happening—when two American journalists visited Elizalde with Charles Lindbergh (one of several celebrities on the board of Panamin).²³ On a night truck ride back to a Panamin Agta resettlement site, their convoy was held up by armed men in jeeps. After some tense conversation, the trucks were allowed to continue their journey.

²¹ Primitivo Mijares writes in *Conjugal Dictatorship* that "to own and operate a tri-media (newspaper, radio and TV chain) establishment became a consuming ambition of the wealthy and the powerful who have learned their lessons from [...] the Elizaldes. 144.

²² During the same visit, the First Lady Imelda Marcos said chidingly of that era in American history, "if you hadn't imported Negroes to do your work and had used the Indians instead, that wouldn't have happened to the Indians."

"Travels with Charlie: A few recent glimpses of our hero, who is still out there working for God, country and the cultural minorities." Edgar Needham. *Esquire Magazine*, March 1971, 91. Alden Whitman, "Philippine Tribes Struggle to Survive," *The New York Times*, August 13, 1970, sec. Archives, 1.

²³ in Edgar Needham and Alden Whitman, *New York Times* and *Esquire*

One of the journalists, Edgar Needham, writing of the incident in *Esquire Magazine* in March 1971, described how,

on the remainder of the drive back, Elizalde kept referring to the “ambush” and how it was the second time “that guy” had tried to get him. That guy was presumably a local politician who resented anyone like us who protected cultural minorities which, in the Philippines, is tantamount to protecting mineral-rich land often used in political payoffs to faithful constituents.²⁴

The incident begs the question: if Panamin was a front for freeing up mineral-rich ancestral lands, was Panamin also a legal front for providing those lands to subsidiaries of the Elizalde empire, rather than the “faithful constituents” of the Philippine political sphere? Landgrabbers were met with a more sophisticated form of land-grabbing. In the process, resettlement was not simply a documented political act (with front page stories on the *New York Times*) but a strategic process for settling political legal disputes, titling ancestral lands directly to the Philippine government’s Marcos cronies.

It is not a long shot. “One of the world’s master hoaxers,” Elizalde was acutely aware of the importance of public relations. Much of Panamin’s work is overshadowed by the Tasaday hoax, a story that broke in 1971 when Elizalde claimed to have discovered a “stone-age tribe,” so cut off from civilization that they had no word for war.²⁵ In reality the Tasaday were paid participants playing for select international cameras, but at the time, incredulity became genuine

²⁴ Needham, *Esquire*, 1971, 54.

²⁵ John Nance, *The Gentle Tasaday: A Stone Age People in the Philippine Rain Forest* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975); Aloysius Ma. L. Cañete, “TASADAYSPEAK: ELIZALDE, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND THE POLITICS OF SPEAKING,” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 37, no. 1 (2009): 35–54; David Hyndman, “Indigenous Representation of the T’boli and the Tasaday Lost Tribe Controversy in Postcolonial Philippines: Interpreting the Eroticised, Effeminising Gaze in National Geographic,” *Social Identities* 8, no. 1 (2002): 45–66; “The Gentle Tasaday Are Merely a Persistent Hoax,” *The New York Times*, January 9, 1988, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/01/09/opinion/1-the-gentle-tasaday-are-merely-a-persistent-hoax-899288.html>; rghwd46gf, *Nova: The Lost Tribe - Full 1993 Tasaday Documentary*, accessed September 4, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QD4tAGAkdw>.

interest, and the story was chalked up as another of so many stories of “Philippine Tribes,” of which the international reading public were now well acquainted. When the Tasaday story was revealed as a hoax by the Swiss journalist Oswald Iten in 1986, it was merely a confirmation for what many were already aware: another exploited Indigenous group doing whatever Elizalde asked of them in exchange for money and food. (fig 4.12–4.13) The larger truth, obscured by the stories, was that Elizalde had territorial interests that reflected that of the holding company’s many shareholders. Iten wrote that the Elizalde family’s economic interests “dovetailed nicely with the activities of its chief member as the head of Panamin.”

In government-declared native reservations (of which there were more than a dozen in South Cotabato alone) Panamin’s permission was required before any mining, timber cutting or land sales be carried out. This placed enormous political power in the hands of whoever was appointed master over the Philippines’ 4.5 million tribesmen.²⁶

At the time, the Mayor of South Cotabato Province claimed that Elizalde was establishing a “Tasaday Reserve” as a front for the control of prospective mining in the area, earning Panamin the nickname “Panamines.”²⁷ The manipulation of T’boli and Manobo peoples who were asked to pose as Tasaday began in 1971 (when Elizalde was making a bid for the senate), a pattern that would become consistent with Panamin efforts to coerce and sometimes force a pseudo-primitivism on reservations.²⁸ The transferal of tribal groups to conveniently accessible community centers in the name of charity only made the process of expropriation more efficient.²⁹

²⁶ Oswald Iten. “A Stone Age Swindle.” *Swiss Review of World Affairs*, June 1986, 14–19.

²⁷ This was Jose Sison Sr. of Surallah. Hyndman and Duhaylungsod, 43.

²⁸ Hyndman and Duhaylungsod, 46.

²⁹ In October 1987 an inquiry by the Philippine House of Representatives was launched into whether manipulative activity was performed by Panamin in the coercion of Manobo and T’boli peoples to pose as stone-age cave dwellers, in particular the use of public funds for such exploitation: “The congressional committee investigated whether Elizalde used his PANAMIN post to abuse indigenous people, especially women, to organize armed

The Tasaday hoax, more than anything else, revealed Elizalde's talent for large-scale manipulation at the expense of Indigenous livelihoods. Indeed, the paid participants were T'boli and Manobo peoples at the fringe of civilization. As anthropologists David Hyndman and Levita Duhaylungsod described it in 1989, "the Tasaday story is a hoax, but the Indigenous people involved are real."³⁰ It was an example of Panamin pushing the limits of a nascent anthropological gaze that compressed time into space travelled: the further away from the city, the deeper into the forest one went, the further back in time.³¹ Elizalde and Panamin were hardly the only arbiters of a telescopic gaze of time-traveling paternalism, however the way that their particular brand of chronopolitics was connected to agribusiness reveal it in the service of a rural modernization like no other.

Early Panamin experiments in resettlement

Panamin resettlement centers were preceded by "Socio-Economic Development Projects and Demonstration Settlements" that would prove Panamin's ability to plan and operate these "centers for social uplift." *Panamin Reports to the People*, a book of promotional materials describing and promoting Panamin's work by 1970, describes five demonstration settlements for the Ati, Batak (in the Visayas) and Samal, T'boli and Mansaka peoples (in Mindanao). (figs

vigilantes, and to amass a huge personal fortune from public funds, donations from foundations and institutions abroad, and from mining ventures in closed reservations for indigenous peoples." Hyndman and Duhaylungsod, 50

³⁰ David Hyndman and Levita Duhaylungsod, "The Development Saga of the Tasaday: Gentle Yesterday, Hoax Today, Exploited Forever?," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 22, no. 4 (December 1, 1990), 40.

³¹ This concept is elaborated in Dan Hicks's *The Brutish Museums* which builds on the concept from Johannes Fabian's *Time and Other*. Hicks writes, "the early modern practice of the nascent anthropological gaze, which collapsed space into time so that it appeared that the further from the metropolis the European travelled, the further back in time they went, until reaching the Stone Age in Tasmania, or Tierra del Fuego, etc." Johannes Fabian and Matti Bunzl, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, unknown edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto Press, 2020), 180.

4.14–4.16) A “seemingly impossible task that Panamin doggedly pursues—resettling landless minority tribes, giving each family sizeable home and farm lots; building schools, clinics, roads on their settlements.”³² The 1967 Ati Settlement Project was built on land leased from the Arroyo family, of the BISCOM sugar dynasty, one of the wealthiest families in the Philippines and long-time business associates of the Elizalde family. The settlement appeared to take its name after similar dynastic land-leasing, named after Marikudo, a chieftain who sold the island of Panay to Bornean chieftains in folklore. It allocated 32 families to 2.5-hectare farm lots where the head of each family was issued a “certificate of possession” that would allow them to “possess and cultivate the farm lot free of charge” for the duration of the lease.³³ According to *Panamin Reports to the People*,

Initial activities were focused on the development of the Barrio Center under the guidance of a PANAMIN architect. Here, each Ati family built their own house in accordance with an approved building plan. PANAMIN furnished approximately one half of the materials—roofing, walling, and flooring—for each dwelling. Labor was provided by the Ati. Each home lot also has a piggery, poultry, and vegetable garden, the vegetables produced being used not only for home consumption but for sale to provide each family with a subsidiary income.³⁴

The Ati traditionally practiced shifting cultivation, therefore in addition to being expected to construct their own homes, were expected to adopt entirely new agricultural methods along with their new farm lots. The expectation that groups like the Ati would be able to maintain some aspects of tradition while assimilating to new lifestyles was built-in to the Panamin understanding of temporality. Just as Panamin became the arbiter of land and certificates of

³² Panamin Foundation, *PANAMIN Reports to the People* (Makati: The Foundation, 1970), 4.

³³ Sitio Marikudo is in Isabela, Negros Occidental (Western Visayas). Today the School of Living Tradition (SLT) is located there. Nanette Guadalquiver, “IPs in Western Visayas Seek to Preserve Cultural Heritage,” accessed February 16, 2021, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1082899>.

³⁴ *Panamin Reports to the People*, 15–16.

possession, they also became the mediator on which aspects of modern and primitive were deemed acceptable, aspects that they alone were in charge of reconciling. “The problem,” Panamin thought, was “one of identification with the rest of the citizenry, of development of skills and knowledge which will permit them to cope with the modern social and economic environment, and to participate in the exercise of citizenship.”³⁵ Demonstration settlements thus became time capsules, places in which to learn how to cope with modern socio-economic environments, a social schooling site for practicing the exercise of citizenship. Through this politicization of time and space, Panamin was the divine mediator, constructing a place for itself as an agency with agency through the actual construction of resettlement centers. Through this act, Panamin alone was able to legitimate difference, yet also the only one in a position to resolve it.³⁶

A mixture of curiosity and suspicion permeated official discourse on “cultural minorities,” who lived, according to Marcos propaganda, in “inaccessible mountainous regions, untouched by the march of civilization.”³⁷ A 1970 Imelda Marcos publication, *To Move a Nation to Progress* (ghostwritten by Ileana Maramag) describes early Panamin reservations:

Firm in the belief that these minority groups can contribute to our national development and can become more productive citizens, President Marcos created the Office of Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (Panamin) to implement the Administration’s various programs for their upliftment. [...] The pilot projects of Panamin include agricultural settlement, residential settlement and reclamation, medical

³⁵ Ibid, D.

³⁶ Archaeologist Dan Hicks uses the term “chronopolitics” in the context of the Benin Bronzes, it “involved more than being denied a place in the contemporary world [...] there was a double process of material change that was effected through which whole cultures really were stripped of their technologies, had their living landscapes transformed into ruins and had these moments of violence extended across time, memorialized through the technology of the anthropology museum.” Dan Hicks, *The British Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto Press, 2020), 180.

³⁷ Ileana Maramag, *To Move a Nation to Progress: Achievements of President Ferdinand E. Marcos* (Manila: Biblio-Filipino, 1970).

services and relief, floating and mobile clinic, water supply, fishing and fish conservation, education and training [...] and folk arts and crafts.³⁸

These early demonstration settlements impacted all aspects of life, a holistic social structure that placed Panamin at the center of operations. At these settlements, Panamin paternalism concerned itself with the status of citizenship through the agricultural skills it deemed necessary.

The Batak, also located in the Visayas, were provided a demonstration settlement for thirty families with land on which lowland “miracle rice,” could be grown. Just like the Ati, the Batak were provided some building materials to begin with, while a project community center would include a school building and a multi-purpose building housing a clinic, canteen, and cooperative. The Batak Center would form a demonstration project “radiating agricultural know-how,” with “modern sanitation and medical practices” that were expected to affect neighboring areas inhabited by the Batak.³⁹ The emphasis on agriculture continued in Mindanao, where two centers had already progressed further along.

A question of materials

Rows of thatched houses, some still a framework of bamboo under construction, many are already complete, with their distinctive steeply pitched thatch roofs tipping up at each end, spread out across a flat plain surrounded by steep foothills on all sides. (fig 4.17) The Panamin resettlement site of Barrio T’boli was one of the largest in 1973, sited on 5,224 hectares. The project was begun with 30 families being provided medical assistance in 1968, a time when, according to Panamin, “the T’boli were harassed people reeling under pressure from lawless

³⁸ Maramag, 55.

³⁹ *Panamin Reports to the People*, 16.

elements,” by 1973, the population had risen to 300 families.⁴⁰ Panamin’s 1973 booklet *Protecting Man’s Right to Choice* provides a rough sense of the implementation of architecture and planning at this settlement. A propaganda publication, the first twelve pages were devoted to documenting the Tasaday, while the remainder described Panamin’s resettlement centers of which Barrio T’boli takes up multiple double-page spreads with panoramic photographs. A typical Panamin “socio-economic project,” Barrio T’boli was built on a self-help basis, “with Panamin guidance and assistance,” and each family was allocated three hectares of agricultural land.⁴¹ Since the project was self-help it is difficult to know how much assistance Panamin provided with construction guidance. Other self-help projects, such as the aforementioned Ati settlement, were built with specific constraints, with Panamin providing half of the building materials and construction happening under guidance of a Panamin architect. Panamin remained close at hand at Barrio T’boli, where a guest house was built for their administrative and research staff, and “material aid is kept to the minimum. However, great pains were taken in providing motivation and in development of strong and responsible leaders among the people.”⁴² Despite the houses conforming to traditional typologies, they were planned according to a grid layout along wide roads, to connect the project with surrounding farmlands, inadvertently increasing the T’boli’s reliance on a fixed residence and the fixed location of farmlands. (figs 4.17, 4.18)

In the photograph of Barrio T’boli a museum can be seen sitting perched on a hill in the distance. Panamin’s approach to traditional crafts was twofold. On one hand, Panamin maintained “a marketing staff to help the minorities in developing and selling their handicrafts as

⁴⁰ Panamin: *Protecting Man’s Right to Choice*, 21.

⁴¹ Panamin: *Protecting Man’s Right to Choice*, 20–22.

⁴² Panamin: *Protecting Man’s Right to Choice*, 21.

part of livelihood assistance,” encouraging the production of crafts—woven baskets, brass gongs, beads and textiles—that could be re-sold either at museums at Panamin sites like the one at Barrio T’boli, or at the Nayong Pilipino museum in Manila. This museum is discussed in more detail in chapter 5, however, what is noteworthy here was the way that these two approaches, a marketing staff and an outlet in Manila transformed Indigenous cultural traditions into commodities for resale.⁴³ (figs 4.18) At Panamin’s resettlement centers the arc of modernity reached its zenith with the repackaging of Indigenous culture. Indeed, the rate at which Panamin was opening its “socio-economic projects” was too fast for their own publishing house, opening an additional six reservations to the existing fifteen as the publication was being printed in 1973, listed in an addendum.⁴⁴

One of the furthest progressed centers was the “Mansaka Regional Socio-Economic Demonstration Center.” (figs 4.19, 4.21, 4.22) The Mansaka were resettled within the lease of Masara Mines on a reservation for 600 families in the Hijo Valley. The emphasis on a shift in agricultural relations was clearly key to Panamin’s efforts, whether public outreach and propaganda, or actual work for Indigenous peoples. Miracle rice was a recently engineered phenomenon, the IR8 variety of rice, developed at the International Rice Research Institute at Los Baños southeast of Manila, was a high-yield cross breed rice celebrated as a “miracle of modernization.”⁴⁵ On a five-hectare Mansaka demonstration farm, “miracle rice and highly marketable vegetables are being raised” as part of an effort to “produce all of the necessary seeds for agricultural development throughout the Hijo Valley.” The carefully curated hand of

⁴³ *Panamin: Protecting Man’s Right to Choice*, 32.

⁴⁴ *Panamin: Protecting Man’s Right to Choice*, 20.

⁴⁵ Nick Cullather, “Miracles of Modernization: The Green Revolution and the Apotheosis of Technology,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 2 (April 1, 2004): 227–54.

Panamin, once again, presented the possibility for “learning improved agricultural techniques under the supervision of agricultural staff.”⁴⁶ While Indigenous peoples, under the shepherding of Panamin were introduced (and coerced) into relocation and adopting new methods of agriculture, they lost traditional shifting cultivation methods of farming, discussed in the next section. Demonstration settlements therefore sat at the intersection of changes in land tenure, farming, and the new interpersonal living arrangements they created.

Comparing the Panamin resettlement sites for the Ati, Batak, T’boli and Mansaka reveals a similar set of componentry: dwellings appeared to be traditionally built, and thus did not obviously appear as resettlement sites; grid layouts that facilitated car and truck transit between plots; single fixed dwellings for each family, (instead of the multiple interchangeable dwellings that those who practiced shifting cultivation were used to in former villages); and finally urban amenities like schools, medical centers, museums. The Panamin double bind, that “they be given security in tenure of a place from which they cannot legally be driven away by landgrabbers or terrorists,” meant fixity and a static existence within the government’s reach.⁴⁷ Freedom from landgrabbers, or freedom to conformity? With Panamin resettlement sites, we are confronted with the theoretical problematic that these sites involved both important amenities, such as schools, medical attention and clean water, combined with a removal and replacement scheme. Could such amenities have been provided without displacement occurring? Not according to Panamin. Bearing similarities to the strategic hamlets propaganda material in chapter 3, in which villagers were lured to move into hamlets with the promise of schools for their children and

⁴⁶ *Panamin Reports to the People*, 17.

⁴⁷ *Panamin: Protecting Man’s Right to Choice*, 20.

better agricultural tools, Panamin's centers put to work a similar message of freedom through integration, leaving ancestral lands for new lives and new lifestyles.

Farming, forests and shifting cultivation

Shifting cultivation (swidden farming, called *kaingin* in the Philippines) is small-scale crop rotation, alternating between fired and cut-back clearings usually on hillsides. Clearings are planted during the growing season with a variety of crops and vegetables, then leaving the plot fallow for a number of years. The practice preserves soil fertility and the regeneration of fauna, if a family is cultivating a plot, several more lie fallow. Chapter 2 considered how the technology of terraced rice paddies was a hydrographic landscape architecture defined by the anthropologist Harold C. Conklin as an environmentally intricate process. Conklin also investigated shifting cultivation in Mindoro, an island east of Luzon where he spent several years between 1943 and 1960 with the Hanunóo. He described how shifting cultivation “is often categorically condemned as primitive, wasteful or illegal, with little or no regard for such pertinent local variables as population density, available land area, climate, or native agricultural knowledge.”⁴⁸ “By careful field rotation and considerable agricultural skill,” wrote Conklin, “the assiduous Hanunóo farmer cultivate a surprising number of food and other economic plants in their hillside swiddens.”⁴⁹ These observations went against the widely held assumptions that shifting cultivation was detrimental to the ecology of forested landscapes. By the early 1980s, observers were referring to Indigenous Filipinos as “ecosystem people,” while Conklin and others had scientifically proved

⁴⁸ Harold C. Conklin, “Section of Anthropology: An Ethnoecological Approach to Shifting Agriculture*,” *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences* 17, no. 2 Series II (1954): 133.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

that shifting cultivation was attuned to the landscape, a “traditional, year-round, community-wide, largely self-contained, and ritually sanctioned, way of life.”⁵⁰ Despite this research, however, the practice would continue to be condemned well into the 1980s by national government and international organizations. Detractors viewed kaingin as disturbing the forest, which was perceived as a continuous and cohesive entity rather than one of changing conditions. Indeed, this view of forests played into a perspective that it was the government’s role to take care of forest management, and emphasized civilizational mismanagement as a problem for governments tackle (such as mass deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon or the hardwood forests of Sarawak).

Even once various experts had confirmed that forest dwellers were not “ecological vandals,” those that lived in forests or near them continued to be seen as a nuisance, where forest management and social forestry were conveyed in a light that put the management of trees in the hands of experts. Writing in 1983, historian Filomeno Aguilar described how,

indigenous technologies, evolved particularly by the so-called cultural minorities, which prove that the agricultural practices of integral swiddeners are compatible with the upland ecosystem. Fire control measures, soil conservation and revitalization techniques, and the tendency to adopt polycultural production systems are indeed widespread.⁵¹

⁵⁰ In the context of Meratus Dyaks in Indonesia Anna Tsing has shown how shifting cultivation is a deeply imbued part of social life, “one of the most important ways in which the forest gains a history is through the cutting and regrowth that accompanies shifting cultivation. As people clear new fields, they do not forget the old ones.” In this regard, Filomeno Aguilar wrote in 1983 that the genre of “Social Forestry” was changing how the government viewed forest occupants: “In trying to determine responsibility for the shrinking forest, it has been commonplace to single out forest occupants as the major culprits [...] The most pervasive yet subtle cause for the view that holds uplanders culpable is the ethnocentric bias that westernized lowlanders hold against swiddening, a form of agriculture which colonial thinking has pictured as primitive and destructive. This is complemented by the widespread notion that uplanders are backward, illiterate and uncivilized, not having the scientific know-how for the optimum utilization and efficient conservation of forest resources. Filomeno V. Aguilar, “The Task Ahead: Developing the Uplands Through Social Forestry,” *Philippine Studies* 31, no. 4 (1983): 411; Conklin, 1957; Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen*, 164; Navin Rai, *From Forest to Field: A Study of Philippine Negrito Foragers in Transition*. PhD Dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1982.

⁵¹ Aguilar, “The Task Ahead,” 414.

For Aguilar, it was the country's model of dependent capitalist development, anchored on exportable commodities that provided favorable terms to extractive industries and foreign interests—foreigners could enjoy the same rights as Filipino citizens if they could invest \$200,000—that meant upland peasants were a “nuisance and a competitor for upland space and resources,” it was for this reason that they were blamed for highland denudation.⁵²

International agencies confirmed a perception of kaingin as an inconvenience. The Food and Agriculture Organization and UNFPA's “Population/Environment Planning for Communities Practicing Shifting Cultivation” was an Asian regional project begun in January 1979.⁵³ Their Phase I report in the Philippines, *Kaingineros: The Boat People of Philippine Forestry*, literally compared people that practiced shifting cultivation, “kaingineros,” to refugees, the so-called “boat people,” of the war in Vietnam, rendering the forest a refuge sought by the destitute:

Since he [the farmer] works against nature by clearing and cultivating steep forest lands which are, normally, not suitable for this type of cultivation, he has to move from one place to another, destroying the forest wealth of the country. Naturally, his intention is not to destroy the forest as such, but he is forced to do so to make a living.⁵⁴

The paternal attitude of the project report, of working “against nature,” echoes the perspectives of former colonial administrators from over a century earlier. In 1874, the Spanish colonial

⁵² In 1979 the Bureau of Forest Development claimed that swidden accounted for more than half of forest denudation in the Philippines, amounting to 100,000 square kilometers. The report failed to mention that logging concessions could remove up to 3,000 trees a day. Aguilar, 412; Rene R. Agbayani, “‘Kaingin’ & Govt. Policy: Injustice Against Man.” *Tribal Forum*, ECTF, 1984, 26–27; *Swidden Cultivation in Asia*, Volume II, UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok, 1983.

⁵³ With participation from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization (of the United Nations).

⁵⁴ *Kaingineros: The Boat People of Philippine Forestry*. Population/Environment Planning for Communities Practicing Shifting Cultivation. National Task Force, Population Center Foundation, Makati, Metro Manila, May 1980: 37. (fig 4.25)

government banned swidden in forest lands, with a Royal Decree imposing fines on those who practiced it. Rather than having an impact on farming, the government intended to curtail freedom of movement and make it easier for the government to collect taxes.⁵⁵ State perceptions of kaingin continued with the US administration, in 1914, the colonist Dean C. Worcester wrote that kaingin cultivation “is carried out in a haphazard way, but is soon abandoned when a jungle growth of grass, weeds and seedling trees begins to spring up.”⁵⁶ These approaches, lacking insight in long-term cultivation patterns, reflect more the distance between metropolitan administrators and their perspectives of those they oversaw in the remote parts of the country.

It was therefore as part of this logic that Panamin’s resettlement centers were places to re-train Indigenous peoples in modernizing agricultural methods. Panamin, in an unknowing impersonation of Worcester, followed suit in their *Reports to the People*, inveighing against Indigenous peoples’ “insignificant” contribution to the gross national product since “most of their economies are still based on slash-and-burn agriculture.”⁵⁷ “It is true that minority peoples are unprepared to either compete for land or utilize it properly,” describes the report,

To remedy this, we suggest that legal procedures be established whereby traditional lands of minority peoples may be held in trust by an agency created for such purpose, the land to be released to each family when the family head has qualified for land ownership. Qualification would include literacy and agro-economic, community development and citizenship training.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Rene R. Agbayani, “‘Kaingin’ & Govt. Policy: Injustice Against Man.” *Tribal Forum*, ECTF, 1984, 25. (fig 4.26)

⁵⁶ The classic example of imposing particular standards of economic forestry on the Philippines comes from Dean C. Worcester’s *The Philippines Past and Present*, published in 1914. Worcester writes that “A large majority of the Philippines will not fight, for any length of time, the tropical weeds and grasses which invade their cultivated fields, and rather than attempt to do so prefer to clear forest lands, slaughtering the trees indiscriminately and burning them where they fall. An area so cleared is known as a *caingin* [...] Cultivation is carried on in a haphazard way, but is soon abandoned when a jungle growth of grass, weeds and seedling trees begins to spring up.” *The Philippines, Past and Present ... With 128 Plates*. (2 vol. Mills & Boon: London; Norwood, Mass. [printed, 1914], 848.

⁵⁷ *Panamin Reports to the People*, C.

⁵⁸ *Panamin Reports to the People*, D

Reserved for those who are “qualified,” citizenship is granted to those who pass the test. For “progress with pride” to take place, as the Panamin logo advertised, selfhood itself was put in question. It is a double bind not dissimilar to that discussed by Dipesh Chakrabarty in the context of Indian history, of a “modernizing elite and the yet-to-be modernized peasantry” where the most desirable form of political community is the “universal” nation state.⁵⁹ Those who are granted permission to enter the gates of modernity first must prove their ability to master new tools. The wide contrasts between the elite and the masses depicted between Manila and the countryside found a meeting place at the resettlement center, which physicalized economic and political citizenship. Economic citizenship in that new methods of farming and trade were stipulated as part of the deal, political citizenship because of the change in land relations the centers enforced.

The oligarch’s playbook

A discussion of this process would be more straightforward if it were to fall into the regulated strictures of the colonizer-colonized dichotomy, a distant power carrying out the role of global caretaker (as was the case in chapter 1). However, a genealogy of the Elizalde family and their web of connections would trace a full-blood Spanish family of Filipino citizenship back to the late seventeenth century. Indeed, Elizalde’s family (like the Zobels, Aranetas and Ayalas) was Basque, with an ancestry whose inheritance came from Ynchausti y Compañía, a holding company that made its fortune from the sugar trade, with links back to the Real Compañía de

⁵⁹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 40.

Filipinas in 1785.⁶⁰ (fig 4.27) In this light, it is particularly curious that Manuel Elizalde enthusiastically took on the role of cultural guardian for his adopted country. By the 1960s, the Elizaldes owned over eighteen business entities involving gold, silver, copper and iron mines, sugar plantations, insurance, shipping, sugar centrals, and mass-media (radio broadcasting and TV, with chains of radio stations all over the country).⁶¹ In 1963 they employed no fewer than 20,000 people whose dependents numbered 100,000.⁶² Their family had long ties to government, during the Quirino administration Joaquin M. Elizalde was a Cabinet member. Indeed, Dante Simbulan notes in his 1965 study of the Philippine oligarchy that the old Basque Spanish families and mestizos tended to retain their exclusivity by inter-marrying, becoming “self-perpetuating minorities within the elite sub-society.”⁶³ One of the board members of Panamin was Jaime Zobel de Ayala, who as a member of the Ayala family is a stockholder in the Ayala Corporation, one of the largest concentrations of local capital and vehicle for foreign investment in the Philippine economy.⁶⁴

These families, with large portions of their wealth coming from cash-crops in the Visayas and expanding their agribusiness ventures south into Mindanao meant an exacerbated spatial difference where the provinces remained a zone of extraction while wealth was accumulated in Manila. Simbulan describes Manila as “the single metropolis that dominates the entire country,” not dissimilar to other urban-rural configurations except that “the apparent growth and

⁶⁰ Marciano R. De Borja, *Basques in the Philippines* (University of Nevada Press, 2012).

⁶¹ Dante C Simbulan, “A Study of the Socio-Economic Elite in Philippine Politics and Government 1946-1963” (1966), 107. See also Benedict Anderson, *Cacique Democracy in the Philippines*.

⁶² “On the Economic Side” *Philippines Free Press*. February 2, 1963, 12.

⁶³ Simbulan, 110.

⁶⁴ Anti-Slavery Society, 122.

modernity” was not shared by the rest of the country. While Manila remained the financial, commercial, manufacturing and cultural center of the archipelago,

Much of the countryside is still characterized by an antiquated kind of life not very different from the kind which the Spanish conquistadores found when they first set foot on these Islands. One still finds the peasant in his world of the nipa shack, the wooden plow and the carabao. Indeed, Manila and the countryside seem to depict the wide contrasts between the elite and the masses.⁶⁵

If full control over the countryside was already mediated by the landowning classes seated in Manila, there was yet more control to be had over the particularities of citizenship at the periphery.

In this way, with Panamin as sole legal trustee and proprietor of Indigenous peoples, the Elizalde holding company was launched into an ethereal realm of ownership, “holding” and releasing in accordance with its own terms of what constituted citizenship. Recognizing the distinction between ancestral domain and industries that mined those territories (mining, logging, plantations), Panamin would become the ultimate interlocutor in any affairs related to this domain. “The basic problem is land,” Elizalde is quoted as saying in a front-page *New York Times* article, “Philippine Tribes Struggle to Survive,” published in August 1970. The article took in Panamin’s demonstration settlements (and the aforementioned ambush), where the “chief ingredients” of rural discontent was attributed to land, which according to the report “in the quantity and quality the tribesmen insist they need, is not available.”⁶⁶ (fig 4.09) The reporters followed Elizalde around as guide to the five initial Panamin settlements, and provides a window into Elizalde’s awareness of the status of Indigenous peoples in relation to the rest of the country and its history:

⁶⁵ Simbulan, 112.

⁶⁶ Alden Whitman. “Philippine Tribes Struggle to Survive.” *The New York Times*, August 1970, 1, 14.

For Mr. Elizalde and others, the minorities are also victims of a neocolonial chauvinism. “The Filipino Christian world,” he says “much like its so-called colonial masters of the past, has assumed the role of ‘civilizing’ and converting our minority brothers into modern Western Filipinos.”⁶⁷

Conscious of the forces of neocolonialism at hand, Elizalde also leaves a clue as to where the discourse of protection would take Panamin, hinting at the “Christian world” that, Elizalde alleges, assumed the role of conversion to civilization. Through Panamin’s recognition of ethnic diversity, however, Indigenous peoples would no longer be converted or civilized. Rather, they would fit into the historical concomitants of capitalism and racism. Racial capitalism, for Cedric Robinson, lies in the recognition of difference to organize a polity. “As the executors of an expansionist world system,” in this case the system of agribusiness, “capitalists required racism in order to police and rationalize the exploitation of workers.”⁶⁸ The concept of rationalization was crucial to determining how Indigenous peoples could fit into the New Society, and Panamin had invented mechanisms that would simplify categorization. Demonstration settlement centers thus plotted out the coordinates of racial capitalism: integration within the larger capitalist system, allotted in terms of tribal group and geographic convenience and enforced by military personnel.

“Some enchanted wood”: mines and militias

Rather than appointing social workers or experts in tribal affairs, the number two and three officials of Panamin were military men with experience in Vietnam working under the CIA’s Montagnard program.⁶⁹ As discussed in chapter 3, the Montagnard program recruited

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Cedric J. Robinson, “Oliver Cromwell Cox and the Historiography of the West,” *Cultural Critique*, 17 (1990), 12.

⁶⁹ Rocamora, *Southeast Asia Chronicle* no. 67

Indigenous peoples living on the mountainous, jungle border of Laos and Vietnam to assist in counterinsurgent guerrilla warfare, mainly for their practical knowledge of the countryside.⁷⁰

Significant to Panamin and its relationship to the military was the speed at which newly established reservations for “tribal minorities” became paramilitary operations, indeed, among the first batch of new hires for Panamin were veterans of the PHILCAG program in Vietnam.⁷¹

While the office staff of Panamin in 1969 included at least six anthropologists and museum directors, they would later withdraw after they learned of the gap between stated objectives and practice in the field.⁷²

In a 1971 article in *National Geographic*, “Help for Philippine Tribes in Trouble,” two journalists accompanied Elizalde on helicopter outreach missions in Mindanao, taking in both Panamin resettlement sites and the original forest villages, which Senior editor Kenneth Macleish describes as follows,

Appropriately, Dean [Conger] and I first met Secretary Elizalde in a jungle so primeval, among a people so unadulterated, that we might have traveled to them by time machine rather than by helicopter. [...] I had felt at once the charm of this curious tree dwelling, so high and safe and sheltering, filled with the magic of a child’s secret hiding place in some enchanted wood. But now I began to take stock of its ingenious design. A single thatch-roofed platform served as the main chamber. Woven walls kept people in without rising to the roof to cut off the flow of air. Low platforms at one end and along both sides were marked off by dividers into family areas—the word “room” would not apply, for no screen or hanging separated one section from another.⁷³

⁷⁰ Laleh Khalili identifies the way in which using preexisting Indigenous systems creates legitimacy for the actions of the occupying power, and the way that Indigenous social organization (including tribal and kinship relationships) determines the structure of the insurgency. Laleh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (Stanford University Press, 2012), 205.

⁷¹ ICL Research Team, 18.

⁷² ICL Research Team, 60.

⁷³ MacLeish, Kenneth. “Help for Philippine Tribes in Trouble.” *National Geographic*. Vol. 140, No. 2. August 1971, 228–230.

The swashbuckling account, ricocheting between paternalist and patronizing tones, like the experience of the *New York Times* journalists a year prior, was a choreographed event in which the interpreters and guides were all Elizalde's men.⁷⁴ In Mindanao, they met the Director of Field Operations for Panamin, Antonio Perpetua, who described a settlement for the Higaonon. (fig 4.22) At the settlement, "we will build a center here to offer medical care, education, agricultural advice."

The President has given the Higaonons 44,500 acres, which will provide 2,000 families with about 22 acres each. It's a start. When the people have shown what they can do, we hope to get land for the rest of the tribe. Many will prefer their *kaingins*—their forest clearings—to village life. But the barrio will serve all.⁷⁵

The reporters also visited a Mansaka resettlement center in Davao del Norte where "These handsome, courteous people have held proudly to their way of life, but have borrowed what has seemed to them worth borrowing from the dominant society," at the center they saw "a clinic, a school, an all but empty co-op store, a beadworking shop, and 137 neat thatched houses."⁷⁶ Macleish describes the "guiding hand" of Panamin, who left its mark in these "neatly spaced huts,"

⁷⁴ The aesthetics of the environment in the third world emerged in tandem with color photography, and plenty have written about the role that National Geographic played in the publicity of third world environmentalisms. (Indeed, National Geographic played a prominent role in representing colonial worlds in prior empires). Tamar Y Rothenberg, *Presenting America's World: Strategies of Innocence in National Geographic Magazine, 1888-1945*, 2016; Julie A Tuason, "The Ideology of Empire in National Geographic Magazine's Coverage of the Philippines, 1898-1908," *Geographical Review* 89 (1999): 34–53; Benjamin Thomas, "'National Geographic, PANAMIN and the Stone-Age Tribe,'" *Dialectical Anthropology* 25, no. 1 (2000): 77–88. Mark Rice, "Dean Worcester's Photographs, American National Identity, and 'National Geographic Magazine,'" *Austjamerstud Australasian Journal of American Studies* 31, no. 2 (2012): 42–56; Mark Rice, *Dean Worcester's Fantasy Islands: Photography, Film, and the Colonial Philippines* (Ann Arbor [Michigan]: The University of Michigan Press, 2014).

⁷⁵ Ibid, 239. Oona Paredes describes how it was during the mid-1970s that the Higaonon became exposed to insurgency through NPA operations in the area, and the realization that "land was in limited supply and was now the main object of competition [resulting in] a host of other problems." (274) Paredes notes that "because of their total economic dependence on the land, specifically forested lands, starvation and destitution became an overwhelming prospect." By the 1990s, Higaonon communities had experienced both military relocation, known as hamletting, and rebel occupation. (175)

⁷⁶ Ibid, 243.

By drawing the forest people together, the barrio strengthens their will to resist encroachment. Panamin never compels settlement, insisting that the tribes be allowed to adopt civilization at their own pace.”⁷⁷

The region of Mindanao where the Mansaka are located is also host to three large mining operations (SAMICO, INCO, MASARA and North Davao Mining Company), a place where an independent report would later find that people in these resettlement sites were expected to work on mining operations.⁷⁸ (fig 4.01, 4.07)

This report, produced by the ICL Research Team in 1979, involved interviews with a number of unnamed Panamin officials. In Davao del Norte, the regional official (possibly Perpetua), described the reservations,

A reservation is the only answer to the land problem. The tribes will be forced to give up their nomadic ways. That way, too, they will no longer be considered squatters. It is really very hard to deal with companies and big corporations. Our only action is to compromise. We resettle the natives in reservation land. From then on, any company interested in that land deals with us.⁷⁹

Ironically, this official gave the exact opposite account to Elizalde, for whom the basic problem was land, noting that “it is very easy for us (Panamin) to get land for the minorities. There is much land available. The Secretary (Elizalde) is very close to the President.”⁸⁰ For this official, rather, the problem was “how to gather the natives into reservations.” The ICL Research Team elaborate the issue thus:

The recent developments of agri-business expansion and increased militarization in Mindanao favor Panamin. With the natives harassed and evicted from their ancestral land, Panamin takes charge of the landless, homeless natives by gathering them into

⁷⁷ Ibid, 235.

⁷⁸ ICL Research Team, *A Report on Tribal Minorities in Mindanao* (Manila: Regal Printing, 1979), 18.

⁷⁹ ICL Research Team, 17.

⁸⁰ ICL Research Team, 17.

reservations. The companies get what they want—land for development and expansion, and Panamin gets what it wants—land resources for development.⁸¹

In this way Panamin streamlined the appropriation of ancestral lands for agribusiness ventures, both for Elizalde holdings and their associates. The International Commission of Jurists in Geneva, reporting on the issue in 1984, described how Panamin had systematically expropriated the country's Indigenous peoples from ancestral lands, lands which “have traditionally been based on indigenous customary law,” Panamin took advantage of the “the legal procedures of Philippine law” to curtail the recognition of Indigenous peoples' ancestral rights.⁸² Panamin was not only at the helm of its own economic agricultural enterprises but represented the interests of a multitude of other businesses that exploited resources on ancestral lands. The Elizalde family had joint operations with government administration in three ventures: Elizalde Steel Consolidated, North Davao Mining and Samar Mining Company.⁸³

The invisible four million

Another way to assess the business interests of the Elizalde empire was through the advertising that funded Panamin. *Panamin Reports to the People* proudly announces that it was funded by agencies who responded with “heartwarming enthusiasm,” the advertisers in turn were themselves awarded for creating Panamin-specific advertisements with “Awards for Excellence in Advertising.”⁸⁴ Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific Company of Manila, for example, announces that

⁸¹ ICL Research Team, 17–18.

⁸² Virginia A Leary et al., *The Philippines, Human Rights after Martial Law: Report of a Mission*, International Commission of Jurists, Geneva. 1984, 113.

⁸³ Mamoru Tsuda. *A Preliminary Study of Japanese Filipino Joint Ventures*, Quezon City, Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978; ICL Research Team, “A Report on Tribal Minorities in Mindanao,” 1979.

⁸⁴ *Panamin Reports to the People*, 1971, 2.

“The Mountain is a Monument” above a black and white photograph of Ifugao rice terraces rippling into the distance, delineated with lines scoring in the contours of the mountain’s topography. The pools of rice paddy mirror the sky above, the contrast is boosted so that a person—we assume one of “our brothers” as the advertising copy mentions—is superimposed and anonymized against this backdrop, looking out over their work. (fig 4.29) The copy below the image reads,

The Egyptians, the Khmers, the Aztecs, the Greeks and the citizens of Imperial Rome. And right here we have the Ifugaos who carved hectares of rice paddies out of the inhospitable mountains. Truly called an engineer of his time. [...] the Ifugao has contributed this monument to man’s achievement [...] They are our countrymen. They are our brothers.⁸⁵

In an overt use of the Ifugao rice terraces as a visual accompaniment to selling heavy machinery (AG&P manufactures steel and reinforced concrete parts for large structures), indigeneity remains discreetly anonymized alongside the engineered landscape they created.

The use of the third person plural “they” is communicated on the next page, in an advertisement from Time Life (fig 4.30),

Funny how little it takes to make some people happy. A hand-me-down dress, a blanket, a worn-out pair of shoes—even these can make some people happy. You find millions of such people among the small ethnic groups scattered throughout the country today. They live destitute lives, thriving on what the harsh environment can offer them.⁸⁶

This time, far from the engineered marvel of the rice terraces, the “harsh environment” provides little, and “they” have to look to Panamin, who “has made it his task to improve their living conditions.” This time the simplified message of the advert is that this is a group of destitute

⁸⁵ *Panamin Reports to the People*, 34.

⁸⁶ *Panamin Reports to the People*, 25.

people that need help, doing more to reify the difference between those in the position to help and those that need it.

The chemical giant Union Carbide Corporation proclaims, “In his dark world, Panamin came ... to bring light and hope” alongside images of an airlift, medical tent and eye operation.⁸⁷ (fig 4. 31 The collision between big business and “little people” is made easier, the text describes, through the mediation of Panamin, who “give light and hope to our unfortunate fellowmen who are hitherto beyond the reach of progress and modern medicine.” While Union Carbide emphasizes fulfilling a humanitarian mission, the electrical company PEMCO takes a different stance on the next page, pushing ethnic stereotypes in a different direction. (fig 4.32) Here, the corner of a darkened page is lit by a painted group of half-naked people huddled around a glowing fire. The large text above them reads “TODAY, they gather ‘round the fire. TOMORROW, they will switch on a PEMCO” with a white lightbulb standing-in for a full-stop. The advert is freighted with metaphor—light and darkness; today and tomorrow—through which PEMCO defines their role alongside Panamin.

Take a bonfire to show a tribe’s primitive source of light. Let a PEMCO light stand in for electric lighting, a modern convenience in life.

The message you want to put across is Panamin’s aid to the upliftment of our minority tribes, and PEMCO’s contribution in modernizing our nation.

Then use light as a symbol. Panamin is bringing light to the darkened condition of our tribes by giving food, clothing, education, medical and legal aid right into their places. A glowing PEMCO bulb symbolizes the splendor of modern urban areas, lighted all over with PEMCO lights.

By these pictures and symbols this much is our wish: that our brothers far behind will rise and change and in the near future reach for a PEMCO light.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ *Panamin Reports to the People*, 32.

⁸⁸ *Panamin Reports to the People*, 27.

Light, the advertisement implies, is modernity, electricity is an urban convenience, and soon “our tribes” will be able to partake in it.

The four advertisements are quite different from one another, and their distinguishing features: engineering, aid, medical technology, electricity, each take up different approaches to indigeneity to reinforce their and Panamin’s shared aims. They find commonality in that indigeneity is a removed, mostly anonymous subjecthood. When it is described, that subject is an object of pity or representative of another time and place. In each case, Panamin’s role is the connection between them and a modernizing society. The advertising copy, which was likely prepared with Panamin’s approval, and the imagery that accompany them reveal more about the landscape of Panamin’s public relations in the early 1970s than the landscape of Panamin’s actual operations (which in any case were obscured from view). While they give the impression of an agency with a carefully curated approach to advertising, they also reveal that even in 1971, when there were still few Panamin projects in operation, word on the agency in Manila circles was that this was a charitable organization that wielded connections. The language and visuals that the adverts employ, focusing on light and dark, modern and primitive, recall Chakrabarty’s distance between urban elites and rural peasantry discussed earlier. Or that, as Gayatri Spivak puts it, “to learn the movement of finance capital is to learn social responsibility.”⁸⁹ The paternal approach that the adverts enunciate is one of helping tribal peoples to learn that movement, the advertiser’s responsibility being to educate their citizens’ on the role of what they perceive their social responsibility to be. Rather than the state mediating tribal assimilation, it is private companies in tandem with Panamin, a quasi-state entity with all the benefits of an NGO. The distance between the city and the hinterland is something that Panamin alone can traverse,

⁸⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Other Asias* (Malden, MA ; Oxford: BBlackwell Pub, 2008), 43–44.

moreover, to be Indigenous is to be included in a political economy mediated by Panamin. This position, enforced by the “they” of the minorities—brothers far behind—describes a capitalist world in wait, ready to accept them when they are ready to leave their “darkened condition.” Indigeneity in this sense already has a latent political economy, though it is completely out of the control of those who inhabit its position.

A question of land

The ownership of land in the Philippines goes back to the Spanish royal land grants doled out between 1571–1629, in which *conquistadores* and native *principales* divided up the flat agricultural land surrounding Manila: Cavite, Laguna, Rizal and Bulacan.⁹⁰ Given over to monocropping of rice and later sugar in the Visayas to the west, lands were also gradually bought up by friar orders, so much so that they claimed possession of some of the best agricultural lands by the late nineteenth century. The changing of eras signified in the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the rapid ascension of steam-powered ship travel was the change brought on not just by global shipping routes, but the kind of raw materials being moved. By the time that the US ceded the remaining Spanish colonies in 1898, the era of advanced extraction was well underway. Minerals, mines of gold and tin, logging for paper mills, and the advantages of cheap logistics brought on a new era in the Philippine archipelago that wrought change on hitherto remote areas, such as the predominantly Muslim southernmost island of Mindanao.

However, unlike the Spanish administrators, the American administration would eventually recognize ancestral lands as private. In the landmark case of *Cariño vs. Insular Government*, the court stated,

⁹⁰ Fabros, 4.

when, as far back as testimony or memory goes, the land has been held by individuals under a claim of private ownership, it will be presumed to have been held in the same way from before the Spanish conquest, and never to have been public land...Spain did not assume to convert all the native inhabitants of the Philippines into trespassers or even into tenants at will.⁹¹

The case was taken to the Supreme Court by Mateo Cariño, an Indigenous Ibaloi who took a legal challenge to the US Colonial Government in 1907, who intended to seize his lands for a military base. The case, which he won, recognized native title “vested through a traditional legal system different from what the colonizers prescribed.”⁹² It is ironic that it was through a colonial-era Supreme Court battle waged by an Indigenous person in 1909 that lands were expropriated, manipulating ancestral domain, by the agency whose mandate it was to protect Indigenous peoples.

More than any other operation, it was through the creation of reservations that Panamin gained control over land. The scheme was threefold. Firstly, by creating reservations and formalizing the lands around them, titles to land were controlled by Panamin, circumventing the fact that most lands occupied by Indigenous groups would have been ancestral domain by default. Secondly, the resources on or within those lands was under direct jurisdiction of Panamin. Thirdly, by regrouping people into reservations, Panamin had access to a labor pool that could be redirected to work in those extractive industries. One former Panamin social worker described how they first began to have doubts about Panamin’s aid work,

What made me really doubt Elizalde’s interests in the minorities was that, on our advance trips, I was always accompanied by two prospector-geologists, a Russian and a Filipino. On our arrival, the people who welcomed us recognized them and asked them which mountain area they are going to this time. I found out later that they were hired by

⁹¹ United States Supreme Court. *Cariño vs. Insular Government of the Philippine Islands*, 212 U.S. 449 (1909) Cf. Philippines Indigenous Peoples ICERD Shadow Report for the consolidated fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth Philippine ICERD periodic reports. Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination 73rd Session, 3rd to 28th of August 2009, 15.

⁹² *Cariño v. Insular Government*, 212 U.S. 449 (1909); *Ibid*, i.

Elizalde on a commission basis—if they found minerals, they were given a certain amount. If not, well, they just had to keep looking.⁹³

As two church activists would succinctly summarize in 1977 after a visit to Cotabato in

Mindanao:

Despite the flourish of Panamin activity, the T'boli's have continued to lose their land. Even in T'boli municipality, it is possible for Christian settlers to purchase land. In fact, the presence makes it easier. Rather than going all the way down the mountain on a treacherous road to the capital of Surullah municipality, the transfer of land can take place right in the Panamin office, especially if the T'boli does not have a properly registered title."⁹⁴

If Panamin's protectionist stance and apparent mastery, at least in the international press, of the aesthetics of altruism were anything to go by, it might come as a surprise that the organization that was the greatest thorn in Panamin's side was the Philippine Church. The next section delves deeper into the politics of Panamin through an investigation of church organizing, one that, like Panamin, had a particular relationship to the land in the role of ecological custodian and protector of Indigenous peoples.

⁹³ ICL Research Team, 1979, 6.

⁹⁴ Dorothy Friesen and Gene Stoltzfus, "The T'boli's and the Dam: The Story of One People's Development Process," unpublished, 6. Stoltzfus was a founding member of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). Friesen and Stoltzfus were Mennonite Central Committee country co-directors in the Philippines from 1977 to 1979. Dorothy Friesen, *Critical Choices: A Journey with the Filipino People* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988).

II

The Church in a Changing Landscape

The work of Panamin and the extractive industries behind its veil transformed how the Philippine Church perceived themselves in association with Indigenous peoples and serves as a distinctive moment in Southeast Asian land relations of the twentieth century. It was in light of these extractive industries that the clergy became more fully aware of the ways in which Indigenous beliefs related to ecological systems, and the following section analyzes how church interactions with the government—in the form of Panamin—rallied around land as a source of life and a threat of loss of Indigenous ecological knowledge.

In 1988, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) released a Pastoral Letter titled “What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?” The letter raised concerns that members of the clergy were having over the destruction of the rural landscape. It emphasized an integration between land and the body of Christ, who,

is the center point of human history and creation. All the rich unfolding of the universe and the emergence and flowering of life on Earth are centered on him (Eph. 1:9-10; Col 1:16-17). The destruction of any part of creation, especially, the extinction of species defaces the image of Christ.⁹⁵

The pastoral letter was drafted out by Bishop Gustavo Gutiérrez in the Diocese of Marbel, South Cotabato. The location is significant because of church disputes with the government and private industry that had been consistently happening there in the prior two decades. This diocese had a history of church activism in its advocacy of Indigenous peoples. Gutiérrez was chair of the CBCP at the time—a powerful position considering it comprised over 78 bishops from across the

⁹⁵ *What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?* Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, 1988, 7.

country—and had an active interest in ecological issues becoming more closely tied to church affairs.⁹⁶ He was also a historian and wrote extensively on the sixteenth-century Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, who was famous for his advocacy of Indigenous peoples in the face of abuses by conquistadores in what was then New Spain.⁹⁷ Gutiérrez writes,

For Las Casas, the defense of the life of the Indians involves the defense of the nature around them, the protection of their entire vital medium. Each individual's life supposes a context. If he or she is deprived of that context, especially if this is done violently, the individual perishes. The human being is like a plant: to stay alive, the human being, too, needs to sink his or her roots in the earth. Today we call it ecological balance.

Wrenched from their natural ambience, the Indians die. 'This,' he writes, 'has been the infallible, universal rule, that with the removal of these people from where they have been born and bred to some other place, however nearby, they take sick, and few are they who escape death.' (*H.I.*, bk. 3, ch. 13, O.E. 2:203a)⁹⁸

In his work on and alliance with Las Casas' writings, Gutiérrez placed himself and the Philippine Church in allegiance with centuries-long church activism on behalf of the environmentally oppressed. At the same time, he brought about contemporary recognition of how the social conditions of environmental exploitation bore commonalities across the centuries and oceans, and neo-colonial exploits in his Diocese, in particular gold mining operations, were no different from the atrocities committed under the auspices of gold and silver mining in the New World four-hundred years earlier. Indeed, Gutiérrez was witness to the logging, mining, plantations and

⁹⁶ Robert L. Youngblood, "Church Opposition to Martial Law in the Philippines," *Asian Survey* 18, no. 5 (1978): 506.

⁹⁷ The CBCP remembered the late bishop as "a strong advocate for the environment in a province threatened by mining interests." Christia Marie Ramos, "Retired South Cotabato Bishop Passes Away at 79," *INQUIRER.net*, February 10, 2019, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1083883/retired-south-cotabato-bishop-passes-away-at-79>.

⁹⁸ Bartolomé Las Casas is one of the most renowned sixteenth century clergy for their activism for the Indians of the New World. Las Casas lobbied for the abolition of the *encomienda* system, and participated in the *Valladolid* debate, arguing against Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who deemed that Indians were less than human and required civilizing. Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ* / (Maryknoll, N.Y.: c1993.), 78–79; William Holden and Dan Jacobson, "Ecclesial Opposition to Mining on Mindanao: Neoliberalism Encounters the Church of the Poor in the Land of Promise," *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 11 (June 1, 2007): 176. (figs 4.34, 4.35)

other agribusiness ventures that wrought havoc on the mountainous, forested regions of Bukidnon, Cotabato and Davao del Norte during the decade prior.

The assertion that the land was the body of Christ, and the syncretism between Indigenous ecology and church advocacy would become a hallmark of Pastoral Letters over the decades that followed “What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?” The 2019 Pastoral Letter on Ecology—the eighth in a series of pastoral letters on ecology—reiterated this integration between the body and land, except this time it was humans as a part of nature. “An Urgent Call for Ecological Conversation; Hope in the Face of Climate Emergency” emphasized “divestment” and “ecological integrity” away from extractive economies as one of the most important activities of church and state:

The prevalent anthropocentric and utilitarian perspectives tend to negate our traditional role of responsible stewardship and deny the reality that humans are part of nature. Both the book of Genesis and our own indigenous folklore about the origin of humankind manifest strongly that we were created out of nature’s very elements—earth, water, wind and fire. We need a paradigm shift in order to reestablish our sacred relationship with nature: ‘Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.’ (LS, 139) Indeed, we are all part of nature. [...] Do not allow the financial resources of our Catholic institutions to be invested in favor of coal-fired power plants, mining companies and other destructive extractive projects. Divestment from such investment portfolios must be encouraged.⁹⁹

Church sentiments on ecological destruction continue to be at the fore. In addition to Pope Francis’ active role in the Paris climate summit of 2015, in November 2019 he considered adding a catechism on sin against ecology, remarking that “We have to introduce, we are thinking about it, in the catechism of the Catholic Church, the sin against ecology, the sin against our common home, because it’s a duty.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines’ Pastoral Letter on Ecology: *AN URGENT CALL FOR ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION, HOPE IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY*. CBCP, Intramuros, 2019, 6, 8.

¹⁰⁰ “Pope Considering Adding ‘sin against Ecology’ to Church’s Catechism,” *Crux* (blog), November 15, 2019, <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/11/pope-considering-adding-sin-against-ecology-to-churchs-catechism/>.

Bishop Gutiérrez, while instrumental in putting ecological issues into print, both in terms of the church's historical lineage in former colonies through Las Casas, as well as part of the CBCP's mandate in the 1980s, was continuing a legacy established over a decade earlier by Bishop Francisco F. Claver SJ. Born in Bontoc, Mountain Province, Claver was an influential member of the CBCP and its social action programs as they were evolving in the 1970s, including heading the Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos (ECTF, today known as the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples, ECIP). He was appointed as the bishop of Malaybalay in Bukidnon, Mindanao in August 1969, and over the next four years carried out the research that would end up in his PhD thesis, *Sharing the Wealth and the Power: Agrarian Reform in a Southern Philippine Municipality*, filed in 1973 at the Anthropology department of the University of Colorado. In it, he attempted to single out “problems of land use and ecological stress” with consideration of how the population was adapting to “changing socio-cultural and ecological conditions.”¹⁰¹ What did Claver observe in his province, and how did he assert the role of the church in land and resettlement issues? Before discussing Claver and the extraction he saw in Bukidnon, the following section provides an overview of the context for understanding how three-centuries of the Philippine church informs their particular relation to land, government and Indigenous peoples.

Contextualizing the ecclesial position

Iberian Catholicism dominated the Philippines with Spanish colonialism. Three centuries of Hispanicization followed when Ferdinand Magellan first held mass in Cebu on Easter Sunday

¹⁰¹ Francisco F. Claver, *Sharing the Wealth and the Power: Agrarian Reform in a Southern Philippine Municipality*. PhD Dissertation, 1973, iii–iv.

of 1521, in which evangelization of the country was carried out by the five major orders at the time.¹⁰² Missionaries instituted a social order through the building of not only churches but hospitals, schools and universities for the function of evangelization, preparing the way for the apostolate of Catholic Action.¹⁰³ In many places around the world, impossibly remote from the Iberian peninsula, missionaries were mobile men, producing maps, drawings and research about the environments they found themselves in. Finding themselves in alienating circumstances and attempting to build a society around entirely different systems to those they found, which were either supported or in antagonistic relationship to the military, friars learnt foreign languages in which to preach the gospel and sent their own descriptions of these places back to Europe, often with promising young natives.¹⁰⁴

These missionaries-as-researchers were part of a complex relationship between colony and metropole, today still visible in the remains of buildings and city layouts scattered around the former Iberian world.¹⁰⁵ The Laws of the Indies were strict in their guidance on how new towns ought to be organized, with a grid layout centered around a *Plaza–Cabildo–Catedral* nexus.¹⁰⁶ The spatialization of Christianity in the countryside, however, would remain centered on the

¹⁰² The main orders are the: Augustinian, Franciscan, Jesuit, Dominican and Recoletos.

¹⁰³ To *reducir*, resettle and civilize *los indios* in their colonies, the imperial policy of the Crown of Castile relied on the creation of village and town units according to a compilation of laws—guidelines really—in the *Recopilación de leyes de los reinos de las Indias*. For most of the Crown’s territories this involved instantiating town structures like those of the old world. In a sense, this social involvement was necessary because the gospel would only really function if a particular way of life was adopted that it could adapt with. In short, for the church to reproduce itself, it needed an imported urban system within which to situate itself. Wilfredo Fabros, *The Church and Its Social Involvement in the Philippines / 1930-1972* (Quezon City, Metro Manila: Ateneo de Manila Univ. Press, 1988): 2.

¹⁰⁴ The society of the Jesuits was one of the first church organizations to actively recruit youth from Spanish colonies to be educated in Europe.

¹⁰⁵ The morphology and urban plans of the *plaza–cabildo–catedral* arrangement, and the debates as to whether it was a reproduction of the Spanish square, or whether it was a Spanish adoption of the Mesoamerican plaza, are discussed by Clare Cardinal-Pett, *A History of Architecture and Urbanism in the Americas* (Routledge, 2015); and Setha M. Low, “Indigenous Architecture and the Spanish American Plaza in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean,” *American Anthropologist* 97, no. 4 (1995): 748–62.

¹⁰⁶ Setha M. Low, “Indigenous Architecture and the Spanish American Plaza in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean,” *American Anthropologist* 97, no. 4 (1995): 748–62.

church itself, a place where its own rules applied no matter how meager the resources at hand. It was the intrepid missionary (they usually acted alone to begin with) to raise funds, find the labor and eventually souls for conversion.¹⁰⁷ The mission, the spatial equivalent of Christian faith at the frontier, was therefore the locus of discussions around agricultural projects that took place there. It bore immediate witness to them and their effect on the people living in Church communities. It is symbolic of a historical negotiation with the frontier, where the clergy have often operated as an intermediary between raw capitalism and those most marginalized by the state.¹⁰⁸ The longer history of the church and the modern, twentieth century “moral mission” of development is part of a tangled relationship which has yet to be unpacked in terms of the built environment. Indeed, while the clergy and the church’s larger public relations successfully pivoted toward the moral mission of humanitarian aid with liberation theology in the second half of the twentieth century, the inversion of the church’s former position as conqueror of souls was consciously revoked by the time humanitarianism entered the picture. Every issue of *Tribal Forum*, for example, closed with a statement on the church’s “Philosophy of Work,” mentioning that “We offer Christ’s message of salvation to them in a dialogue of life and Faith with them, as a gift and an invitation to which they can respond and receive freely in their own way, in their own time.”¹⁰⁹ (fig 4.36) While the church’s actual locations in the provinces were a network that was geographically remote in relation to Manila, it was hardly peripheral in social affairs, politics and governance, and the church continues to be a constant mediator in Indigenous

¹⁰⁷ The thankless task of the missionary in the Philippines is discussed by William Henry Scott in several articles, notably: Francisco Antolin and William Henry Scott, “Notices of the Pagan Igorots in 1789,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 29 (1970): 177–249; “Igorot Responses to Spanish Aims: 1576–1896,” *Philippine Studies* 18, no. 4 (1970): 695–717.

¹⁰⁸ Find FN.

¹⁰⁹ E.g.: *TF*, Vol. V, No. 5, September–October, 1984, 69.

affairs. Just as the church moderated mining politics in eighteenth-century Mountain Province, so too was the church the first to raise the alarm about the disappropriation of land from Indigenous peoples when some of the first large-scale development projects began to be carried out in the 1960s (see Chapter 2).¹¹⁰

Spiritual concerns became involved with environmental ones after the Second Vatican Council's commitment to social justice in the 1960s with the *Aggiornamento*, the "bringing up to date" of the Church and becoming involved in social issues.¹¹¹ This commitment evolved in the Philippines with the establishment of the National Secretariat on Social Action (NASSA) in 1966, and a separate, independent Episcopal Commission on Social Action. Both of these new organizations were part of what Wilfredo Fabros SJ calls the "institutionalization of the socioeconomic involvement of the Philippine Church," lodging the church within the sphere of social action.¹¹² Rural affairs were at the center of these new organizations, and a sense of urgency that church laymen get involved in opposing the deteriorating conditions and poverty they produced in the provinces. Consider a letter from Archbishop Mariano Madriaga in 1965, who not only thought that "we must use our leadership to help our poor rural farmers," but believed that church laity had a duty to help direct farmers "to apply modern methods and to

¹¹⁰ Joanna Carino, Jessica Carifio, and Geoffrey Nettleton, "The Chico River Basin Development Project, A Situation Report," 1980, 67.

¹¹¹ William Holden and Dan Jacobson, "Ecclesial Opposition to Mining on Mindanao: Neoliberalism Encounters the Church of the Poor in the Land of Promise," *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 11 (June 1, 2007): 155–202, 163.

¹¹² Fabros, 100

coax the land to produce the maximum yield.”¹¹³ Poverty “impeded spiritual fulfillment;” and social action meant getting involved in agricultural issues for social uplift.¹¹⁴

When in the late 1960s the government and Panamin began to actively resettle tribal groups, the Church was in the position to sound the alarm. The thinking behind the Pastoral Letters on Ecology were informed by this moment, in which clear ecological destruction was twinned with the removal of people from ancestral land. Thus, through the Church’s role as an advocacy organization for social justice, they were inadvertently brought into the realm of defending people and the landscapes they occupied that were under threat from agribusiness. While the Catholic church in the Philippines is aware of its own sixteenth- and seventeenth-century legacies of settlement, by the twentieth century it was an active voice against architectures of development and resettlement.¹¹⁵ Friction between the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and the Marcos government was heightened not only because the church advocated for the poor and marginalized, but because they had the organizational power to do so and publicize their efforts as part of the gospel. By the 1960s the church was the most powerful social network in the archipelago, connecting itself to global social justice groups long

¹¹³ “Circular Letter of Archbishop Mariano Madriaga,” *Sentinel*, 5 September 1965; Fabros, 101.

¹¹⁴ Fabros notes that these developments took shape relatively quickly, between 1965 and 1967 a widespread agreement in the hierarchy that church “The National Rural Congress declared that concern for the poor and suffering was an essential part of Christianity and of the preaching of the gospel [...] Extreme poverty impeded man’s spiritual fulfillment.”

See also the “Pastoral Letter on Social Action and Agricultural Development,” January 8, 1967, a month before the rural congress.

¹¹⁵ The landscapes in which the church found itself already involved a mixture of faith systems, and while those continued to thrive in many cases, the Catholic church grew in strength between the populace and the state for most of the Spanish empire. Today the countries that make up Central and South America, along with the Philippines have over 85% of the populace professing the Catholic faith.

before humanitarian aid arrived.¹¹⁶ In densely forested, mountainous landscapes like Kalinga in Luzon and Cotabato and Bukidnon in Mindanao, the few individuals that moved between dioceses and had regular contact with individuals in both highlands and metropole were members of the clergy. They were the only individuals with some sense of purview over the lands that lay beyond the cities and rice and sugar-producing lowlands. Indeed, the Church in the Philippines plays an integral role in socioeconomic involvement, a gradual change that took place between 1930–1970 in which the Church was not only defender of its own interests, but proclaimer of the rights of the poor and the oppressed.¹¹⁷ This organizational role is part of a tangible, sometimes antagonistic, connective tissue between urban centers and hinterlands. The church thus went from being an instrument of colonial expansion between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, to an instrument of advocacy in the twentieth.

Church encounters with Panamin

By late 1975, after various run-ins with the church, Manuel Elizalde had expressed a desire to meet with those religious superiors actively working with Indigenous peoples. A meeting was brokered by a professor at Ateneo Law School, Fr. J. Bernas, who brought together eight members of the clergy from across the country to meet with Manuel Elizalde and three other Panamin representatives on March 16, 1976 in Quezon City.¹¹⁸ The three-hour encounter

¹¹⁶ Wilfredo Fabros, *The Church and Its Social Involvement in the Philippines / 1930-1972* (Quezon City, Metro Manila: Ateneo de Manila Univ. Press, 1988).

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ J. Bernas, SJ, Francisco Claver, SJ (Malaybalay, Bukidnon), D. Coyle, SC, Fr. Vincent Cullen, SJ (Missionary to the Higaonon, Bukidnon), Rex Mansmann, CP (Missionary to the T'boli, Marbel), Benigno Mayo, SJ, G. Obin, CICM; C. Van Ooteghem, CICM; SJ: Society of Jesuits; CP Passionist Fathers; CICM: Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; SC: Brothers of the Sacred Heart). The three representatives of Panamin were: Guerrero (Sergeant); Miguel Romero (legal counsel); Oscar Trinidad (General).

was described in the ICL Research Team’s “Report on Tribal Minorities in Mindanao.” According to the report, Panamin provided a brief explanation of their philosophy, to “strive to make cultural communities realize their dignity as distinct peoples,” to “foster pride in themselves” and to “achieve a unity of purpose” in development for themselves.¹¹⁹ The church (represented by eight religious) had no quarrel with the Panamin philosophy, as it was “basically the same philosophy it [the Church] has been trying to implement.”¹²⁰ However, the assembled religious superiors alleged that it had violated its stated philosophy on every point, citing firsthand examples from dioceses in South Cotabato, Bukidnon and Kalinga (Rex Mansmann’s diocese served the T’boli, while Francisco Claver’s was in Malaybalay, Bukidnon, serving the Higaonon):

Competition with and unnecessary duplication of Church efforts have marked Panamin’s approach so far. Undisguised hostility too. In the three general areas represented (Cotabato, Bukidnon, Kalinga) the Church had been operating long before Panamin. [...] It has a decidedly anti-Church, anti-religious bias. [...] in the field, its actual line is to downgrade [Church networks], to nullify their effectivity, to duplicate existing works. Religious freedom is negated in some instances in Panamin’s program of “returning to origins.”¹²¹

The meeting, according to the ICL report was a failure, no agreements were met, with Fr. Bernas stating at its close, “in other words, the war is still on.”¹²² The event set the stage for the conflict that Panamin and church officials engaged in the years following: bitter truces, unkept promises, mutual suspicion. Three months after the meeting, *Signs of the Times* published three open letters decrying Panamin operations, two of which came from Father Rex Mansmann of South

¹¹⁹ ICL Research Team, *A Report on Tribal Minorities in Mindanao* (Manila: Regal Printing, 1979), 74.

¹²⁰ ICL Research Team, 74.

¹²¹ ICL Research Team, 74–75.

¹²² ICL Research Team, 75.

Cotabato, who was present at the initial meeting. Mansmann came to the Philippines in 1961 as a Passionist priest, with a mission to help the poor, the oppressed and the rights of tribal peoples. Mansmann's letters were directed at the Defense Minister, Juan Ponce Enrile, and contained allegations of a smearing campaign to "get Father Rex kicked out," complete with forged thumbprint signatures and money being offered to have Mansmann killed.¹²³ He exhorted the Defense Secretary to end Panamin's activities with a series of requests:

- a. Let Panamin desist from in any way hindering myself or other priests as ministers of the Gospel from fulfilling our commission to preach this same Gospel. The same respect for religious freedom must be extended to any other lawfully designated persons, Catholic or not, ordained ministers or not. And further, that Panamin recognize and respect the religious freedom of members of the cultural communities to accept or reject these religious teachings.
- b. Let Panamin desist from pirating students from our educational program and employees from the mission employ, as if with all of Panamin's resources and channels of publicity they cannot find other competent personnel.
- c. Let Panamin desist from interfering with the Mission's efforts to help the people become economically self-sufficient, especially in regard to the mission's extension and supervision of agricultural loans and credit, whether through the Masagana-Karangalan system or from the private sector; for example, by extending loans to people already indebted to the Mission or in any other way.
- d. Let Panamin desist from taking advantage of the people's simplicity by offering them bribe money to disassociate themselves with the Mission.
- e. Let Panamin CHDF [Civil Home Defense Forces] or any Panamin personnel desist from bringing their arms on the mission properties, and let them not use these arms to threaten or intimidate mission personnel, mission cooperators or indeed any innocent people.

Clearly the mission was facing a serious incursion from Panamin. Why were church activities considered a threat to the government? Mansmann noted in the open letter that there were over 100,000 T'boli's who "are not receiving any attention or help," so why should Panamin concentrate its resources "in precisely the same place with the same people as Sta. Cruz Mission?" Santa Cruz Mission sat directly adjacent to Lake Sebu, in the center of T'boli and Ubo

¹²³ *ST*, June 26, 1976, 18.

areas. Already the region was prey to illegal logging and coffee plantation encroachment, but in 1976 there were rumors that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was surveying for seventeen hydro projects across Mindanao.¹²⁴ These included two 50-meter dams, one on Lake Sebu and the other along the Lanon River. The dams would produce 30 megawatts of electricity and irrigate 80,000 hectares of lowland farms.¹²⁵ The year following Mansmann's open letter in *Signs*, the T'boli's of Lake Sebu sent a 2000 signature petition to the ADB to request they desist from funding the government hydropower plan, stating they would "rather kill ourselves and our children than witness the terrible destruction Lake Sebu dam would bring."¹²⁶ The government responded by accusing the local Santa Cruz Mission of having manipulated the people into opposing the dam.

Situating *Signs of the Times*

At this point it is useful to situate *Signs of the Times*. Although the AMRSP had been releasing "Various Reports" since early 1975, these were largely compendiums of documents to be circulated within the church, a kind of internal newsletter to keep missionaries, particularly those in more remote provinces, informed of church goings on. The editorial team of *Signs* provided an explanation of their position already well into its operation in October 1976—in fact, *Signs* would be closed down in December of that year—with a short article, "Signs of the

¹²⁴ "The Making of a Minority," *Tribal Forum*, September-October 1981, 16. As recently as 2009 the region was in the midst of wrangling over land claims, with the Department of Agrarian Reform insisting it was agricultural land, while the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) claimed that this ancestral land was forest land. Philippines Indigenous Peoples ICERD Shadow Report for the consolidated fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth Philippine ICERD periodic reports. Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination 73rd Session, 3rd to 28th of August 2009, 29–30.

¹²⁵ Joel Rocamora, "Agribusiness, Dams and Counter-Insurgency: A whole generation of tribal Filipinos fight for survival." *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, Issue No. 67, October 1979. 6–7.

¹²⁶ "The Making of a Minority," *Tribal Forum*, September-October 1981, 12–16.

Times?” “As sponsors of this little publication,” they wrote, “we Major Superiors of Religious Congregations in the Philippines feel it necessary to clarify our aims, especially for our primary readership, the members of our own congregations.”¹²⁷ They write that “signs of the times” became a part of the contemporary Christian vocabulary after the Second Vatican Council, renowned for situating the Church in the modern world held a decade earlier between 1962 and 1965. This Vatican Council was a momentous moment for the Catholic Church, the first meeting in a century to settle doctrinal issues and reposition the church in the postwar world. Their “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World” stated that, “though mankind is stricken with wonder at its own discoveries and its power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of its individual and collective strivings, and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity.”¹²⁸ The Pastoral Constitution laid out the roadmap for how Church laity were to interact with this changing global landscape, and for the Church to carry out this task was not necessarily an unfamiliar mandate, “the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other.”¹²⁹ The *Signs of the Times* editorial raised this directive alongside the meteorological verse from Matthew 16:3 that gave their journal its name:

As we know, “signs of the times” is biblical in its origins. Jesus is proclaimed as speaking the words in contexts which suggest how difficult it is so to read these signs as to discern

¹²⁷ *ST*, October 16, 1976,

¹²⁸ Part 3. “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965.”

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, part 4.

where and how God’s saving act is hidden in them. To the Pharisees and Scribes, those with a special vocation as interpreters of the laws of God, Jesus said,

If you know how to interpret the look of the sky, can you not read the signs of the times? (Matt. 16, 3)

And to the multitudes he said,

If you can interpret the portents of earth and sky, why can you not interpret the present time? Tell me, why do you not judge for yourselves what is just? (Luke 12, 56–57)

With our fellow religious primarily in mind, we reflect on these words of Jesus and see that none of us can be content with any superficial reading of the data presented by our publication. Deeply aware of our own need of ongoing conversion, we allow the words of Jesus to the “church people” of his day—the Scribes and Pharisees—to echo in our hearts. And if in some quarters our publication is seen as an anti-government instrument, we cannot justify—nor should we want to justify—our sponsorship of it on this ground.¹³⁰

Signs of the Times, then, was borne of the resolution to interpret the moment—the look of the sky; martial law—for what it was, a moment in which the AMRSP connected religious duty, through the mandates laid out in the Second Vatican Council, to the broader context of injustices perpetrated by the government in the Philippines. (fig 4.37)

Perhaps it is of little surprise that *Signs* was shut down two months later. The younger, more social-action oriented membership of the AMRSP who published *Signs*, twinned with the outspoken foreign missionaries of the religious orders that they published, were less inhibited about criticizing government programs than some of the more “moderate” bishops of that time.¹³¹ The network was formed, however, and so was the emphasis. Panamin’s own publishing

¹³⁰ *ST*, 16 October 1976.

¹³¹ Robert L. Youngblood, “Church Opposition to Martial Law in the Philippines,” *Asian Survey* 18, no. 5 (May 1, 1978): 506.

and propaganda wing, *Panamin News*, had printed a direct threat to the church in October 1976, warning:

For the church to work outside of the province of state concerns and preach ideas hostile to the state is to place itself within the punitive domain of the state [...] The world of God is of the spirit, the world of the state is of matter. Church intransigence on areas affecting the material well-being of the citizenry is an act of hostility.¹³²

By setting such boundaries—the real and the spiritual—Panamin firmed up the growing borders between church and state, while at the same time invoking peculiar physical properties to social action, State, Panamin: real; God, the Church: spiritual. Powerful though it was, Panamin drew a line around the perceived intransigence, stubbornness, of members of the clergy, due in no small part to the meeting earlier that year in which the group assembled at Ateneo were at loggerheads.

Much distrust of Panamin was brewing on the pages of *Signs*. Fr. Dennis Corrigan wrote in the September 1975 issue that while the Manobos received “big grants of land” that week, a “sign of change,” these signs nevertheless remained ambiguous, “since those purporting to effect and supervise these changes are notoriously involved in other purposes political and economic. What is more—these interests of theirs have only too often been cloaked by a so-called philanthropy.”¹³³ No prizes for guessing who was supervising the changes Fr. Corrigan mentions. Clues to how Elizalde perceived the church in relation to tribal groups can be read in an exchange between Elizalde and the Indigenous Kalinga *pangat*, Macliing Dulag (discussed in Chapter 2), printed in the December that year, “Minorities Secretary Exhibits Utmost Contempt for Kalingas:”

Elizalde: You Kalingas should not believe this bunch of religious fanatics.
 These priests and nuns are using you for their own purposes. [...] I am
 doing this for your own welfare so that you will be able to send your

¹³² *PANAMIN News*, 1:3 Oct. 1976: 5; and Rocamora, *Southeast Asia Chronicle*: 21.

¹³³ “Homily Preached for Dead Manobo Leader” Fr. Dennis Corrigan. *Signs of the Times*, September 19, 1975, 7

children to school, have them graduate, get a very good job and enjoy good whiskies on the mountains.

Dulag: I am telling you Mr. Secretary that if the dam project is pushed through, we will fight to death.

Elizalde: How can you talk like that when you Kalingas are not united?

Dulag: We, Kalingas have always been united through our Bodong system until the day you came and taught us politics.¹³⁴

Unity was mediated, as Dulag mentions, through the Bodong system, a political mechanism for inter-tribal peacekeeping in the Cordillera. The oft-repeated “whiskies in the mountains” line has since become a flashpoint in the differences between Elizalde’s ideology and Indigenous resistance because not only does it reveal his perception of the countryside as a place of leisure, it posits that Indigenous displacement must be a part of a process of return to that domain—“for your own welfare”—in order for it to be transformed into both a productive energy landscape (the hydroelectric dam projects along the Chico) and a productive landscape for tourism.

Anonymous interviews conducted by mission workers in Kalinga were published in *Signs* the following month, on January 22, and reveal the extent to which Elizalde was embroiled in appropriating land for other industrial uses in addition to hydropower.

“On my way to Lubuagan from Tinglayan, I met one employee of the Panamin. He told me that Mr. Elizalde has intentions of making Maswa ricefields as a pilot agricultural experimentation, but for him as his private property. Capt. Jeopano told us the secret: Maswa will become his bodega for his paper pulp concession. This concession is granted to him as his reward for having convinced the people to support the dam project.”¹³⁵

¹³⁴ “Minorities Secretary Exhibits Utmost Contempt for Kalingas. A Report from Kalinga, November 1975” *Signs of the Times*, December 1975: 3.

¹³⁵ ST, February 27, 1976, 18

Indeed, hydropower would be a necessary ingredient in order to generate enough electricity necessary to power paper mills. Elizalde himself recognized the irony that the mission, the very institution that originally sought to convert *indios*, was now an institution that was not only a form of protection but also a well-organized network. His speech to a group of Kalinga assembled in Bontoc in 1975 warned of displacing tribal tradition with Christianity, “If you throw away your customs simply to imitate those of the Christians, you’ll be shadows, not men. Who respects a shadow? You’ll be beggars in your own lands.”¹³⁶ It was, however, too late for Elizalde. Bishop Claver was one of six other bishops that endorsed the Kalinga’s open letter to President Marcos denouncing Elizalde and published in the February 1976 issue of *Signs*.¹³⁷ “We Kalingas prefer to remain where we are,” it stated, “we do not want to be resettled anywhere.”

“If the land could speak, it would speak for us”

If the world of the state was matter, and the world of the spirit was the church’s domain, the church, with the blocking of *Signs* in December, moved on to both more tangible and alternative approaches to spirituality. In 1977, the AMRSP decided that the problem that church laity confronted in martial law was that of the oppressed, and of the oppressed, it was the struggles over land that Indigenous peoples faced that epitomized the duties of the church in the Philippines. They organized the Episcopal Commission for Tribal Filipinos (ECTF) and began to hold events, both to raise awareness of the plight of Indigenous peoples, as well as to increase solidarity between them. Tribal Filipino Sunday was one such event, and because it was

¹³⁶ MacLeish, Kenneth. “Help for Philippine Tribes in Trouble.” *National Geographic*. Vol. 140, No. 2. August 1971, 237.

¹³⁷ “Kalingas Denounce Elizalde; Restate Opposition to Dam (January 5, 1976),” *ST*, February 27, 1976, 15–16.

celebrated in parishes across the archipelago, was a responsibility of all CBCP members. A poster advertising the event, illustrated by Edgar Talusan, provides a sense for the urgency and spatial dimensions of the situation. (fig 2.38) Logging machines and diggers eat into a darkened mountainside excavating logs and rocks, smooth brushstrokes delineate steep rice terraces in the higher reaches. Five figures watch against a red horizon. Illustrated by Edgar “Egay” Talusan Fernandez, the poster is stylized in a social-realist tri-tone of black, white and glowing orange, and similar to a trend in impactful, graphic heavy protest artworks by the Kaisahan (unity) group, of which Fernandez was a member. Their major aims, to create art in the quest of national identity, to create art for the masses, to create alternative and oppositional art, fell in line with support for the ECTF and the Kalinga alike. The poster’s headline announces, “OUR LANDS ARE MARKED FOR DESTRUCTION ... AND WE WITH THEM.” With a quote following, superimposed against the hills, “Plantations, logging and mining companies profit, but what about us? Our land gives us life. To defend our life, we will defend our land!”

“Land is life” was the phrase, and it reified the need to address and articulate how traditional concepts, beliefs and attitudes related to land. In 1977 a seminar was organized by church workers in Mindanao to address these distinctions (it included Vincent Cullen, missionary to the Higaonon in Bukidnon, who was also at the aforementioned workshop with Elizalde in March 1975). “Tribal Groups and their Worldview” included 54 representatives from 15 tribal groups, responding to the question “How do you view land?” their answers were:

1. Land is a gift from God which provides everything needed to sustain life. Land is a source of life.
2. The earth is owned by God but since humans were created by God, they have the right to develop the land and are therefore the secondary owners. When they die, they return to the land.
3. Land cannot be sold or bought since according to one group, the Tiruray [Bukidnon], land is both mother and father.
4. Land cannot be divided, only the fruits of the land can be divided.

5. Land is plentiful and could be sold cheaply, that is, the steward rights may be sold.¹³⁸ What comes through in these points is that humans are custodians of the land, which is a gift—not a right—and the only way to return to land is with death. Another workshop held in 1985 by the ECTF bore similar descriptions. “According to the tribal participants, land is a blessing and a gift from God and is, therefore, sacred. It is the sources of life of the people, like a mother that nurtures her child. Consequently... land is life.”¹³⁹ The conflation of environmentalist rhetoric with expressions of ethnic identity was a growing trend where different threads of political and social history could be brought together.¹⁴⁰ Because these workshops brought a wide diversity of viewpoints together, Indigenous worldviews became stabilized in and of themselves, the diversity among them becoming reconciled through their active oppositional stance to the governmental situation that they found themselves confronted with. In creating this position, then, a political economy became tied to indigeneity. It foregrounded the land and human relationship to it in a way that revealed government and private interests in it detrimental, both to the people who lived there and the land itself, since the two were bound together.

In 1978 the church also recognized its position in relation to these views of land. Bishop Francisco Claver, a member of the CBCP and key organizer among these workshops and seminars published *The Stones Will Cry Out*. Claver, himself from Bontoc in Cordillera, was a

¹³⁸ Shelton H. Davis. “Indigenous Views of Land and the Environment.” World Bank Discussion paper. Washington DC, 1993, 68.

¹³⁹ Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos (ECTF) posed the question to 11 Mindanao tribes, “what is your concept of land, its ownership and its use?”

¹⁴⁰ Oona Paredes has shown how Higaûnons conflated environmentalist rhetoric with expressions of ethnic identity, emphasizing economic and cultural dependence on the land. Land struggles have defined Higaûnon identity, bringing together the “different threads of Higaûnon political and social history.” Oona Thommes Paredes, “Higaûnon Resistance and Ethnic Politics in Northern Mindanao,” *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 8, no. 1 (1997), 272.

bishop to Malaybalay in Bukidnon, the provincial capital with a diocese covering over 8,000 square kilometers, in one of the regions of Mindanao most heavily impacted by agribusiness. (fig 4.33) *The Stones Will Cry Out* was a collection of his pastoral letters, “grassroots pastorals” as he called them, published by the Christian press Maryknoll, in New York. Claver began these weekly pastoral letters after the closure of several church publications and radio stations in Mindanao (accused of “sending coded messages to the Communists in the hills”) with which he was involved in November and December 1976, including *Signs*.¹⁴¹

“Mr. President, I am writing this from my father’s house here in Bontoc” Claver wrote in April 1975, “I came here because I was summoned by my people.” In this letter to Marcos—written far from his diocese in Mindanao—Claver transcribed his meetings with despairing groups of Bontoc and Kalinga Indigenous peoples, threatened by the Chico Dams. He describes a placard he saw at the entrance to a village, Anabel, which was taken down by employees of the National Power Corporation. It read “This is our father’s land. Not even Moses can bring us to another land.” The man who spoke these words was not a baptized Christian,” yet,

at the base of their opposition to the building of the dams is an intense religiosity, a deeply felt belief that what is given them by God is a sacred trust and it is not right for a person to be forcibly divested by other people of what one has received freely from the Creator.¹⁴²

Religious duty and land as heirloom were collapsed as one in Claver’s letter, in which he volunteered as translator for Marcos these sentiments: land, death, life. “It is this opposition *on*

¹⁴¹ Two radio stations, DXBB and DXCD, were closed on November 18, 1976 (one in Tagum, Davao, the other in Malaybalay, Bukidnon). They were accused of having links to the NPA and sending messages to them in the hills, along with the church newspaper of Malaybalay, *Ang Bandilyo*, “The Town Crier.” The charges were later dropped, a grant of “amnesty,” for lack of evidence. Francisco F. Claver, *The Stones Will Cry out: Grassroots Pastorals* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1978), vii; 196.

¹⁴² Claver, *Stones*, 138.

religious grounds that the government, it seems, cannot grasp. What to the government looks like rank superstition is to the people sacrosanct reality.”¹⁴³ Land was more than a right, it was roots and tradition, linked inextricably with land, with fields, burial grounds, sacred groves.

Indeed, for Claver, the best defense of human rights was their “exercise even while they are being denied or violated.”¹⁴⁴ A similar assertion is made by the Brazilian anthropologist Edouardo Viveiros de Castro, an existence of resistance that he coins as “*reexistir*”—*resistir*, *existir*—as the combined aspects of living in order to survive.¹⁴⁵

Bukidnon, like many long-forgotten areas of the Philippines, is caught up in the ferment of development: Ranch lands are being converted overnight into cane fields; a huge sugar central is already up in the municipality of Quezon; mines for a number of metals are being started; infrastructure projects—roads, bridges, airports, dams, etc.—are being launched or planned for the hoped-for economic boom. All of this should stir us up with hope, with optimism, for the future of Bukidnon.¹⁴⁶

Though Claver lambasted the “ferment of development,” he notes that it should have stirred hope or optimism. The kind of development that the government was pushing, however, “destroys people,” and it must be to the profit all citizens, “not just to the government itself.”¹⁴⁷

In the pastoral letter titled “Our Fears,” Claver wrote that “Martial law, by definition, is rule by the gun. And its first and immediate effect on all of us is fear.”¹⁴⁸ He invited the reader of

¹⁴³ Claver, *Stones*, 139.

¹⁴⁴ Claver, *Stones*, 179

¹⁴⁵ The context of Brazilian Indigenous communities bears similarities to that of the Lumad in that they are the surviving descendants of pre-Columbian and pre-Magellan communities, colonized by church and state at least once over. Such “inherent resistance” describes the plight of Indigenous peoples in Brazil, “it is impossible for the indigenous peoples not to resist if they are to continue their existence as such,” he notes, “their existing is inherently a resisting” which is condensed into the neologism of *reexistir*, or *reexist*. *Jacopo Crivelli Visconti*. 30 March, 2020. Bienal São Paulo, “Correspondence #3—Bienal,” accessed March 8, 2021, <http://www.bienal.org.br/post/7516>.

¹⁴⁶ Claver, *The Stones*, (February 26, 1977), 23.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Claver, *The Stones*, (January 15, 1977), 10.

the letter to reconsider the fear of living under martial law via the Gospel according to Matthew, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul” (10:27) explaining that “Fear of God gives us fearlessness before those who would destroy us physically, reduce us through fear to a people without questions—and without answers.”¹⁴⁹ These calls were not unwarranted, under martial law arbitrary detention, arrest, torture and indiscriminate killings by the Philippine Constabulary (PC) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) had become commonplace, and were on the receiving end of Claver’s more heavy-hitting pastoral letters:

I would especially invoke God’s wrath (as Christ himself did once on the people of Corozain and Bethsaida) on those who inflict *actual physical harm* on defenseless people in the name of “government security.” Any form of physical torture to make people confess to crimes (that in most cases they never committed in the first place) is especially execrable.

People flagrantly and publicly guilty of this sin against our common humanity and dignity have cut themselves off from the church. They will henceforth be excluded from the sacraments, from acting as sponsors in baptisms, confirmations, and weddings.¹⁵⁰

“Government security” refers to the tactics of the PC, AFP and Panamin, but also referred to the more pernicious forms of counterinsurgency. The Integrated Area Development (IAD) program, a World Bank sponsored government response to insurgent NPA activity that funded road building to facilitate the mobility of the AFP. An anonymous interview with a World Bank official (conducted by Walden Bello in 1980) described how “military officers head up key positions even in the rural development component[s]” of IAD projects.¹⁵¹ Counterinsurgency, security and development, like the agents involved in Panamin, were closely tied together.

¹⁴⁹ Claver, *The Stones*, (January 15, 1977), 11

¹⁵⁰ Francisco F. Claver, *The Stones Will Cry Out: Grassroots Pastorals* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1978), 9.

¹⁵¹ Walden F. Bello, David Kinley, and Elaine Elinson, *Development Debacle, the World Bank in the Philippines* (San Francisco, CA : [Oakland, Calif.]: Institute for Food and Development Policy ; Philippine Solidarity Network, 1982), 93.

Erosion of difference

What do these experiences of church activists and Indigenous peoples' interactions in their opposition to Marcos and Panamin reveal about land and territory? For one, that systems of faith were not mutually exclusive, indeed, land itself as the body of Christ, "sacrosanct reality," was wielded by both parties in their alliance, a common space on which to understand spirituality in resistance. Being removed from land, violently and otherwise, was a deeply felt incursion on Indigenous peoples whether in Bukidnon, Cotabato or the Cordillera. Indeed, it was the commonality that these different factions, historically so different, were able to come together on. When I visited the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples in Manila in 2019, I came across a torn-out piece of paper that was being used as a bookmark in an issue of *Tribal Forum*.¹⁵² (fig 4.39) On this piece of paper was written a quote from the Indigenous leader Macliing Dulag, it read: "If the land could speak, it would speak for us." For Dulag, Claver, Mansmann and the other figures discussed in this story of faith and landscape, the question of land was the glue holding several diverse actors together.

The stones will cry out; if the land could speak: the speech acts encapsulated in Claver and Dulag's words resonate as a personification of materials that calls to attention other ways of perceiving the rural landscape as a built environment. Unlike the Panamin reservations that architecturally reconfigured the countryside, for Claver, speaking to assembled parishioners indoors, and Dulag who was assassinated for leading the resistance against the Chico Dam (discussed in chapter 2), it was cultural production around indigeneity that reconfigured perceptions of the land. Through church cultural production in alliance with tribal Filipinos it is

¹⁵² The ECTF changed their name to the ECIP, following the lead of the United Nations who began referring to naming first nations peoples as Indigenous Peoples in the 1990s.

possible to trace the political economy of indigeneity as it was being sketched out by the early 1980s. Launching *Tribal Forum* at the end of 1979 was a way for the ECTF to increase the visibility of the plight and resistance movement of Indigenous peoples in the country. They described their role as one of closing the gap between the general population and tribal Filipinos, a gap that elided the fact that their problems were the same: “exploitation, injustices and violation of human rights” under martial law.¹⁵³ *Tribal Forum* was a venue for connecting tribal issues to national issues. In barely disguised similarity to *Signs of the Times*, the editorial of the first issue of *Tribal Forum* described their duty:

We are guided by the Gospel’s message of total human liberation. Our work is part of the Christian duty of “scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them.” With all these in mind, we pledge to disseminate relevant and truthful information; strive for accuracy and depth; and guard against carelessness and distortions. Should we fall short of these ideals, we stand gladly to be corrected. For we believe that only through constructive criticism can we improve our work and enrich our experience.¹⁵⁴

Created as a Catholic agency under the CBCP, the ECTF used *Tribal Forum* as the main organ for voicing dissent. It was similar to *Signs* in that it brought together voices of the clergy with Indigenous peoples and activists working with them, as well as foreign commentators. However *Tribal Forum* differed in that it broadened the measures by which dissent could be voiced. It built on the campaigns led by the ECTF in the form of cultural events such as Tribal Filipino Sunday—plays, festivals, speeches and poetry—all were reported on and organized through the pages of *Tribal Forum*. As a result, after 1979 the movement became more creative with interpretations of faith, land and inhabitation. Consider how evangelization is described in this excerpt from the “Philosophy of Work” from the first issue:

¹⁵³ “Closing the Gap” editorial in *Tribal Forum* Vol. 1, No. 1, Nov–Dec 1979

¹⁵⁴ “Closing the Gap” editorial in *Tribal Forum* Vol. 1, No. 1, Nov–Dec 1979

Our evangelization is a witness of life and humble service. We offer Christ's message of salvation to them, as a gift and an invitation to which they can respond and receive freely in their own way, in their own time. [...] pledge ourselves to the building up of interdependent yet self-determining communities through:

1. Participation in the Tribal Filipinos' opposition to all attempts to destroy their cultural heritage.
2. Participation in their opposition to all forms of exploitation and violation of justice and human rights.
3. Sharing of resources in the promotion of liberating education and organization.

Participation in *Tribal Forum* events is based on opposition first, faith second. The assertion of the importance of intangible cultural heritage—a category that was first officially recognized by UNESCO in 2003, is a basic condition of participation in the sharing of resources through the resistance struggle laid out by the ECTF. These organizing principles were defined in response to the conditions in the countryside:

A series of disturbing events has put tribal Filipinos back on the map again. The government's national industrialization program has triggered the influx of foreign and big business, dams, and other infrastructure projects into tribal lands. [...] They are not objecting to development per se. But they refuse to play host to "progress" which spells their doom. The plight of millions of tribal Filipinos throbs hot on two issues: LAND—their basic source of life; and SURVIVAL—as people and ethnic groups with distinct cultural heritage. Everything they hold precious is at stake."¹⁵⁵

Land and survival were the themes on which the activity was organized, but these involved speculations on how religious framings of the problems faced could be understood. In the first issue a poem reflected on Tribal Filipino Sunday, "Why Jesus Wept," an excerpt reads: "And He passed over the mountain ranges of the B'laans and the Manobos, and He saw the landgrabbing of multinational companies. And Jesus wept."¹⁵⁶ (fig 4.40) A "Cordillera Version" of the same poem appeared in summer 1981, with yet more specificity to the situation. (fig 4.41)

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, "Philosophy of Work" in *Tribal Forum*, 2–3.

¹⁵⁶ *Tribal Forum* Vol. 1, No. 1, Nov–Dec 1979

... The following day, Jesus was standing by a mining pit, and He observed how exhausted miners were made to strip and pass through a metal detector. And He walked to their bunkhouses, and He saw that there was hardly room for all. And He listened as the miners talked about the meager wages paid them by their foreign masters. And Jesus wept. [...]

And He crossed the mountains to the west and entered the province of Abra. And He walked in the mud left by Cellophil trucks loaded with logs for the pulp mill. And everywhere He went, He met bands of soldiers who were keeping watch over the entire area. And Jesus wept.¹⁵⁷

Cellophil Resources Corporation, a giant logging venture integrated with pulp and paper manufactures, was fronted as a “pine plantation” in the Abra highlands.¹⁵⁸ Cellophil was run by the Marcos crony Herminio Disini—part of “our responsibility in helping government speed up the industrialization and development of the economy in God-forsaken places”—took advantage of the recently enacted Presidential Decree 410 (Marc 11, 1974), “declaring ancestral lands occupied and cultivated by national cultural communities as alienable and disposable, and for other purposes.”¹⁵⁹ The decree was dressed up as giving “the same opportunity to own the lands occupied and cultivated by their ancestors,” meaning that the Director of Forest Development would distribute said lands among Indigenous peoples that could prove that they had “occupied and cultivated” them for at least ten years before the effectivity of the decree.¹⁶⁰

Alongside the use of poetry to frame the church perspective of agribusiness injustices, *Tribal Forum* reported on events that furthered similar causes. By the early 1980s it was

¹⁵⁷ *Tribal Forum*, July-August 1981, 11.

¹⁵⁸ Filomeno V. Aguilar, “The Task Ahead: Developing the Uplands Through Social Forestry,” *Philippine Studies* 31, no. 4 (1983): 419;

¹⁵⁹ Herminio Disini, interview in *Business Day*, January 20, 1978; PD 410; Walden F. Bello, David Kinley, and Elaine Elinson, *Development Debacle, the World Bank in the Philippines* (San Francisco, CA: [Oakland, Calif.]: Institute for Food and Development Policy; Philippine Solidarity Network, 1982), 90.

¹⁶⁰ PD 410; Dorral, Richard. “The Tinggians of Abra and Cellophil: A Situation Report” *Aghamtao* 2 (December 1979), 116–54.

common knowledge that the Marcos dictatorship was propped up by Multilateral Development Banks (Cellophil's "pine plantations" were funded by the World Bank) and the larger forces at play were now clearly in the picture.¹⁶¹ "Dictatorship and its direct beneficiary—US imperialism," were the charges against which the 1982 Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy (NAJFD) held a congress, involving performances and speeches. The *Tribal Forum* article that described the events detailed a dance performance that symbolized the context of Philippine society under martial law, (fig 4.42)

From the back of the coliseum the rhythmic sound of gongs swelled to a mighty beat. It was as if the echoes had placed the expectant crowd in the majestic Cordillera mountains. Along the aisle, pounding their instruments in mesmerizing unison, a group of Igorots danced single file towards the stage. The men were resplendent in their native attire. Their bronze skins glistened softly in the stage lights. They ascended the podium and circled around as if following the fluid motions of a long snake. Their faces intent, their feet hugging the ground, their bodies arched like strung bows. Then, from the darkness of the left stage an effigy of an American bald eagle appeared. Carried on three poles by camouflaged actors, it seemingly hovered above the dancers. The eagle had an American flag for its wings. This was supposed to represent 'US imperialism and its local counterparts.' The men manipulated the eagle skillfully such that it seemed to fly menacingly on the now dwarfed dancers. Just then, actors representing the different sectors and mass organizations all over the country, joined the ranks of the dancers. The now-reinforced dancers continued their rhythmic flow as they and the eagle circled one another as if in a fight. This went on for some time. Then, out of nowhere, other actors displaying a streamer which read: 'Dismantle the US-Marcos Dictatorship!' joined the dancers. They went under the eagle and gave the streamer to the other dancers. As the gongs pounded furiously they danced around the eagle, the streamer seemingly tightening around its neck. Then, it fell. A victory cry rent the air as the Igorots leaped high and trampled the effigy underfoot.¹⁶²

The description of the powerful effect that this performance, staged by a group of Igorots (the collective name for tribal groups in the Cordillera, including Kalinga and Bontoc), had on the audience is mesmerizing. The piece describes a resistance movement that was more than the sum

¹⁶¹ Bello, 90.

¹⁶² "NAJFD Holds People's Congress" Rene Agbayani describes the scene in, *Tribal Forum*, 1982, 9.

of its parts—performance, indigeneity, theater, dance, caricature—and one that was also carnival, an event that brings a diversity of people together in an air of celebration, not only in overcoming their shared oppressors, but in the capacity to resist and exist. Events like this one, and Tribal Filipino Sunday (in which performances were also common) were an opportunity to stage tribal issues in urban centers and bring these issues to wider audiences. The resistance-solidarity networks were broadened in the process, but so was the conception of indigeneity as a cohesive paradigm at the center of them.

The sophistication with which *Tribal Forum*'s visual tactics reached can be discerned in the January 1983 issue, "Culture Shock," in which all of the tropes of the previous decade are juxtaposed in a frenzy of black and white cartoon drawings. (fig 4.43) The parody of all of the ills of martial law—military bases; hydroelectric dams; Panamin resettlement sites; logging, palm oil and pineapple plantations—are jumbled together in a wry portrait that is as mocking in tone as it is fatigued with of the accessibility of the stories it contains. Elizalde grins from a helicopter as it lands on a "Panamin Abaka plantation and Nude Camp" recalling that Indigenous peoples were required to wear traditional clothing as a prerequisite to receive aid at resettlement sites, while a "Hamletting Area" is guarded by a row of surly soldiers. Elsewhere a group of Dumagat children regard a man (a surveyor?) pointing "kaliwa" and "kanan" each direction faced with a large dam. The sketch is a description of the Kaliwa Dam project, "kaliwa" being both a place name and the word for "left" in Filipino, employed in this sense as the direction for a dead end alongside "kanan" (right). (fig 4.44)

What these vivid if fleeting examples demonstrate about the church, and specifically the ECTF, was that it was a powerful vehicle for cultural production in a time of fear and injustice. While the Kalinga, T'boli, Higaonon or Mansaka were embroiled in the strife brought on by

Panamin and its henchmen, through church programs they were provided the possibility to choose a resistance that married cultural activity with a popular environmentalism. While some of the tenets of this environmentalism came from Indigenous sources, such as *kaingin* practices and rice terraces, others found form through the ecclesial repositioning of friars such as Las Casas, the pastoral letters of Bishop Claver, the pages of *Signs* and the work of *Tribal Forum*.

III

Highland Militias

In “Specific Characteristics of Our People’s War,” the mountainous, archipelagic topography of the Philippines is described as playing a crucial role in the strategy for forging a policy of “centralized leadership and decentralized operations” for the New Peoples’ Army (NPA). The tract, written in 1974 by Amado Guerrero, the nom de guerre of José Sison, leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines, rooted Marxism-Leninism in the particularities of the Philippine landscape.¹⁶³ The strategy of creating multiple guerrilla zones and bases throughout the archipelago had, according to Walden Bello, a devastating effect on the AFP, who were unable to amass their forces in concentrated attacks and instead were stretched beyond their means.¹⁶⁴ “The mountainous character of the country countervails its archipelagic character from the start,” wrote Guerrero.¹⁶⁵ Sison’s broader interest in promoting the landscape of the country as a folded in to the revolutionary struggle is also visible in his poems of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Neferti Tadiar discusses how poems such as “The Forest Is Still Enchanted,” “The Coming of the Rain,” and “Rain and Sun on the Mountains” play on the dynamic natural environments of the islands to free the masses from the colonizing spirit of superstition. “The guerrilla is like a poet” writes Sison, “He has merged with the trees ... The guerilla is like a poet. Enrhymed with nature.” For Tadiar, Sison’s poetry and Guerrero’s strategy are not merely

¹⁶³ Walden Bello, “From the Ashes: The Rebirth of the Philippine Revolution: A Review Essay,” ed. Amado Guerrero, Francisco Nemenzo, and US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff, *Third World Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (1986): 260.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Guerrero, “Specific Characteristics of People’s War”

rhetorical devices. Rather, they are a “technology of imagination that is fundamental to the practical life of the movement.”¹⁶⁶

It is helpful, then, to begin a discussion of the NPA with and through Sison/Guerrero’s descriptions of the Philippine landscape as integral to the romance and strategy of insurgent warfare. Just as the romance of counterinsurgency was located in emerging theories of psychology, as chapter 3 discussed, insurgent guerrilla warfare was itself rooted in romantic associations with the rural landscape in which it took place. As Rocamora and Panganiban argue, therefore, counterinsurgency was an implicit goal in government rural development programs.¹⁶⁷ It was through counterinsurgency that rural development was consolidated, and through the NPA that rural development found an alibi for militarization, as it was conveniently tied to the issue of security. The rise of the NPA, which was operating twenty guerrilla fronts in Luzon by 1974, helps to understand too why the rise of resettlement and eventual “hamletization” campaigns were taken up with such gusto by the AFP by the early 1980s, with Panamin boasting that over 2,600,000 tribal Filipinos were using Panamin “service centers” as nuclei for “settlements” by 1979.

To exploit the mountainous character of the Philippines the NPA operated from the borders of ranges from which they exerted political and military influence on lowland provinces, a “profoundly dialectical, profoundly Marxist” approach that turned geographical constraints into advantages, Bello notes.¹⁶⁸ The propaganda campaigns of the NPA too were effective toward

¹⁶⁶ Neferti Xina M. Tadiar, *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization, Post-Contemporary Interventions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 270.

¹⁶⁷ J. Eliseo Rocamora and Corazon Conti Panganiban, *Rural Development Strategies, the Philippine Case: Final Report* (Ateneo de Manila University, Institute of Philippine Culture, 1975), 125.

¹⁶⁸ Bello, “From the Ashes,” 269.

their cause. (fig 4.45, 4.46) Armed Propaganda Units (APUs) were spread among the major islands of the archipelago to do non-military political work, such as education, medical services and organization-building, Ka Dexter, leader of NPA unit in northern Luzon, noted in 1980 that, “Most of the time when we take military action, it is at the demand of the people. It isn’t to be separated from our political work and propaganda [...] We helped with irrigation, farm work, any kind of labor, even house building.”¹⁶⁹ These APUs won local confidence through exposing systemic social issues, and in turn built more NPA units to continue the work.¹⁷⁰ The NPA was also able to draw the AFP from one part of the country to the next to create breathing room for movement when deemed necessary.

As a scapegoat for the government’s militarization campaigns, the NPA were extraordinarily convenient. The church were often accused of taking sides with the NPA, and while the Christians for National Liberation (CNL), which formed in early 1972 did side with the goals of the NDF-CPP, however with the declaration of martial law later that year, some of these members were arrested and others were forced underground.¹⁷¹ At other times, the clergy attempted to actively distance themselves from the activity of the NPA. In 1978, amid allegations of church dealings with the NPA and the subsequent closure of church-led radio stations and newspapers in Mindanao, Bishop Claver invited General Olano and others from the AFP to talk at his office with the aim of clearing the church of any interaction with the NPA.¹⁷² Military pressure nevertheless continued on the Church with multiple raids and National Council of

¹⁶⁹ *Wall Street Journal* June 21, 1980, cf Philippines Research Center, NPA, 1981, 8.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 269–270,

¹⁷¹ Robert Youngblood, *Marcos Against the Church: Economic Development and Political Repression in the Philippines* (Cornell University Press, 2019), 81.

¹⁷² Claver, *Grassroots Pastorals*, 3–4.

Churches of the Philippines (NCCP) officials being arrested on suspicion of links to communist organizations.¹⁷³

By 1980 the NPA had over twenty-six battlefronts in the countryside and operated in more than half of the country's provinces, taking advantage of the cumbersome reaction times of the AFP. Infrastructure (and in particular road building) was of primary concern for the Marcos government to cheaply provide the AFP access to these fronts. Panamin's 1978 "National Security and Information Campaign" stated,

Through its security program and in close coordination with the military, PANAMIN has maintained the loyalty of the 4.25 million non-Muslim hill tribes to the President and to the government. As a result, the cultural communities have served as a strong deterring factor to the expansion plans of the Muslim rebels and the NPA's.¹⁷⁴

These reservation schemes were becoming increasingly complex. Farmers were issued "safety passes" by military detachments to permit them to get wood in the forest, while in the fortified villages themselves each family would have to post a list of occupants in front of the house for the military's spontaneous cross-checks for "subversive activity."¹⁷⁵ These tactics were the same as those used in Vietnam with the creation of "free fire zones" during the Strategic Hamlets Program. Because of rules like the safety passes, "when we go on operations at night," General Olano noted in an interview with visiting relief workers in 1979, "we will know that any movement in the field is enemy."¹⁷⁶ Olano also attempted to substantiate the military's approach,

¹⁷³ In addition to the jailing of two sisters of the Good Shepherd (RGS) on subversion and murder charges and military raids on Catholic Church social action centers in the Visayas. Robert L. Youngblood, "The Philippines in 1982: Marcos Gets Tough with Domestic Critics," *Asian Survey* 23, no. 2 (February 1, 1983): 211.

¹⁷⁴ Rocamora, "The Political Uses of Panamin," *SEAC* 19.

¹⁷⁵ When three Catholic sisters on a relief mission slept with a family in Mabuhay barrio recently, the house was searched at midnight." Rocamora, "The Political Uses of Panamin," *SEAC*, 17.

¹⁷⁶ Rocamora, "The Political Uses of Panamin," *SEAC*, 17.

“they find the advantages of being together, not only for security but in the services we can provide them, I think they will find it advantageous to stay in those communities. Families should learn to live together with other families, as communities.”¹⁷⁷

In a further parallel with the counterinsurgency strategies employed in Vietnam a decade prior, the same tactic as that undertaken with the Montagnards was carried out in which Indigenous peoples were trained as armed paramilitary troops called Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDFs). A Panamin official explained to the ICL Research Team that “the only chance the natives have for survival and self-defense in these remote areas is a strong CHDF,” except, these means, he explained, only led to more violence,

We need to protect the area from encroaching outsiders—bandits, possible landgrabbers, subversives. The only problem is, sometimes the PC patrolling the area cannot distinguish our people from the bandits or the dissidents. The result is unnecessary bloodshed. That’s why the military should leave us alone to patrol and guard the remote areas.¹⁷⁸

An aid worker speaking in military tones? The officials in Panamin were clearly at home with such language, which helps to explain their unwillingness to cede military duties to the PC. Indeed, some Indigenous peoples did take up arms for the NPA and many were sympathizers, but the issue was not necessarily exploitation of land but who was in control of that exploitation.¹⁷⁹ (fig 4.48)

¹⁷⁷ Ibid 18

¹⁷⁸ ICL Research Team interviews a Panamin regional official on their military programs. 17–18.

¹⁷⁹ Oona Paredes’ account of the conflict during the Higaonon war during the 1970s explains how “Higaonons are not necessarily against the commercial exploitation of the forest—as long as they receive acceptable compensation and retain ultimate control of their land. In fact, logging is not the issue at all. [...] Though the Higaonon involved were NPA troops and sympathizers, they chose the rhetoric of environmentalism over that of class struggle,” which coincided with the rise of popular environmentalism in the Philippines. Oona Thommes Paredes, “Higaonon Resistance and Ethnic Politics in Northern Mindanao,” *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 8, no. 1 (1997): 282–283.

“Base denial operations” and strategic hamlets

It is against the backdrop of the NPA as a rural force that the AFP was struggling to contain, that the evolution of Panamin reservations into fully-fledged strategic hamlets, carried out by the military, progressed into the early 1980s. Department of Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile issued a Memorandum in March 1982 to cease hamletting, however, in December of that year the Davao del Sur chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines set up a Fact-Finding Mission to investigate allegations of hamletting, and the reported existence of multitudes of “hamlets” in several areas of Mindanao. “Forced groupings” or “hamletting” was a military terminology that was purportedly for protection from rebels of the NPA. Between 1981 and 1983 it was estimated that half a million Filipinos had been forced into such hamlets.¹⁸⁰ The Fact-Finding Mission concluded that,

The continued use of ‘strategic groupings’ or ‘hamletting’ by the military as a strategy of counter-insurgency is alarming. [...] Hamletting as a strategy could even alienate the people from the government. Instead of separating the population from the NPA, the program as it is creates the danger of making NPA’s out of the people.¹⁸¹

In an interview in Davao, General Alfredo Olano, Philippine Constabulary commander for Region XI, described the operations as being modeled on the strategic hamlet strategy used in

¹⁸⁰ Mindanao Documentation Committee for Refugees (Philippines), *The Expanding Strategic Hamlets of Mindanao* (Philippines: Mindanao Documentation Committee for Refugees, 1983).

¹⁸¹ Report of the IBP Davao del Sur Chapter Human Rights Committee Fact-Finding Mission. The report also notes that ‘hamletting’ is not new in the Philippines, being practiced by the Spanish in the 16th Century under the Laws of the Indies, and termed *reducciones*. “The ostensible purpose then was to gather villagers together in one area to protect them from Moro slave raids. The real purpose was to facilitate their indoctrination and administration.”

Virginia A Leary et al., *The Philippines, Human Rights after Martial Law: Report of a Mission*, 1984, 39.

The Strategic Hamlets of Mindanao. (Mindanao, Philippines: Mindanao Documentation Committee for Refugees, 1981); Mindanao Documentation Committee for Refugees (Philippines), *The Expanding Strategic Hamlets of Mindanao* (Philippines: Mindanao Documentation Committee for Refugees, 1983).

Vietnam, however, the strategy was carried out through civil authorities to relocate rural peasantry and deny NPA guerrillas their mass base.¹⁸² Removing farmers from their agricultural lands meant that they would have to walk up to six miles to care for small plots of one- to five-hectares of corn, coffee and cacao, and “no cooking pots are to remain in the countryside” lest they be put to use by NPA insurgents.¹⁸³ Because there is very little physical evidence of what these reservations entailed, we must rely on the precedent set by Panamin’s socio-economic programs described in the earlier part of this chapter, and the photographs and reports that accompanied accounts of strategic hamlets in the reports of concerned activists.

A visiting American priest, Earl Martin, described the so-called agricultural programs “for upliftment” in Bukidnon in 1981.¹⁸⁴ He wrote that families were ordered to relocate to barrio centers along easily accessible roads, away from mountains. Following the “precipitous orders,” families were crowded into “makeshift hovels or partially completed new structures.”¹⁸⁵ On his visits, he asked whether the military assisted in building the camps, “Oh no, in fact they required us to help build their quarters. Each family had to donate a certain number of man-days labor to help them.”¹⁸⁶ (fig 4.49) Just as in 1979, when tribal groups like the Higaonon had to consent to the destruction of their houses to qualify for Panamin assistance the process of dislocation and uprooting now extended to a more sophisticated mode of destruction of former villages. (fig

¹⁸² Earl Martin, in *Southeast Asia Chronicle* 83 writes “it is the military's attempt to curb the growing influence of the communist New People's Army (NPA) in this remote area several rough-riding hours north of Tagum. Brig. Gen. Alfredo Olano, PC commander for Region XI, said in a recent interview in Davao that the San Vicente operation is modeled on the ‘strategic hamlet’ strategy employed widely in the Vietnam War. Military planners here often issuing orders through civil authorities-expressed hope that this strategy will deny a base of popular support to the NPA guerrillas.” Earl Martin, “In the Name of Security: A Philippine Strategic Hamlet” from *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, No. 83. Berkeley, Southeast Asia Resource Center. April 1982, 16.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Martin, “In the Name of Security” (Martin was from the Mennonite Central Committee, a relief, service, and peace agency).

¹⁸⁵ Martin, 16.

¹⁸⁶ Martin, “In the Name of Security,” *Southeast Asia Chronicle* 83, 17

4.51) Martin described that if farmers did not want to destroy farmhouses in the countryside, they were instructed to leave the frame standing but remove the sides and floor, so that the interior was visible to passing troop patrols—with the military threatening to burn any houses left standing.¹⁸⁷

No longer were resettlement centers simply the employ of Panamin agribusiness maneuvering but had evolved to play a role in what was increasingly being described as a refugee crisis.¹⁸⁸ *Tribal Forum* reported in 1983 that the strategic hamlets were called “live-in” resettlement centers, “despite the failure of strategic hamlets in Vietnam, they are being duplicated today in Mindanao and northern Luzon [...] several hundred thousand people are currently living in strategic hamlets in the entire country.”¹⁸⁹ The Philippine Council for Human Rights alleged a play-by-play that led to the hamletting of villagers:

mass protest actions or guerrilla operations occur in areas where the NPA is strong; the military reacts by arresting, torturing and salvaging citizens suspected of being dissidents or sympathizing with rebels; more protest actions and guerilla offensives are launched; then, in a last-ditch effort to quash dissent, the military orders the villagers to abandon their homes and live in clumps of houses in the población where they are kept under close guard.¹⁹⁰

Guarded by detachments of soldiers, the hamlets were “worse than even the most squalid slums” with many families grouped together in single houses. (fig 4.52) Poor sanitary conditions turned

¹⁸⁷ Martin, “In the Name of Security,” *Southeast Asia Chronicle* 83, 17

¹⁸⁸ As early as 1972 a report in the *New York Times* described how “the Philippine armed forces are uprooting thousands of villagers in a region through which small bands of guerrillas roam and moving the refugees to towns and villages securely in government control.” A general who was interviewed for the report noted that “everybody who remains in the area is an NPA.” Henry Kamm, “Manila Uprooting Thousands in Drive Against Guerrillas,” Friday, October 20, 1972, *The New York Times*: 9, 75.

¹⁸⁹ “Strategic Hamlet: Philippine Experience” *Tribal Forum*, January 1983, 8.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

deadly, according to the PCHR 145 people dead in hamlet centers in a four-month period in 1981–1982 in the single province of Laac, Davao del Norte, Mindanao, a town where all 35,000 residents were forced to relocate. This province is also rich in marble, gold, silver and coal, a coincidence that was noticed throughout the country.¹⁹¹

By the early 1980s the intensity of militarization appeared to be reaching a climax, hitting a peak with the assassination of Benigno Aquino Jr. in August of 1983 on the tarmac of Manila International Airport. At the stage the country was being was practically run by a combination of army generals and economists, with these two factions being represented on one hand by Imelda Marcos and General Fabian Ver (head of the secret police and the para-military Metro Manila Police Command) and on the other hand, the Marcos cronies of Rodolfo Cuenca, Juan Ponce Enrile, Edward Cojuangco and Cesar Virata.¹⁹² The fissures in an already top-heavy oligarchy were beginning to show, and Elizalde fled in 1983 after a falling out with Imelda.¹⁹³ Panamin was absorbed into the Department of Foreign Affairs and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

¹⁹¹ “Throughout the country,” the report in *Tribal Forum* contends, “the coincidences—of hamletted areas also being sited of possible corporate expansion—are too frequent to be merely incidental. There are already enough indications showing strategic hamlets are being built to clear resource-rich areas of all forms of dissent in order to facilitate the unhampered exploitation of their human and natural resources by foreign as well as local corporations.” *Ibid.*, 10–11.

¹⁹² Joel Rocamora, “Marcos: Safe for Now” *Southeast Asia Chronicle*. Berkeley: Southeast Asia Resource Center (April 1982): 14

¹⁹³ He was reported to have “settled on a coffee plantation in Costa Rica with more than a dozen young Filipino girls” and was expelled three years later by the Costa Rica Government, citing “scandalous reports” of the activities within his heavily guarded compound. Robert Thomas, “Manuel Elizalde, 60, Dies; Defender of Primitive Tribe,” *The New York Times*, May 8, 1997, sec. World.

IV

Faith by 1983

The resettlement centers of Panamin help to understand the function of civilian frameworks to carry out capitalist objectives through military means. In a two-fold process, Panamin hired military men to create these settlements and set an example in how the AFP could create resettlement sites as strategic hamlets, “free-fire zones” and “base denial operations,” against the NPA. The political economy of indigeneity that Panamin created was both a sophisticated publicity campaign in line with the Marcosian “New Society,” and an elaborate cover-up. Panamin’s approach understood that Indigenous peoples had a political economy that could be fixed and exploited—a double exploitation of both humans and their representation—that enabled capital interests to adopt a similar language around philanthropy and “protection.”

At the same time members of the church began their own calls for new forms of organizing, which, judging by the rapidly expanding nature of their publication efforts and rhetoric (not to mention quality of printing and distribution) presented a viable option for a cohesive resistance movement and major front to Panamin and the government. Indeed, it was through church organizing, as the mediator between tribal issues and state aims, that Indigenous peoples were able to better navigate militarization. In his letter to Marcos (April 25, 1975), Bishop Claver warned that “my people are giving serious thought to armed violence and are asking whom they should approach for arms” in order to fight the planning of the Chico dams, “he is desperate. Armed violence is the only answer, but he knows his spear and head-axe are no match for your guns.”¹⁹⁴ Yet, evinced in the humble terms of Claver’s letter, the church offered

¹⁹⁴ Francisco F. Claver, *The Stones Will Cry out: Grassroots Pastorals* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1978), 136.

an alternative, “armed violence cannot be the answer. This much I tried to tell them. I cannot guarantee that they will follow the way of peace in their desperate search for a solution to the life-or-death dilemma you have thrown before them.” The way of peace was an alternative political economy of indigeneity, one that emphasized a spiritual, environmental connection to the land, based on both the principles of ancestral domain and the gospel of the New Testament.

That both Panamin and the ECTF engaged in the creation of a political economy of indigeneity is visible through Panamin’s highly structured resettlement sites, and the wide variety of print media that both organizations produced to forward their opposing agendas. Yet despite the differences between Panamin’s public relations and propaganda, and church organizing and publishing, they shared commonalities. This is partly because each had an overtly public image, Panamin as a government agency, the ECTF as a church organization in a country where over 85% of the populace professed the Catholic faith. Thus, each being acutely aware of their reputation, took great pains in the selection of their vocabulary. Consider, for example, the words with which Bishop Claver defended his responses to an interview in 1984, “The answers I have given above sound like a subversive screed. A screed? Perhaps. And subversive? Definitely yes. I make no bones about the fact. The Gospel has to be subversive of evil and injustice, or it would not be Gospel at all.”¹⁹⁵ Choice of words, Claver was aware, held great weight, and those words defined Indigenous relations to land. In the same interview Claver noted that “All tribal peoples, regardless of how variant their use and concept of land is, depend entirely on the land and its fruits for their physical and social life.”¹⁹⁶ The new conditions that were created by

¹⁹⁵ “Land and Solidarity: From the Village to the Cathedral.” Vol. V, No. 5. *Tribal Forum*, ECTF, 43.

¹⁹⁶ “Land and Solidarity: From the Village to the Cathedral.” Vol. V, No. 5. *Tribal Forum*, ECTF, 41.

Panamín's resettlement sites and the strategic hamlet campaigns that followed them created new vocabularies with which tribal peoples were understood.

In its just short of two-decade existence, Panamin encapsulated the rural developmentalist goals of the Marcos government's New Society by clearing the way for agribusiness thoroughfare and the government absorption of rural lands through the cooption of ancestral domain. These aims were achieved through architectural, legal, and paralegal means through resettlement sites, PD 410 and the overall militarization of tribal affairs. Panamin policy understood that aid in the form of resettlement, land titles and medical support had to adhere to the general sheen of an Indigenous identity, at least in the press. Bamboo, nipa thatch, cogon roofing, and the accoutrements of tribal life all helped Panamin achieve the goal of a cohesive government aid agency with a view toward development. Of course, it didn't fool everyone, but it didn't have to. Even the incredulous, mildly bemused foreign journalists along for the ride could agree that these "cultural minorities" appeared to need help. All the while, agribusiness was protected through the media distraction and the control of land put in the hands of Panamin through their increasing control of ancestral domain. When treated as cultural assets, tribal peoples' subjecthood and way of life became, like their photographed image, frozen in time.

Elizalde's operation hinged on the control of this image. The cumulative effect of a select few camera lenses being aimed at rural Philippines meant that the government were able to control an image of those groups who had previously not been part of a national image into a source of sellable national pride. In their projects, architecture was a feature of the landscape that fulfilled a paradox: replicable yet intangible heritage, disposable yet traditional. Church strategies of networked organization, visible in Tribal Filipino Sunday, *Signs of the Times*, *Tribal Forum*, and the various projects of the ECTF were effective because they remade tribal issues

from localized conflicts into international affairs. In the eyes of the public, the church were regarded as wielding moral higher ground through their ties to the Vatican and were one of the few groups that could still leverage sustained critique against the Marcos government. The church peacefully advocated for Indigenous rights during a time of fear and violence and were able to do so because of their historical connections to the country's Indigenous population in otherwise remote rural landscapes. Yet, just like Panamin, the church also created a nomenclature with which to engage the issues at hand. A pantheistic spiritual connection to the land was enabled through engagement between church laity, activists and Indigenous peoples. This was explored through kaingin shifting cultivation, cultural events that dramatized the resistance movement, Bishop Claver's pastoral letters whose stones cried out, and for Dulag, the land that could speak. All of which, for better or worse, compressed indigeneity into a compact identity with its own political economy.

While resistance was waged through solidarity between church and Indigenous groups in response to agribusiness, it was, perhaps ironically, Panamin that led the way in terms of creating a cohesive singular image for "tribal protection." Through a global marketing campaign that took advantage of Elizalde's media connections in the international presses and the exclusive, sometimes glamorous, always swashbuckling, helicopter missions to Panamin resettlement sites, a political economy of indigeneity was formed through the lenses and words of foreign reporters. These reflections complicate the theoretical analysis of the political economy of indigeneity that formed in the Marcos years. This pernicious process evades straightforward judgement because both modes of this political economy—whether Panamin exoticism or church activism—relied on common approaches as exterior institutions to Indigenous peoples who were lumped together as a single category and whose allegiance they sought.

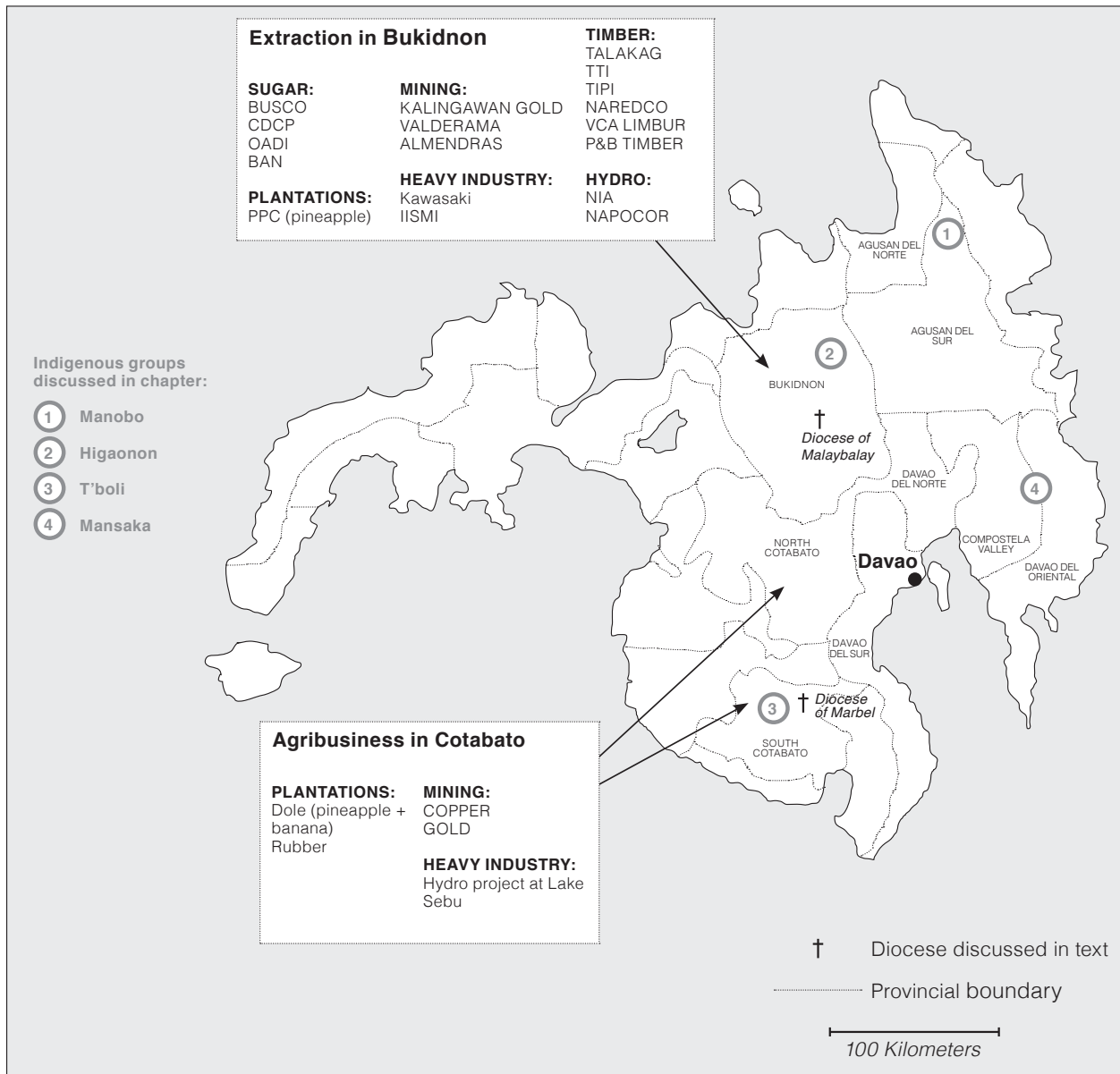


Fig 4.01 Industry, extraction and the church in Mindanao, 1979. Map by the author. Information compiled from: ICL Research Team, 1979; Anti-Slavery Society, 1983; Southeast Asia Chronicle, 1979.

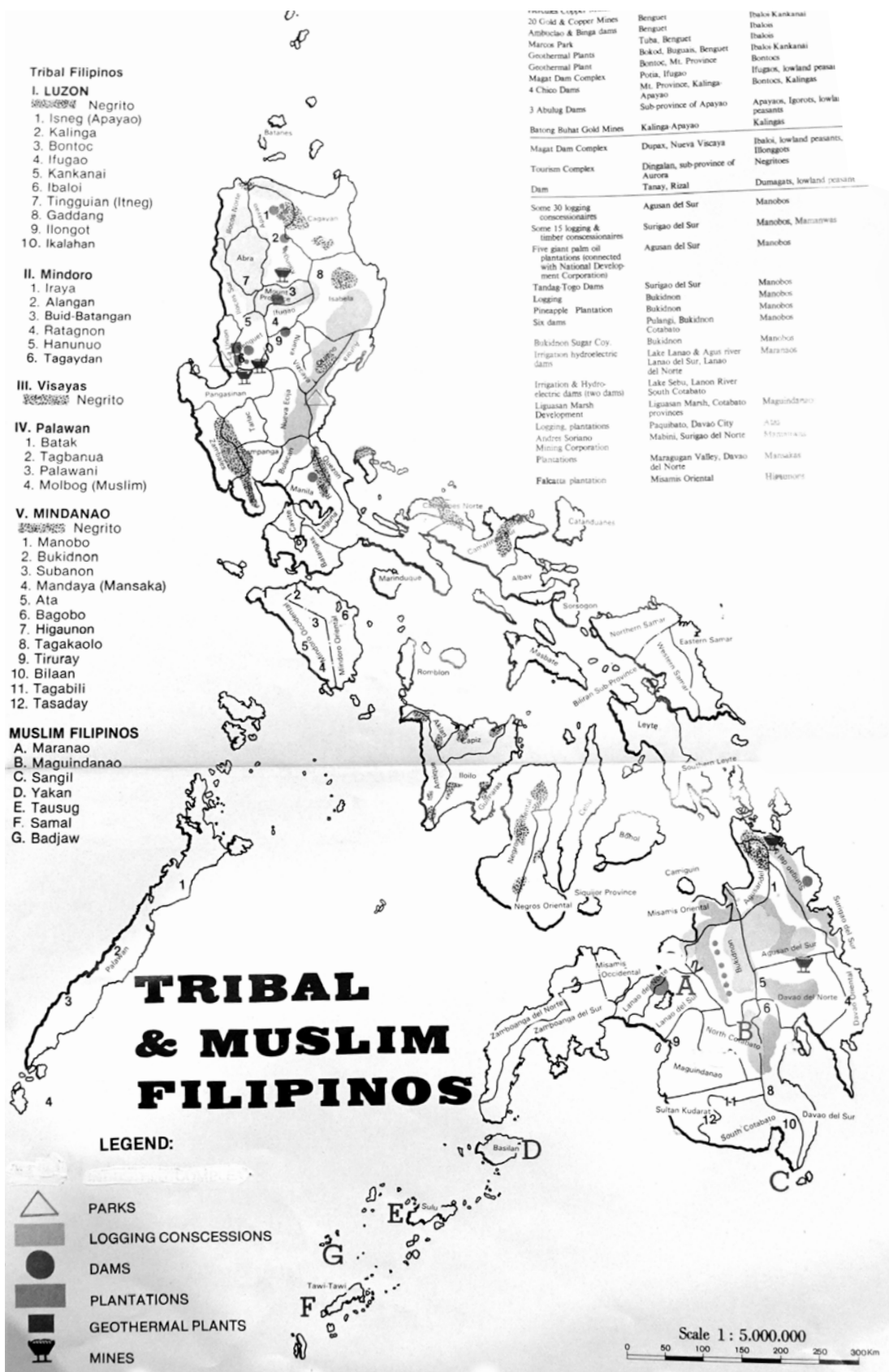


Fig 4.02 Tribal Forum, Vol. II, No. 7. Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos. September-October 1981.

Existing and proposed hydro-electric dams affecting Indigenous Peoples, 1983 (1/3)

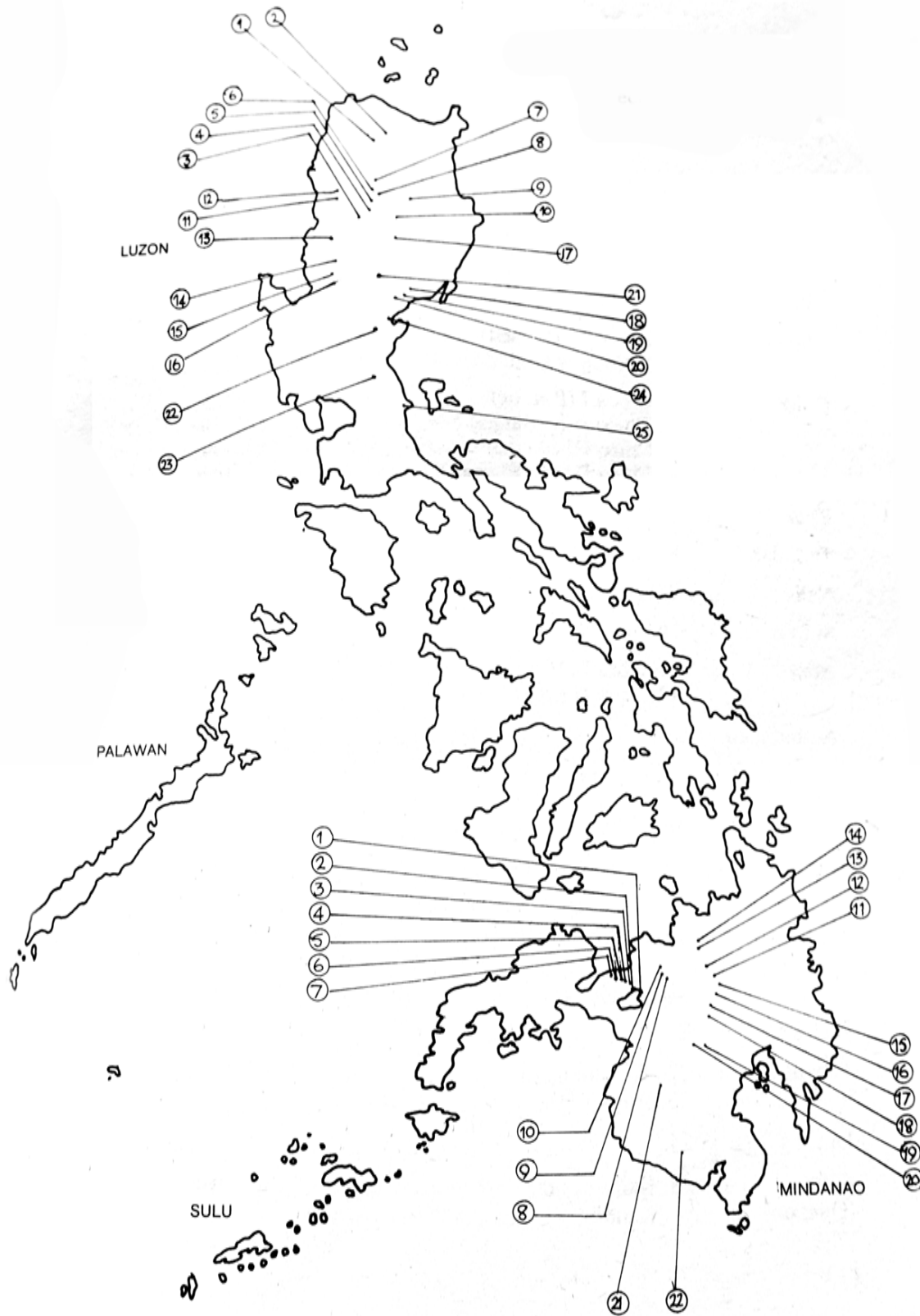


Fig 4.03 Existing and proposed hydro-electric dams affecting Philippine minorities. *Authoritarian government, multinationals and ancestral lands.* Anti-Slavery Society, Indigenous Peoples and Development Series: 1. 1983.

Existing and proposed hydro-electric dams affecting Indigenous Peoples, 1983 (2/3)

River	Name	Completion Date	Dam MW	Affected Peoples	Population
LUZON					
Abulog	1. Abulog I (Gened)	1989	600	Isneg	14,000
	2. Abulog II (Agbulu)	1991	400	Isneg	
Chico	3. Chico I (Bontoc)	N.S.	100	Bontoc/Kankanay	
	4. Chico II (Sadanga)	1991	250	Bontoc/Kankanay	
	5. Chico III (Basao)	1991	100	Kalinga/Bontoc/Kankanay	
	6. Chico IV (Toniangan)	1988	360	Kalinga/Bontoc/Kankanay	
Pasil	7. N.S.	1997	100	Kalinga	85,000
Tanudan	8. Tanudan	1992	140	Kalinga/Bontoc	10,000
Nalig	9.	1997	55	Gaddang/Kalinga	
Siffu	10.	1996	60	Gaddang/Bontoc	16,000/14,000
Abra	11. Abra I (N.S.)	1994	130	Tinggian/Kankanay	
	12. Abra II (Supo)	1991	225	Tinggian/Kankanay	
Amburayan	13.	1994	150	Kankanay	105,000
Agno	14. Ambuklao +	1956	75	Ibaloy/Kankanay, Ifugao	} 76,000
	15. Binga +	1960	100	Ibaloy/Kankanay, Ifugao	
	16. Tabu	1996	110	Ibaloy/Kankanay, Ifugao	
Magat	17. Magat I-IV and V-VI	1983	360	Ifugao, Gaddang	
		1986	180	Kalahan, Kalanguya	
Casecnan	18. Cabingatan	1992	140	Ilongot, Kalahan, others*	
	19. Gadeng	1996	135	Ilongot, Kalahan, others*	
	20. Dakgan	1997	115	Ilongot, Kalahan, others*	
Diduyon	21.	1991	499	Ilongot, Kalahan, others*	384,000
Pampanga	22. Pantabangan +	1972	100	Dumagat, Ilongot, others*	
	23. Angat +	1967	212	Dumagat	
Umiray	24.	1996	100	Dumagat	
Agus	25. Kaliwa Kanan	1994	115	Dumagat	
		1990	280	Dumagat	

* Includes resettled Ifugao, Bontoc, Kankanay and Ibaloy

+ In operation

Sources:

Authoritarian government, multinationals and ancestral lands. Anti-Slavery Society, Indigenous Peoples and Development Series: 1. 1983, 113-117.

Ten Year Energy Program 1979-1988; Ministry of Energy, Manila, 1979, 52-61.

Realizing the Visions of a New Society, *National Multi-year Settlement Plan, 1978-2000*

Ministry of Human Settlements, Manila, September 1979, 73-75.

Proceedings of the Dam Consultation, Davao City, October 1978.

Existing and proposed hydro-electric dams affecting Indigenous Peoples, 1983 (3/3)

River	Name	Completion Date	Dam MW	Affected Peoples	Population
MINDANAO					
Agus	1. Agus I (Marawi)	1982	80	Maranao/Maguindanao	} 480,000
	2. Agus II (Saguiaran)	1979	180	Maranao/Maguindanao	
	3. Agus III (Calangan)	1984	225	Maranao/Maguindanao	
	4. Agus IV (Matampay)	1983	150	Maranao/Maguindanao	
	5. Agus V (Matampay)	1982	55	Maranao/Maguindanao	
	6. Agus VI + (Dituculan)	1977	200	Maranao/Maguindanao	
	7. Agus VII (Dituculan)	1981	54	Maranao/Maguindanao	
Cagayan	8. Cagayan I (Talakag)	1988	100	Bukidnon, Manobo, others	
	9. Cagayan II (Baungon)	1991	100	Bukidnon, Manobo, others	
	10. Cagayan III (N.S.)	1989	100	Bukidnon, Manobo, others	
Tagaloan	11. Tagaloan I	N.S.		Bukidnon, Manobo, others	
	12. Tagaloan II	N.S.		Bukidnon, Manobo, others	
	13. Tagaloan III (M. Fortich)	1990	90	Bukidnon, Manobo, others	
	14. Tagaloan IV	1989	105	Bukidnon, Manobo, others	
Pulangi	15. Pulangi I (N.S.)	1986	69	Bukidnon, Manobo	} 500,000
	16. Pulangi II (N.S.)	1985	343	Bukidnon, Manobo	
	17. Pulangi III (Valencia)	1985	130	Manobo	
	18. Pulangi IV (Naramag)	1984	255	Manobo	
	19. Pulangi V (Balakuran)	1987	348	Manobo, Maguindanao	
	20. Pulangi VI (N.S.)	1988	70	Manobo, Maguindanao	
	21. Maganoy (Maguindanao)	1991	330	Maguindanao, Tiruray, Manobo	
Lake Sebu*		N.S.	30	T'boli	

* Includes resettled Ifugao, Bontoc, Kankanay and Ibaloy

+ In operation

Sources:

Authoritarian government, multinationals and ancestral lands. Anti-Slavery Society, Indigenous Peoples and Development Series: 1. 1983, 113–117.

Ten Year Energy Program 1979–1988; Ministry of Energy, Manila, 1979, 52–61.

Realizing the Visions of a New Society, *National Multi-year Settlement Plan, 1978–2000*

Ministry of Human Settlements, Manila, September 1979, 73–75.

Proceedings of the Dam Consultation, Davao City, October 1978.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

23 January 1976

Sanicid

<u>Various Reports</u>	<u>Page</u>
Military Hounds Militant Workers <i>By a Correspondent</i>	3
Situation of Oil in 1975 Sketched <i>Petroleum News, S.E.A., Vol. 6</i>	6
Implications of FL's Appointment As Metro Manila Manager Sketched <i>Washington Star, 22 December 1975</i>	8
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New Wave of Arrests	25

FOR RELIGIOUS USE

Fig 4.04 Signs of the Times, Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines. January 23, 1976.

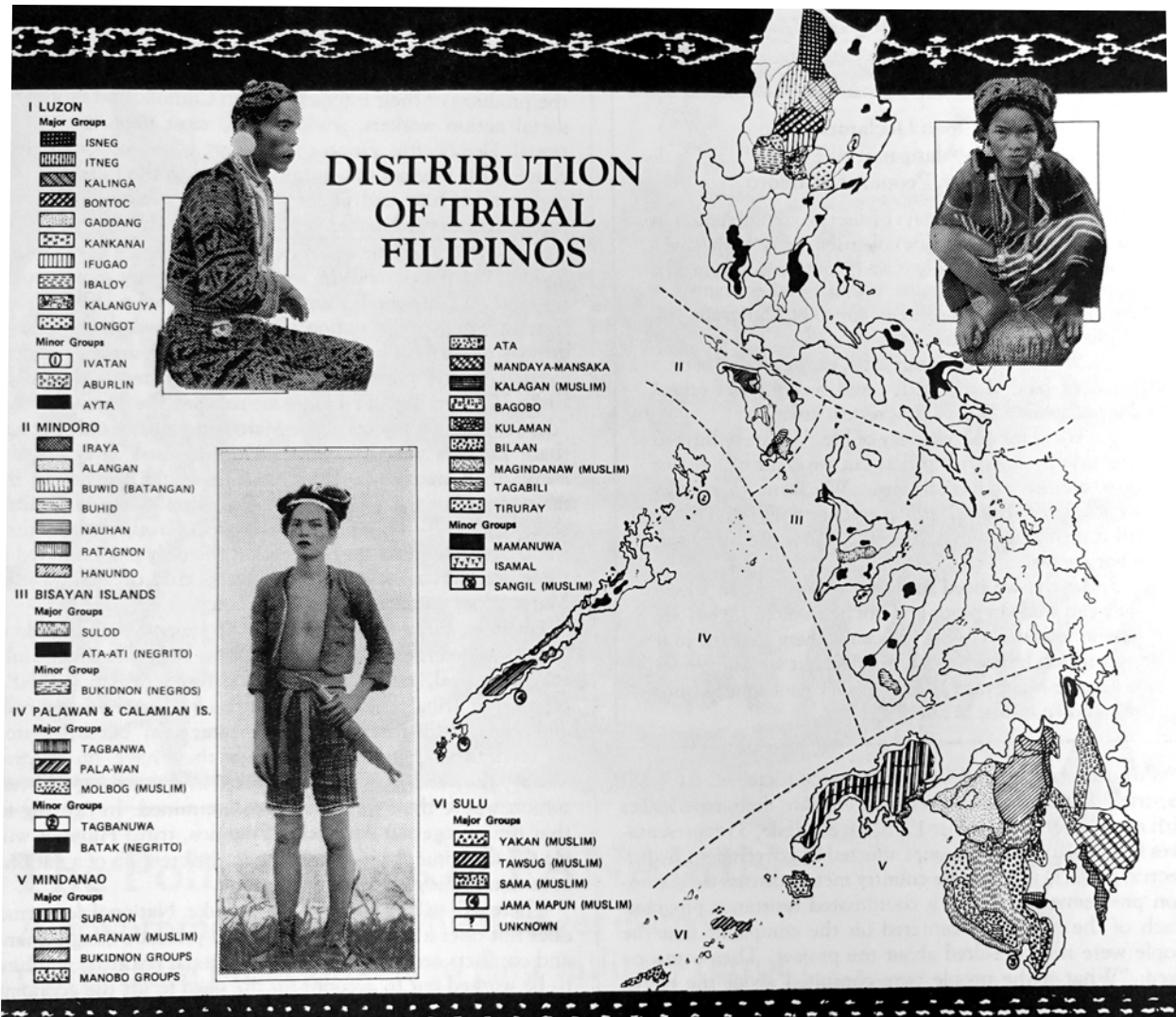
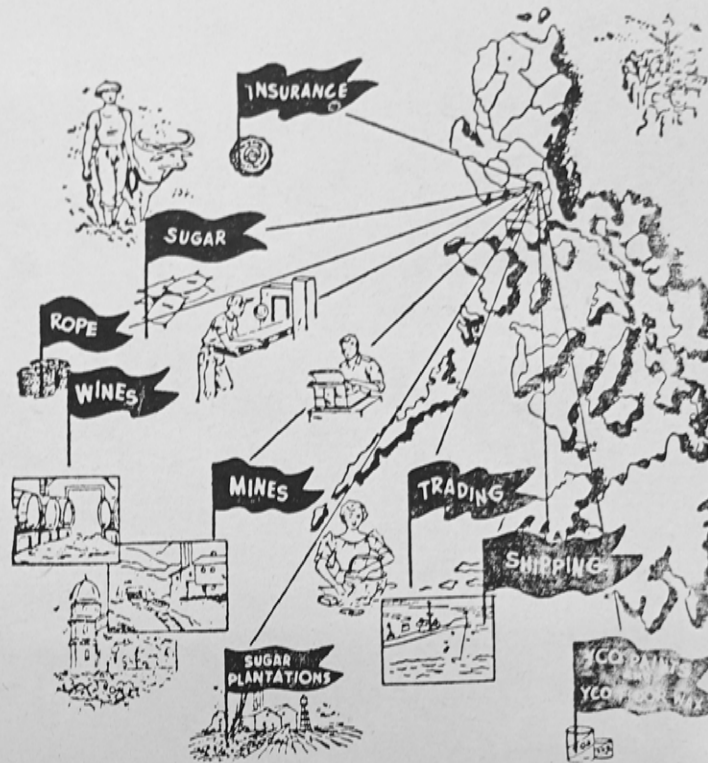


Fig 4.05 "Distribution of Tribal Filipinos" from *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, No. 67. Berkeley: Southeast Asia Resource Center. October 1979.

DEDICATED TO THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE



ELIZALDE & CO., INC.

LA CARLOTA SUGAR CENTRAL
 PILAR SUGAR CENTRAL
 SAMAR MINING CO., INC.
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 METROPOLITAN INSURANCE CO.
 ELIZALDE TRADING CORPORATION

SUGAR PLANTATIONS
 SHIPPING DEPARTMENT
 TANDUAY DISTILLERY, INC
 ELIZALDE PAINT & OIL FACTORY, INC.
 MANILA BROADCASTING CO.

Fig 4.06 Elizalde & Co. advertisement in the 1960 Fookien Times Yearbook, 68.

FIG. 2. CORPORATE EXPANSION IN BUKIDNON

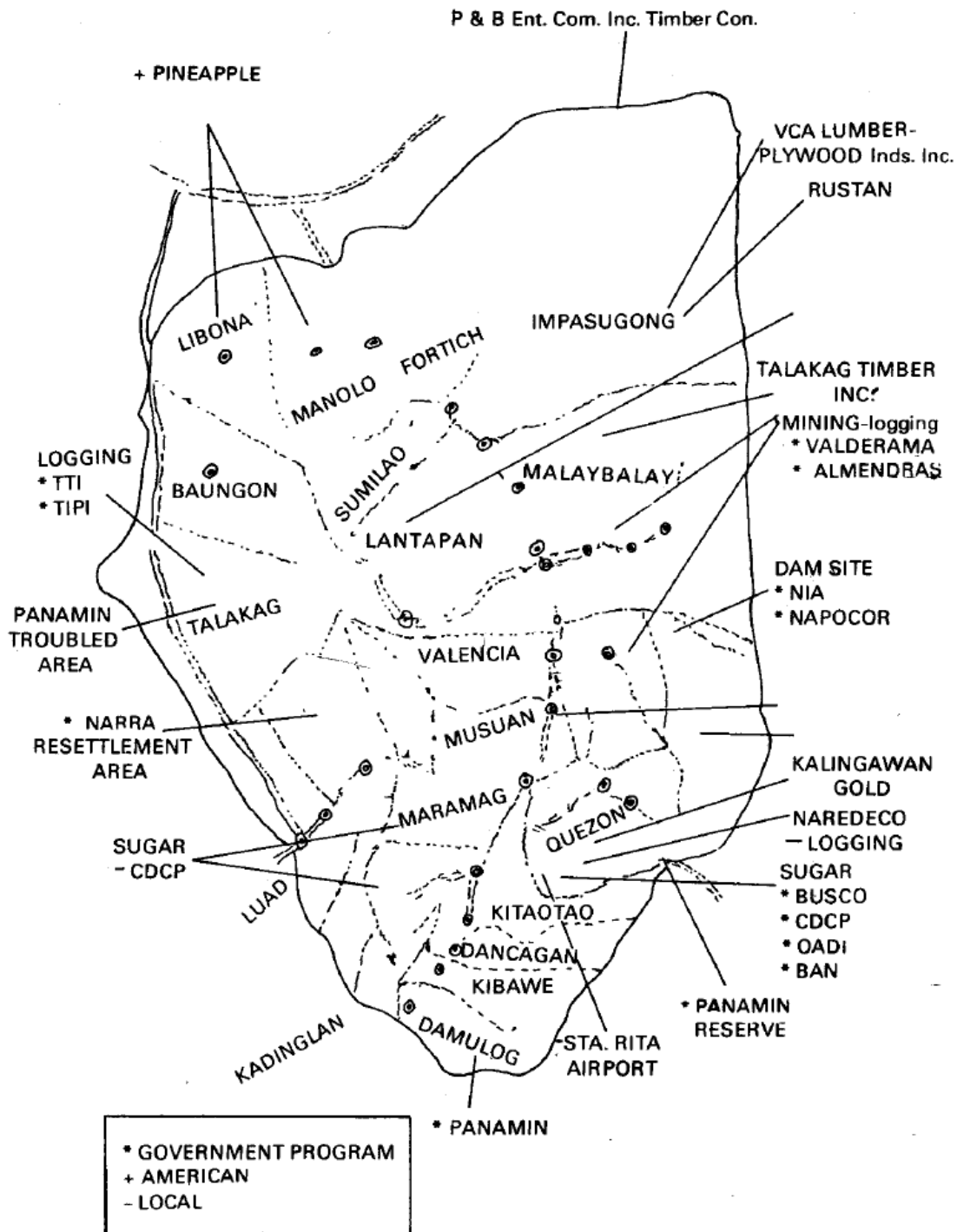


Fig 4.07 Agribusiness and Panamin in Bukidnon, ICL Research Team, 1979.

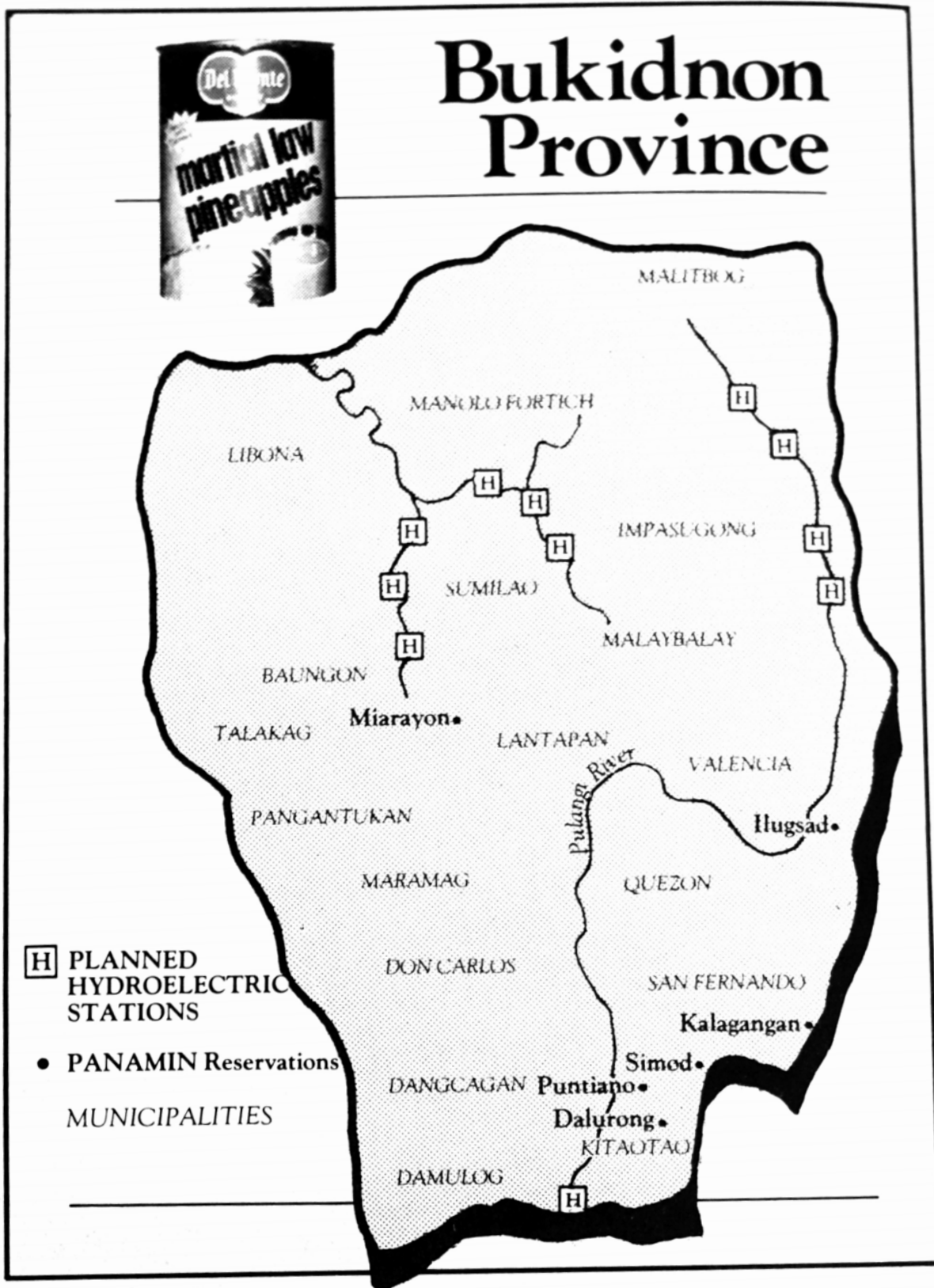


Fig 4.08 Agribusiness and Panamin in Bukidnon, *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, 1979.

Fig 4.09 Charles Lindbergh poses for photographer Edgar Needham. "Philippine Tribes Struggle to Survive." *New York Times*, August 13, 1970, 1, 14.

Philippine Tribes Struggle to Survive

By ALDEN WHITMAN
Special to The New York Times

MANILA — Some 60 tribal groups in the Philippines, many of them still living on prehistoric cultural levels, are waging a stark struggle for survival.

Ranged against those four million people and their primitive ways are the seemingly invincible forces of 20th-century civilization in this 7,000-island archipelago. The population has doubled to 40 million in 25 years and the shaky economy is emerging from 400 years of colonial somnolence, 50 of them under American tutelage.

The situation of the tribal peoples, sometimes termed national or cultural minorities, is roughly similar to that of the American Indians, who were virtually obliterated in the European settlers' conquest of what is now the United States. The Indians then were "savages," to be treated as less than human, just as the Indians of Latin America are widely regarded as subhuman anachronisms today.

There is an important difference in the Philippines, however: The tribal peoples are related by language and history, and perhaps by blood, to those who are battling them.

Moreover, there are urgent stirrings among the tribesmen,



Charles A. Lindbergh, the aviator-conservationist, looks on as Agta tribesman works with a new tool—a hammer. *Continued on Page 14, Column 1*

Tribesmen's Mentor

Manuel Elizalde Jr.



Edgar Needham for The New York Times

Putting to work the sociology he learned at Harvard (Mr. Elizalde with a tribal leader)

THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 1970

Philippine Tribes Struggling for Survival as Civilization Encroaches

under cultivation, all farms. of little concern, when the population was 19.2 million. It began 30 years ago, when the population was 19.2 million. It is crucial. The population is growing at 5 per cent a year. If their lands do the food, it has to be which is next to a country desperately.

and Minerals
al areas are also their forest prod- ippines is already order of lumber to hlessly logged and tains attest — and soil wealth. Cop- ese, iron and pe e believed to be

), at least in the quality the tribes- they need, is not e rising clamor for and coconuts and id sugar and beef akes land cultiva- hoe or sharp stick situation demands tracts to the plow, tractors and reap- nders and ranch t for one-family ve a few rows of ew hills of scrag-

the tribesmen who land vanishing are ted and destroyed ipinos.

the prehistory of ago is not fully Dr. Robert B. Fox, who is chief an- of the National other authorities the southern Mon- tors of today's in- ind-hopped to what Philippines thou- rs ago. ed in the highlands, lowlands. When



Edgar Needham for The New York Times

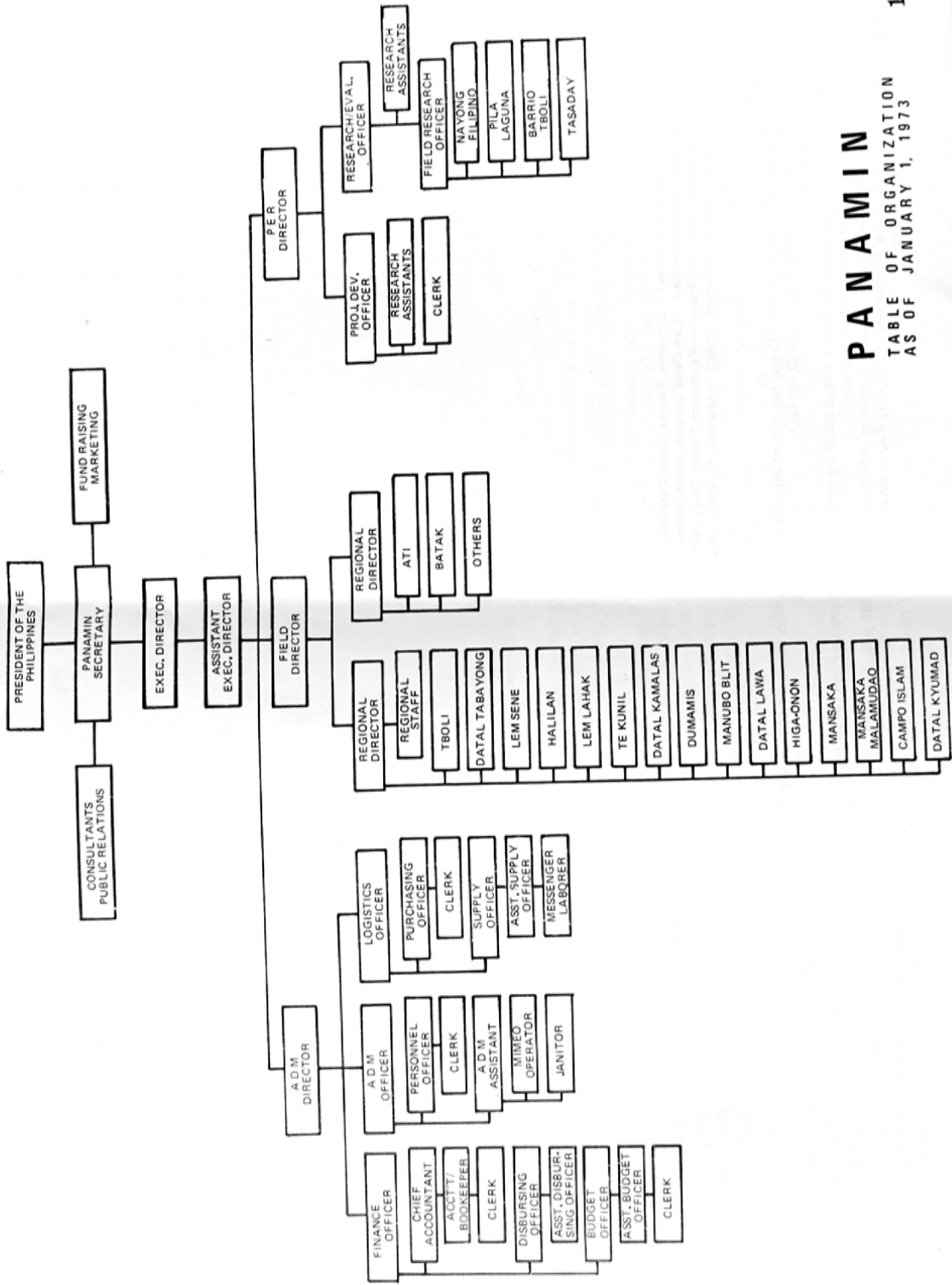
An Agta family on the beach in lean-to shelter of bamboo and leaves. The twin structures provide relief from the wind—they may be shifted to meet breezes from different directions. Cooking is done on a fire between parts of the shelter. A sturdier shelter, nearby, is used in bad weather.



Fig 4.10 Marcos propaganda featuring Panamin resettlement sites and Panamin medical boat. Imelda Marcos and Ileana Maramag, *To Move a Nation to Progress: Achievements of President Ferdinand E. Marcos* (Manila, 1970).



Panamin Organizational Chart



PANAMIN
TABLE OF ORGANIZATION
AS OF JANUARY 1, 1973

Fig 4.11 Panamin Organizational Chart. Panamin: Protecting Man's Right to Choice, 1973.



Fig 4.12 Tasaday posing at the caves in 1986 as they did in the 1970s. Photo by Oswald Iten, accessed February 2021: <https://www.oswald-iten.com/tasadei/text-english>



Fig 4.13 Oswald Iten. "A Stone Age Swindle." *Swiss Review of World Affairs*, June 1986, 14–19.





Mansaka Project: A demonstration farm, primary school, adult education, clinic and a multi-purpose center, besides farm and home lots for 40 Mansaka families.

Fig 4.14 Panamin Reports to the People, 1972, 17.

Fig 4.15 Panamin Reports to the People, 1972, 17.



Ati Settlement Project: 100 hectares of land on a 25-year lease; 2-1/2 hectares for farming

and a 1,000-sq. meter home lot for each of the 32 Ati families settled here.



A fitting climax to PANAMIN's activities in 1969 is this settlement for the Tebolih which, as did other similar projects, began with a medical mission . . .



Fig 4.16 *Panamini Reports to the People*, 1972, 19.



Fig 4.17 Panamin's T'boli socio-economic project. *Panamin: Protecting Man's Right to Choice*, 1973, 20–21.

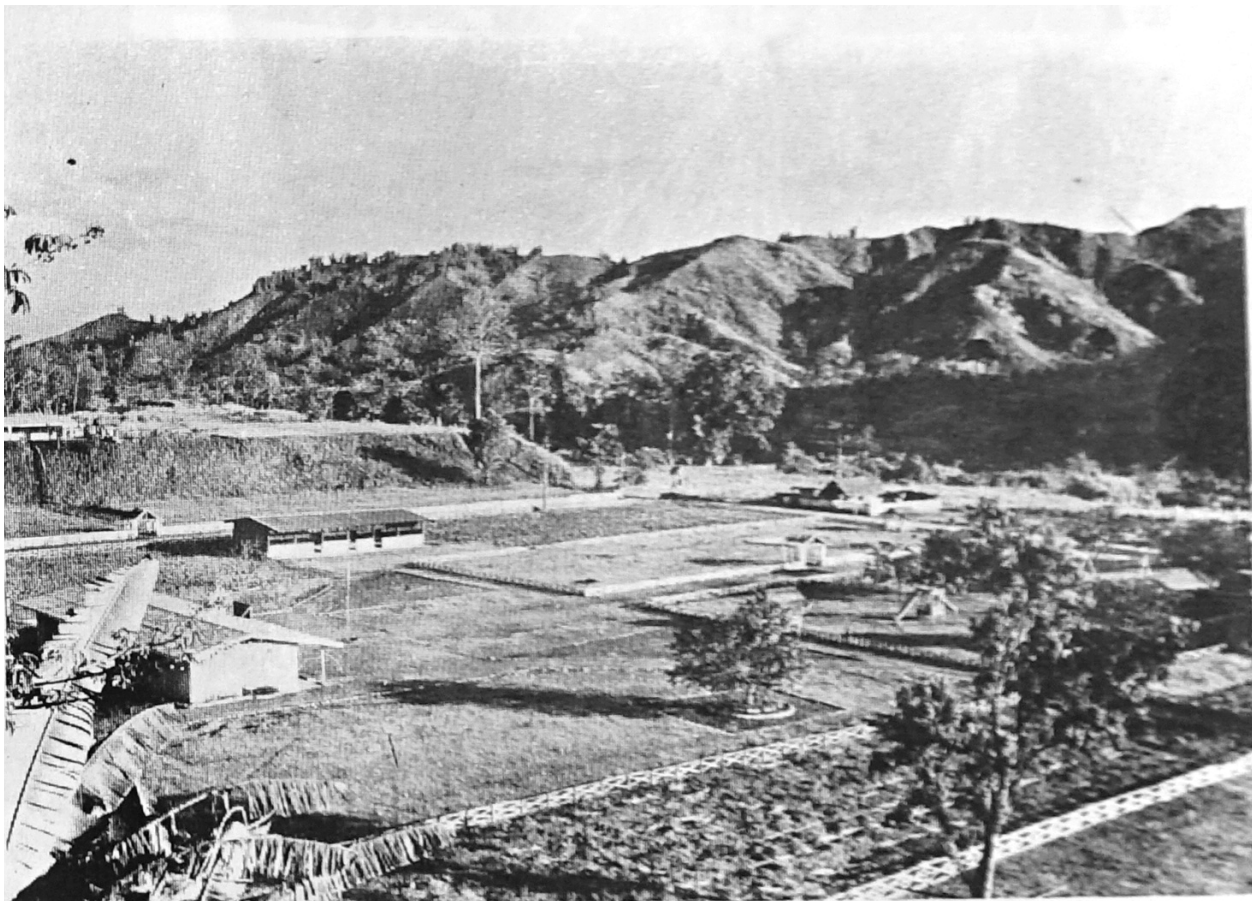


Fig 4.18 T'boli school campus at Panamin's socio-economic project and description of handicrafts. *Panamin: Protecting Man's Right to Choice*, 1973, 32, 33.

Handicrafts

Panamin maintains a marketing staff to help the minorities in developing and selling their handicrafts as part of livelihood assistance. Photos show, clockwise from right top, Batak basket weaving (with Elizalde and General Lindbergh observing); Ubo basket weaving; Ubo brass casting; Mansaka bead making; T'boli tie-dye textile weaving; and solitary Ubo stringing beads.





Fig 4.19 Mansaka Multi-Purpose Center, “a bead-making project and medical clinic” and overview of Mansaka project barrio. *Panamin: Protecting Man’s Right to Choice*, 1973, 26.

Fig 4.20 Manmade lake at T’boli Barrio Kematu socio-economic project. *Panamin: Protecting Man’s Right to Choice*, 1973, 23.

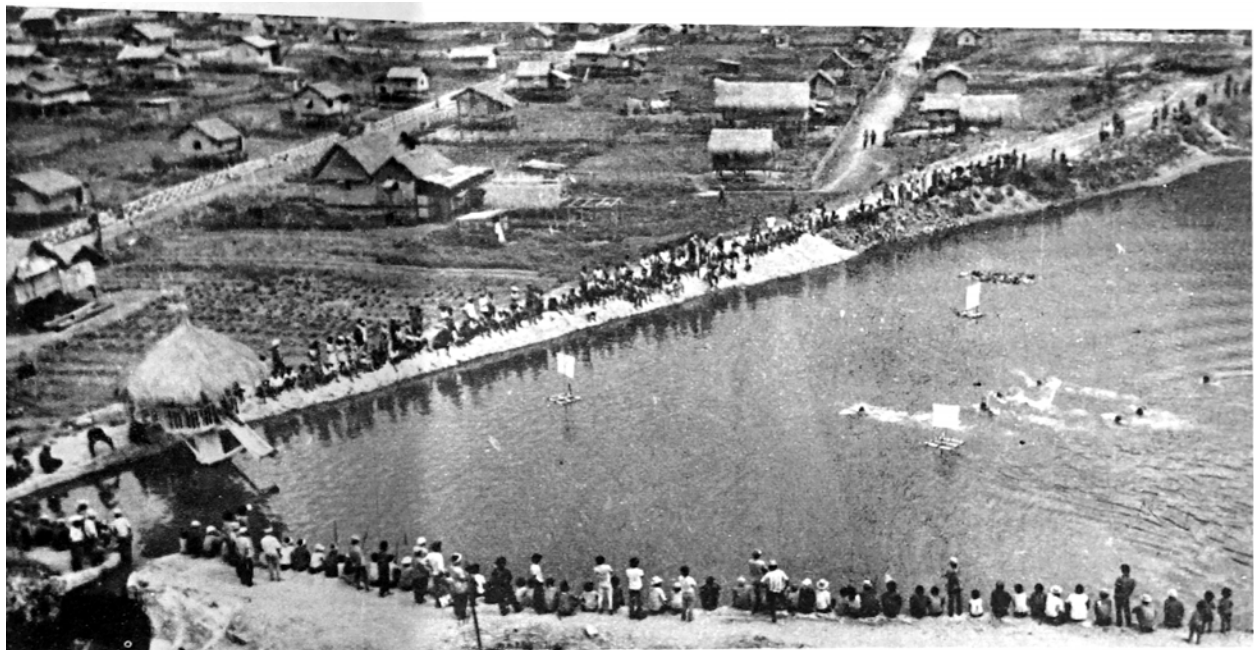




Fig 4.21 Overview of Mansaka project barrio. *Panamin: Protecting Man's Right to Choice*, 1973, 26.



Fig 4.22 Mansaka barrio and below, Elizalde (L) and the author, National Geographic senior assistant editor Kenneth MacLeish (R). "Help for Philippine Tribes in Trouble." *National Geographic* Vol. 140, No. 2. August 1971, 228–230.





Fig 4.23 Panamin logo with traditional script, spear and cog. *Panamin: Protecting Man's Right to Choice*, 1973.

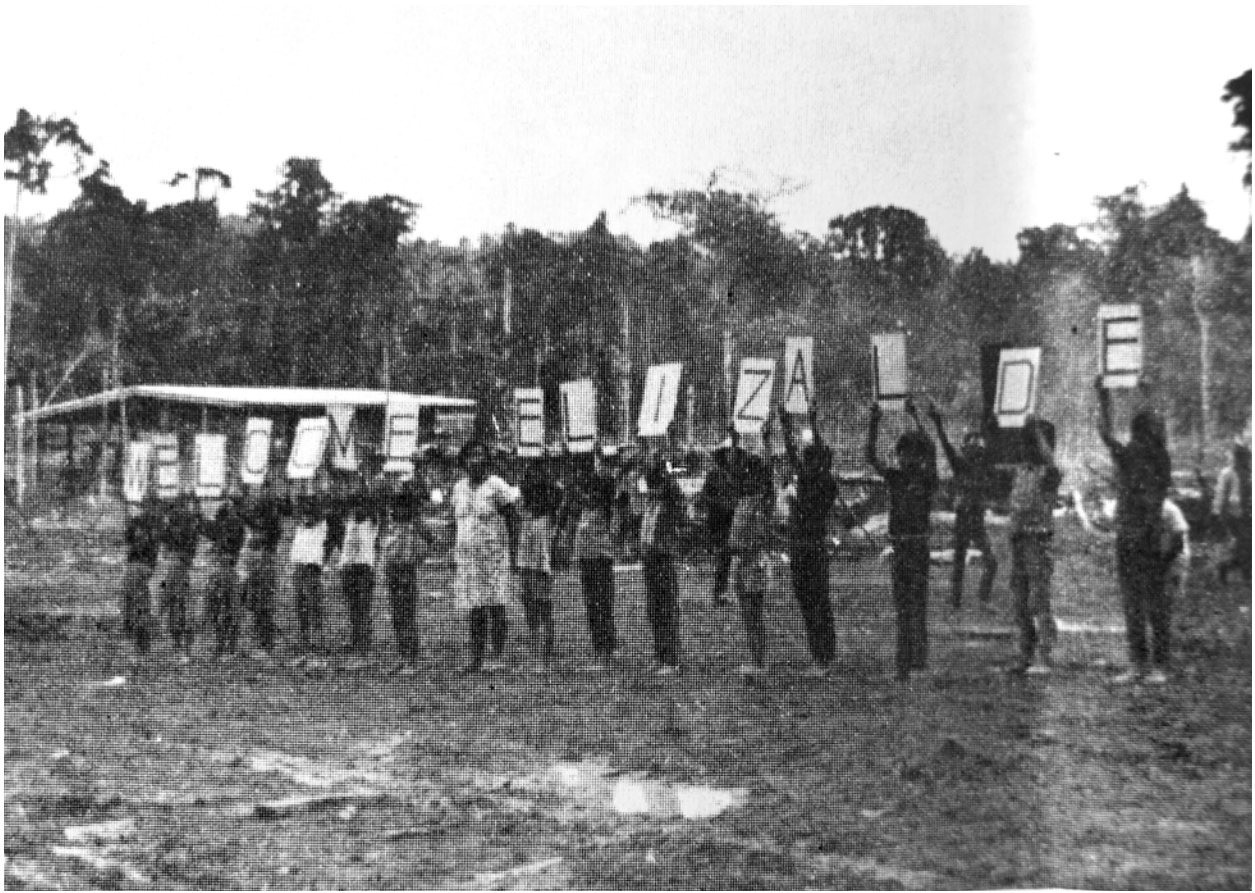


Fig 4.24 "Higaonon school children welcoming Elizalde;" construction in progress of Higaonon and T'boli settlements. *Panamin: Protecting Man's Right to Choice*, 1973, 28, 33.

**POPULATION/ENVIRONMENT PLANNING
FOR COMMUNITIES PRACTICING SHIFTING
CULTIVATION: THE PHILIPPINE COMPONENT
PHASE I REPORT**

**KAIÑGINEROS
THE BOAT PEOPLE
OF PHILIPPINE FORESTRY**

**NATIONAL TASK FORCE
POPULATION CENTER FOUNDATION
MAKATI, METRO MANILA
MAY, 1980**

Fig 4.25 Kaiñgineros: The Boat People of Philippine Forestry. Population/Environment Planning for Communities Practicing Shifting Cultivation. National Task Force, Population Center Foundation, Makati, Metro Manila, May 1980.



Indigenous peoples are environmentally astute. They have a good sense of Kaingin management.

Fig 4.26 "'Kaingin' & Govt. Policy: Injustice Against Man." *Tribal Forum*, Vol. V, No. 5. Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos. September-October 1984, 27.

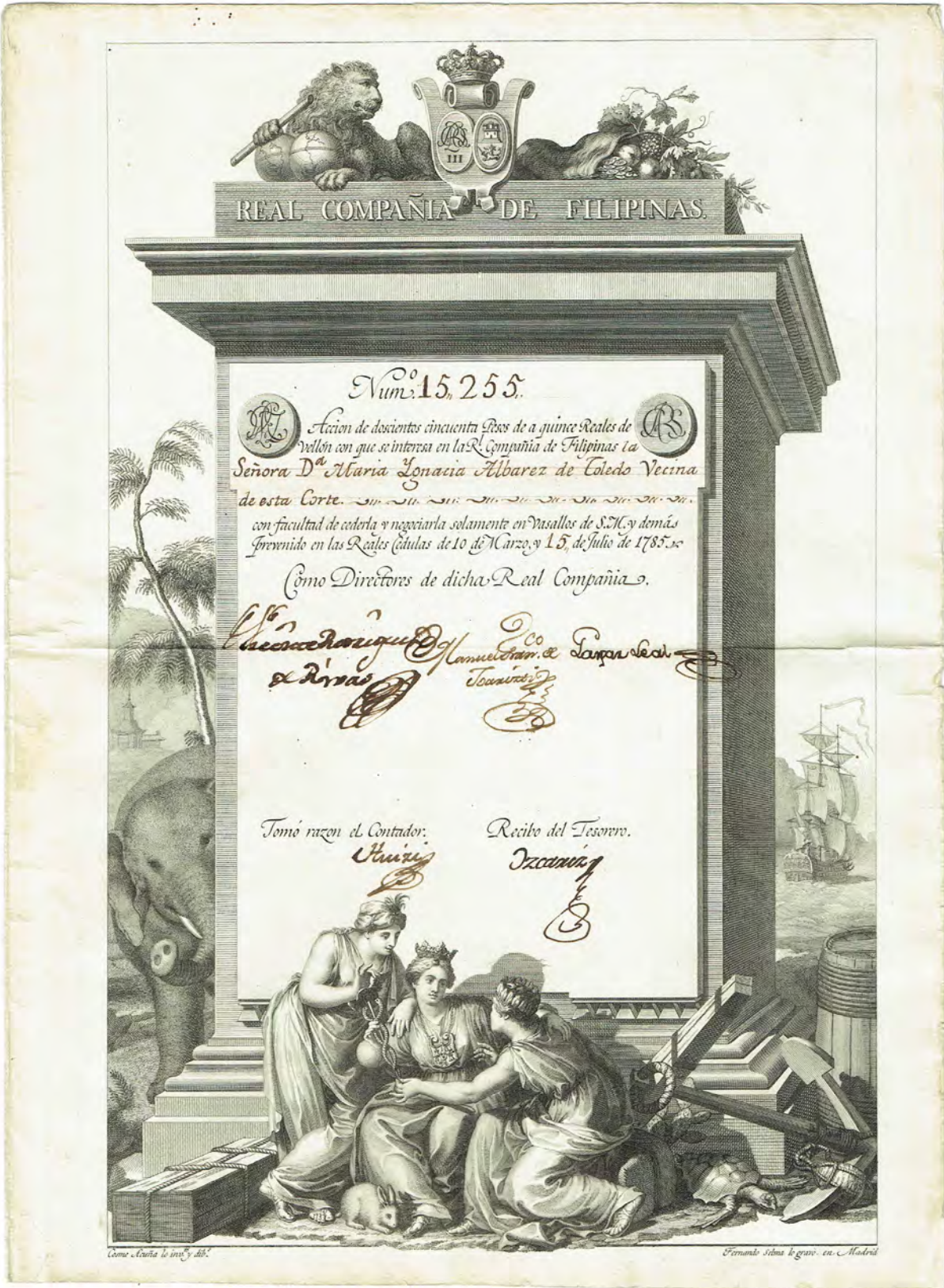


Fig 4.27 Establishing deed of the Real Compañía de Filipinas, of which the Elizalde family traced their fortune. March 10, 1785. Sammlung eines Mitglieds des Ersten Deutschen Historic-Actien-Clubs e.V.

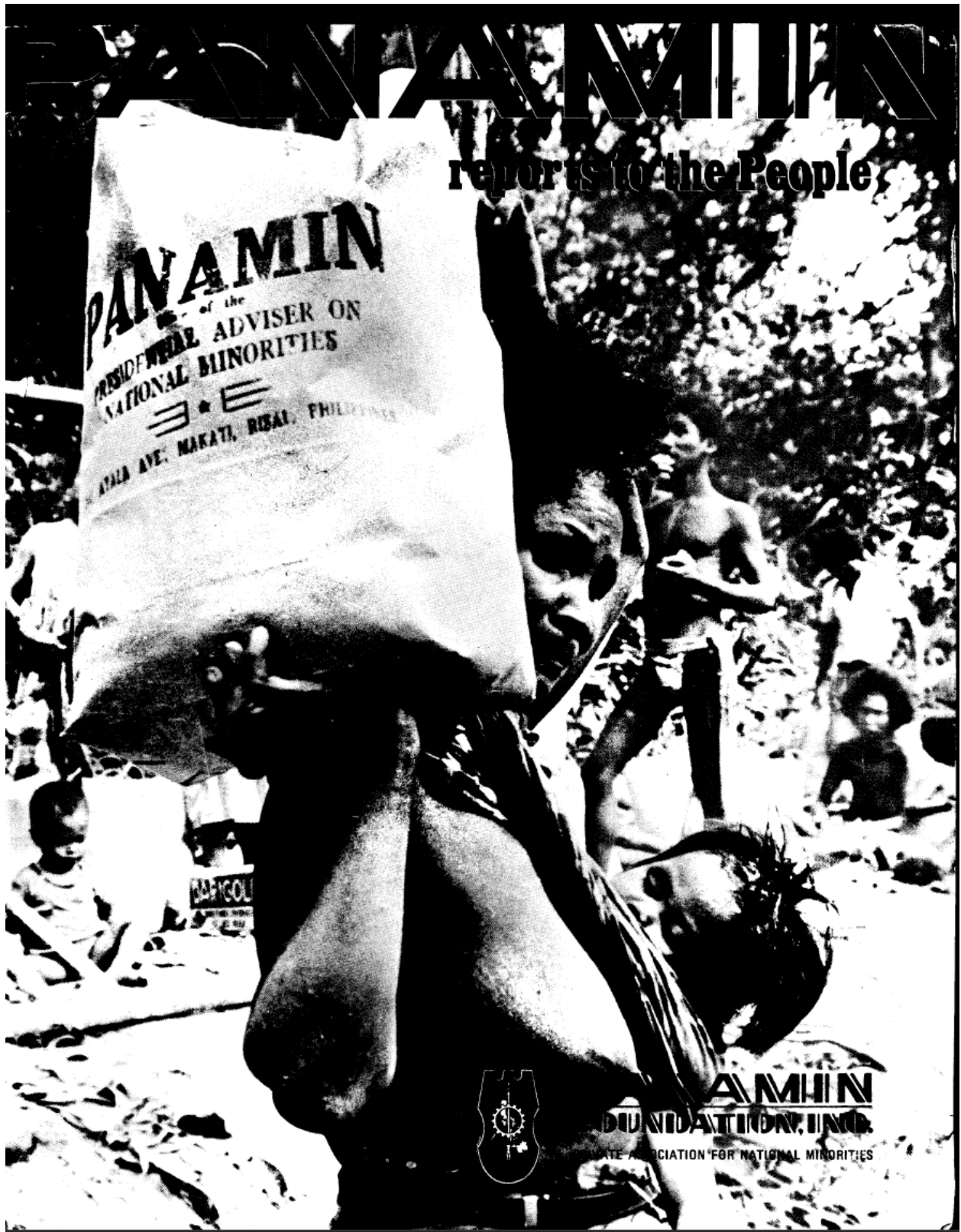


Fig 4.28 PANAMIN Reports to the People, 1972.

The Mountain is a Monument



In this day and age where we are born and grow up with the marvelous achievements of science and technology, it is so easy to forget that these are all the achievements of man.

We take for granted the roads, the bridges, the skyscrapers that we see. We take for granted that these are possible only in this modern era. And we forget that man has been building structures that endure even to this day; built without the tools and machineries of today. The Egyptians, the

Khmers, the Aztecs, the Greeks and the citizens of Imperial Rome.

And right here we have the Ifugaos who carved hectares and hectares of rice paddies out of the inhospitable mountains. Truly called an engineer of his time. The first Filipino engineer. We tend to forget this. We tend to forget that those who live far from the cities are also a part of our country. With as much a right to share in the blessings of prosperity. With as much a right to contribute to our country's progress. As the

Ifugao has contributed this monument to man's achievement.

It is only proper that today in our country we have young men and women who dedicate themselves to the task of bringing back the pride and dignity of those who live in the mountains and in the clearings of the forest. They are our countrymen. They are our brothers.

Our best wishes and highest respects to PANAMIN

AG&P ATLANTIC, GULF & PACIFIC COMPANY OF MANILA, INC.



Fig 4.29 PANAMIN Reports to the People, 1972, 34.

Funny how little it takes to make some people happy.

A hand-me-down dress, a blanket, a worn-out pair of shoes — even these can make some people happy.

You find millions of such people among the small ethnic groups scattered throughout the country today. They live destitute lives, thriving on what the harsh environment can offer them.

Lately, there has been a spark of hope for these people in the person of the PANAMIN volunteer who has made it his task to improve their living conditions. But it is an Herculean task. The PANAMIN needs more funds, more equipment, more man-power.

The PANAMIN needs your support. Make your contribution to the cause of the minority groups now!

A public service message from



Fig 4.30 PANAMIN Reports to the People, 1972, 25.

**IN HIS DARK WORLD,
PANAMIN CAME ...**
to bring light and hope.

**A humanitarian mission
Union Carbide helps to
fulfill.**

Another month and Agkaam Terano would have totally lost his sight. Or worse, despair would have led him to take his life by then.

But because PANAMIN is fired by love for our unfortunate Filipino brothers, Agkaam Terano will see again. It is this love that brings PANAMIN even to the darkest wilderness. To give light and hope to our unfortunate fellowmen who are hitherto beyond the reach of progress and modern medicine.

Out of this same love, UNION CARBIDE is borne. To bring to the Filipino people the benefits derived from varied products that result from continuous research and discovery.

This is the service UNION CARBIDE offers to the Filipino. Service that brings light. Light that brings hope.

UNION CARBIDE PHILIPPINES INC.

Fig 4.31 PANAMIN Reports to the People, 1972, 32.

TODAY, they gather 'round the fire. TOMORROW, they will switch on a PEMCO



Take a bonfire to show a tribe's primitive source of light. Let a PEMCO light stand for electric lighting, a modern convenience in life.

The message you want to put across is PANAMIN's aid to the upliftment of our minority tribes, and PEMCO's contribution in modernizing our nation.

Then use light as a symbol. PANAMIN is bringing light to the darkened condition of our tribes by giving food, clothing, education, medical and legal aid right into their places. A glowing PEMCO bulb symbolizes the splendor of modern urban areas, lighted all over with PEMCO lights.

By these pictures and symbols this much is our wish: that our brothers far behind will rise and change and in the near future reach for a PEMCO light.



Fig 4.32 PANAMIN Reports to the People, 1972, 27.

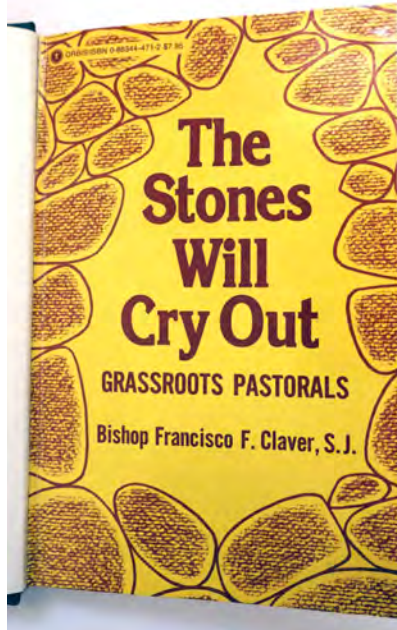
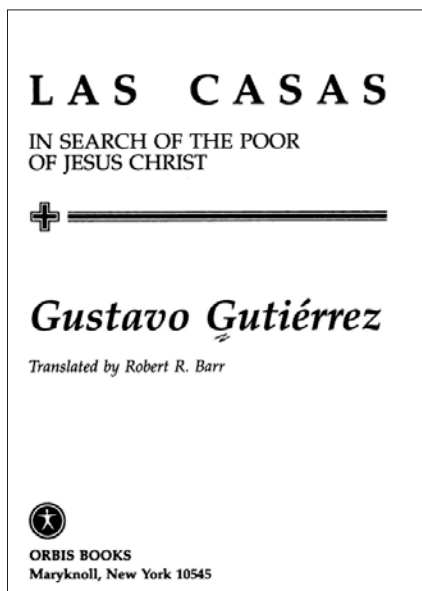


Fig 4.33 Bishop Francisco Claver, *The Stones Will Cry Out: Grassroots Pastorals*. NY: Maryknoll, 1978.

Fig 4.34 Bishop Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ*. NY: Maryknoll, 1984.

Fig 4.35 Bartolomé de Las Casas baptizing Indigenous prisoners in Cuba, 1511. *Historia de la Marina Real Española: desde el descubrimiento de las américas hasta el combate de Trafalgar*. José Ferrer de Couto. Madrid, 1854.



Philosophy of Work

0290

We affirm the God-given dignity of the tribal Filipinos and their culture.

Our evangelization is a witness of life and humble service. We offer Christ's message of salvation to them in a dialogue of life and Faith with them, as a gift and an invitation to which they can respond and receive freely in their own way, in their own time.

This humble service imposes on us a continuing process of: (a) analysis of our own and each other's culture, (b) appreciation of our mutually enriching cultures and (c) a cultural synthesis, that is the growing together towards national identity of self-determining partners.

Alone, each culture — because

of its inherent weaknesses, is vulnerable to the exploitative forces of society; but united as friends, we find our strength in the assurance that each is willing "to lay down his life for his friend."

We, therefore pledge ourselves to the building up of interdependent yet self-determining communities through:

1. Participation in the Tribal Filipinos' opposition to all attempts to destroy their cultural heritage.
2. Participation in their opposition to all forms of exploitation and violation of justice and human rights.
3. Sharing of resources in the promotion of liberating education and organization.

Fig 4.36 *Tribal Forum*, Vol. V, No. 5, September–October, 1984, 69.

16 October 1976 - SI

EDITORIAL

SIGNS OF THE TIMES?

As sponsors of this little publication, we Major Superiors of Religious Congregations in the Philippines feel it necessary to clarify our aims, especially for our primary readership, the members of our own congregations. All human efforts at giving expression to realities and values tend to degenerate into catchwords and slogans. Our publication serves several good purposes. But why are we, its sponsors, making it as part of our evangelizing task?

It was through the Second Vatican Council that "signs of the times" became part of the contemporary Christian vocabulary.

. . . Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ Himself under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served.

To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the task of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel. (The Church in the Modern World, nn. 3-4)

The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord, who fills the earth. Motivated by this faith, it labors to decipher authentic signs of God's presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires in which this people has a part along with other men of our age. For faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God's design for man's total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human. (Ibid., n. 11)

As we know, "signs of the times" is biblical in its origin. Jesus is proclaimed as speaking the words in contexts which suggest how difficult it is so to read these signs as to discern where and how God's saving act is hidden in them. To the Pharisees and Scribes, those with a special vocation as interpreters of the law of God, Jesus said,

If you know how to interpret the look of the sky, can you not read the signs of the times? (Matt. 16, 3)

And to the multitudes he said,

If you can interpret the portents of earth and sky, why can you not interpret the present time? Tell me, why do you not judge for yourselves what is just? (Luke 12, 56-57)

Fig 4.37 Signs of the Times, October 16, 1976.

**"OUR LANDS ARE MARKED FOR
DESTRUCTION.. AND WE WITH THEM."**



**"Plantations, logging and
mining companies profit,
but what about us?
Our land gives us life.
To defend our life,
we will defend our land!"**

**Tribal Filipino Sunday
October 14, 1979**

**A Project of
The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines
Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos**



POSTER DESIGN: EDGAR TALUSAN

Fig 4.38 Poster for *Tribal Filipino Sunday*, Edgar Talusan, Episcopal Commission for Tribal Filipinos. October 1979.

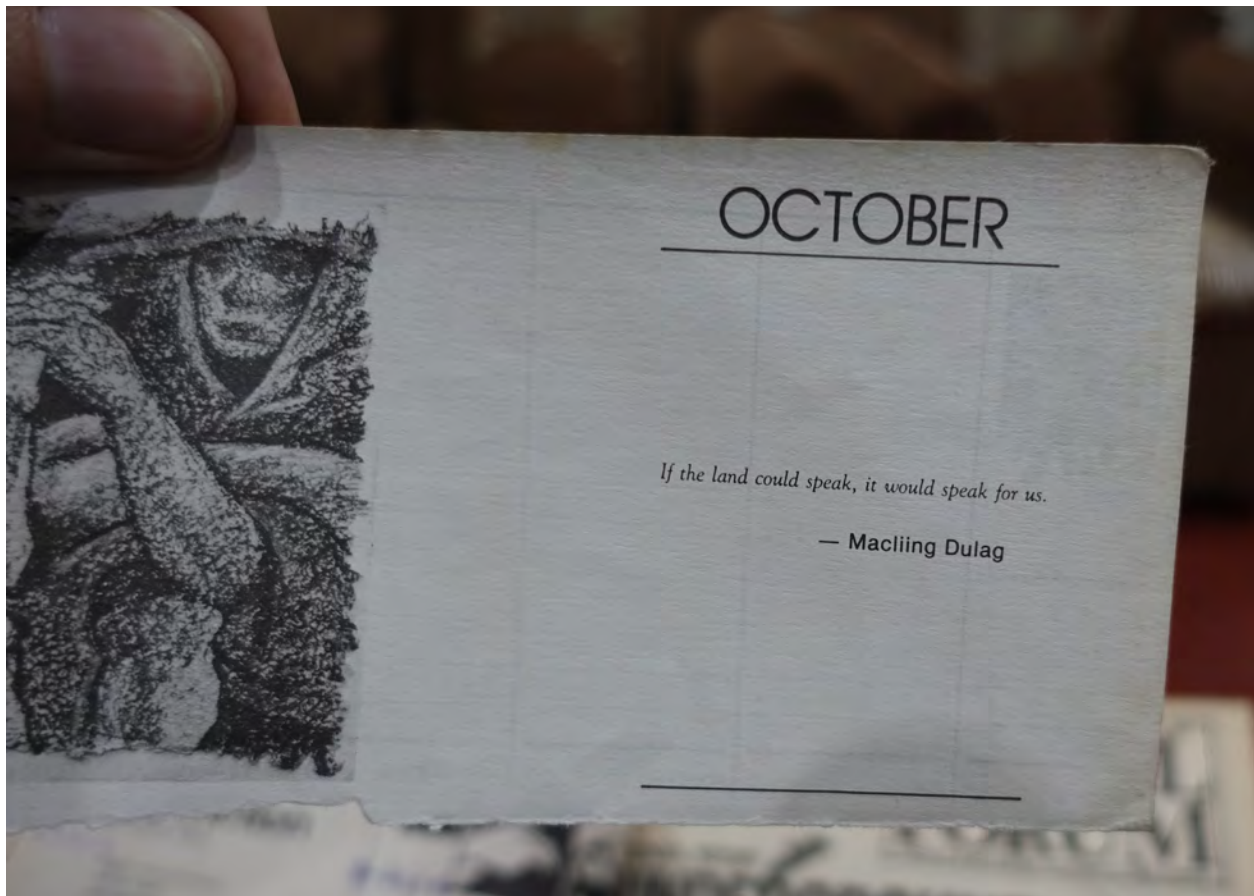


Fig 4.39 “If the land could speak, it would speak for us” Macliing Dulag, a torn out piece of paper in *Tribal Forum*, found at ECIP, December 2019.

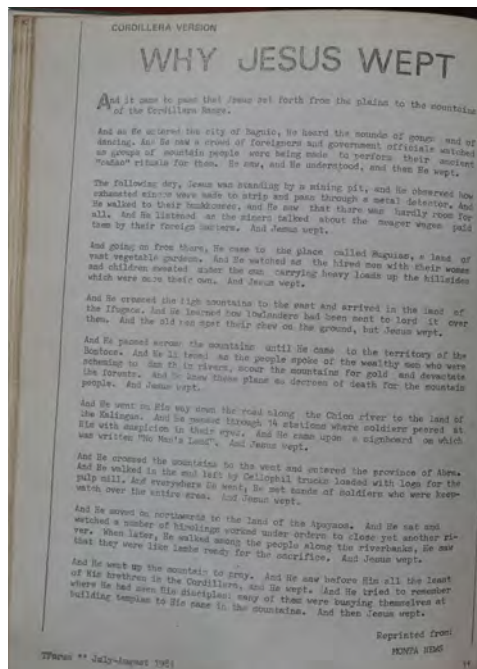
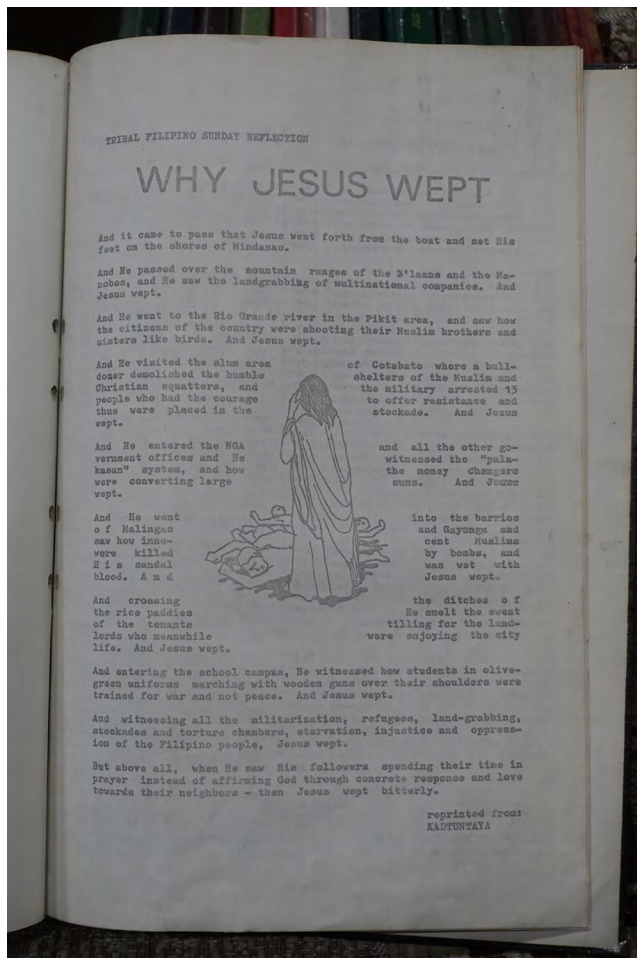


Fig 4.40 "Why Jesus Wept" Tribal Filipino Sunday Reflection, reprint from KADTUNTAYA, *Tribal Forum*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Nov-Dec 1979.

Fig 4.41 "Why Jesus Wept" Cordillera Version, *Tribal Forum*, July-August 1981, 11.

Fig 4.42 Performance by Cordillera delegation, "NAFJD Holds People's Congress" by Rene Agbayani in *Tribal Forum*, November 1982, 7.

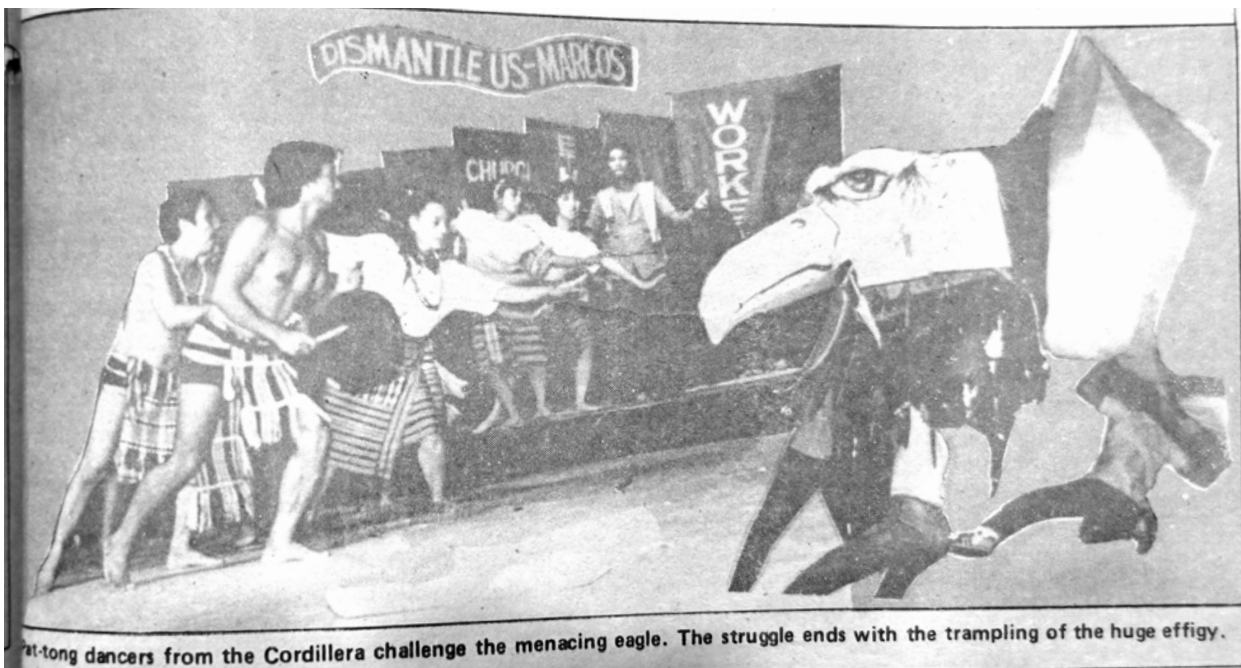




Fig 4.43 Tribal Forum, January 1983. Details overlaid.

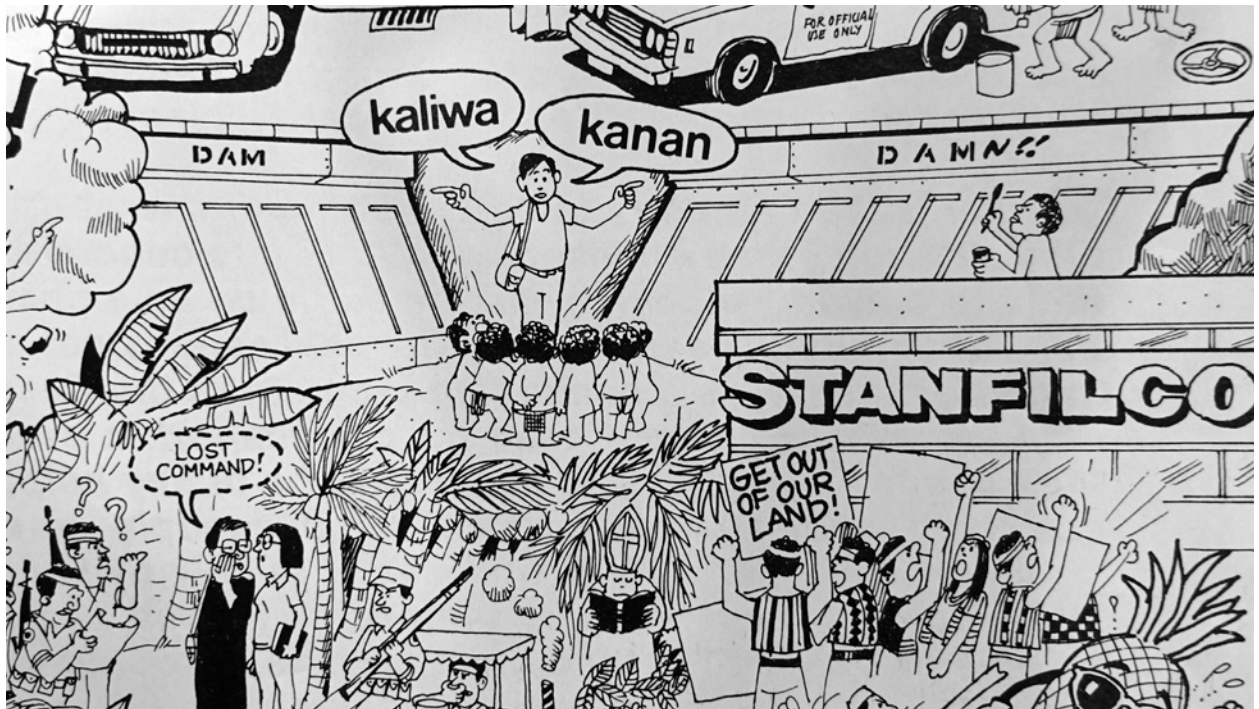


Fig 4.44 Details from front cover of *Tribal Forum*, January 1983. Clockwise: Kaliwa and Kanan (also meaning right and left) dam projects being explained to Dumagat children; Elizalde flies over Panamin Abaka plantation and nude camp (on many Panamin reservations, tribal peoples were required to wear traditional dress at all times); a guarded “hamletting area,” with caricature of confused Lumad indigenous person.



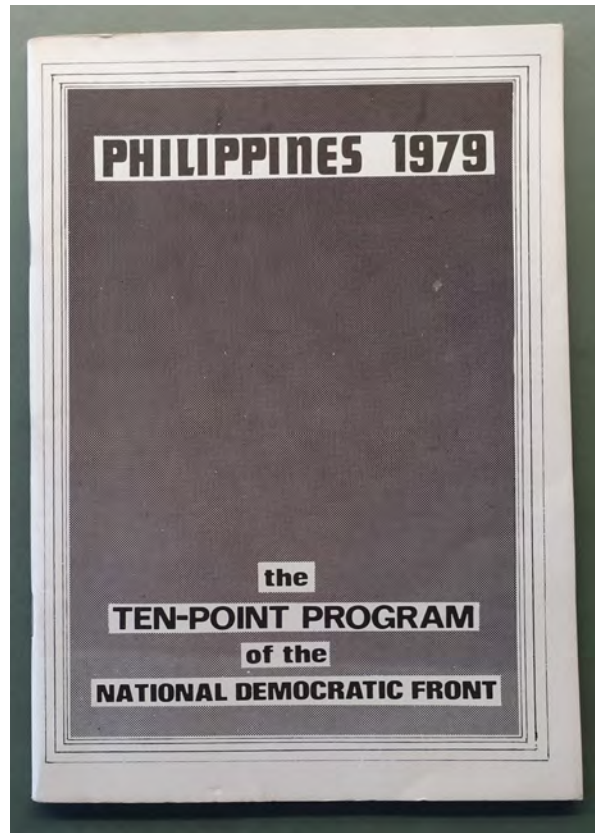
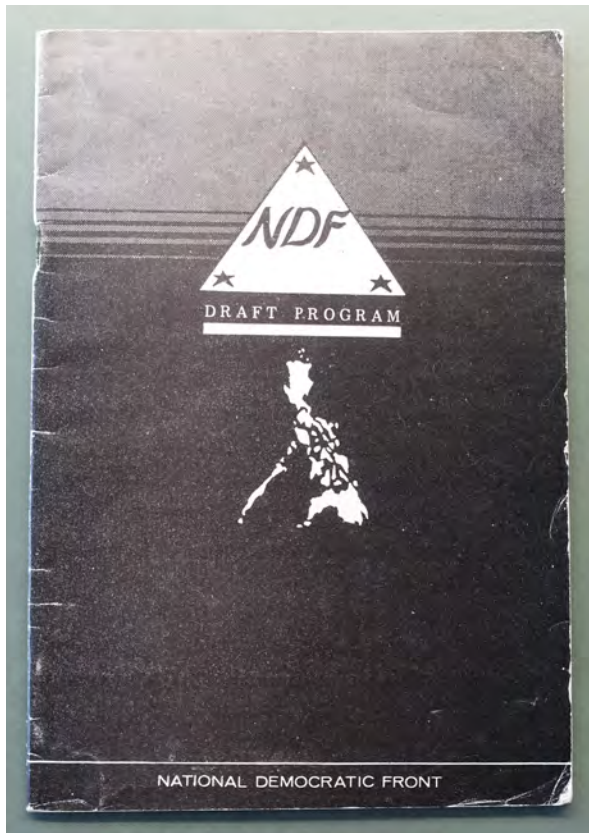
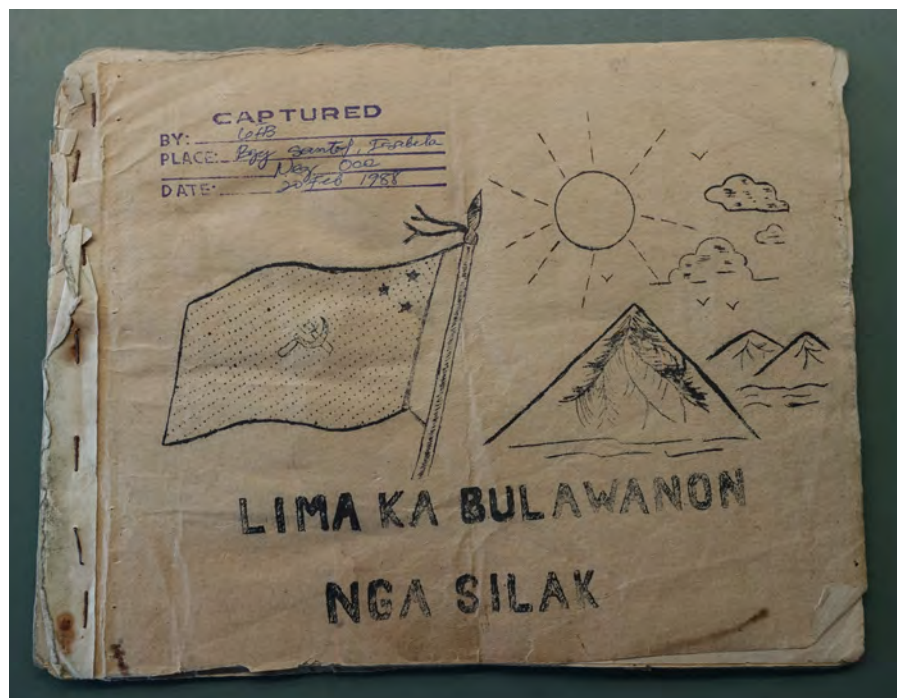


Fig 4.45 Draft Program, National Democratic Front. Undated and Ten Point Program of the National Democratic Front, 1979 (International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam)

Fig 4.46 LIMA KA BULAWANON NGA SILAK, "The Five Golden Rays," CPP Department of Education, May 1976. IISG, Amsterdam.



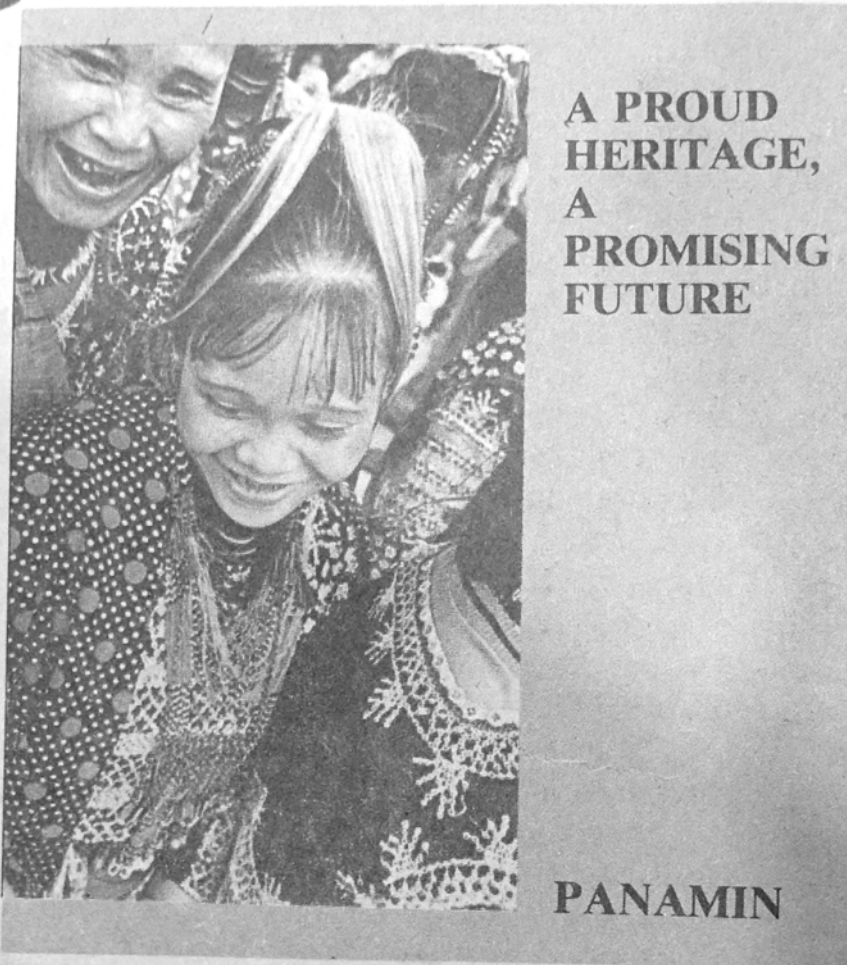


Women play important roles in the armed struggle in the Philippines.



Fig 4.47 "Letter from Southeast Asia: Southeast Asian liberation movements see the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea as a threat to the whole region." *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, No. 79. Berkeley, Southeast Asia Resource Center. August 1981, 2, 5.

COUNTER-INSURGENCY



PANAMIN STYLE

Fig 4.48 Article about Panamin CHDFs, whose cover image is a spoof of a Panamin advertisement. *Tribal Forum*, Vol. III, No. 6. Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos. September-October 1982, 22.

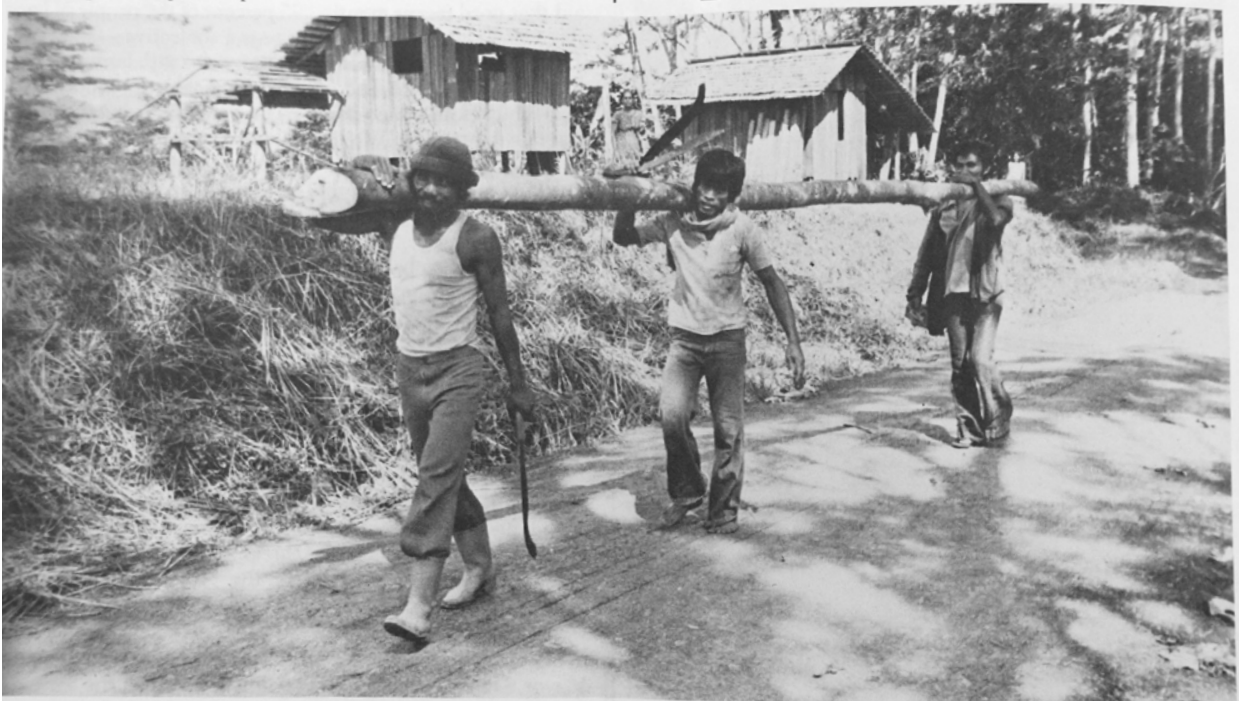


Fig 4.49 Evacuees building military barracks apart from their own shelters. Photograph by Earl Martin, "In the Name of Security: A Philippine Strategic Hamlet" from *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, No. 83. Berkeley, Southeast Asia Resource Center. February 1983, 16–18.

Fig 4.50 Farmers in Bukidnon, Mindanao oppose dams which will flood their lands. Sign reads: "National Power Corp (NPC) and contractor, our lands have not been paid for, pay before you start operations." Earl Martin, "In the Name of Security: A Philippine Strategic Hamlet" from *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, No. 83. Berkeley, Southeast Asia Resource Center. February 1983, 16–18.

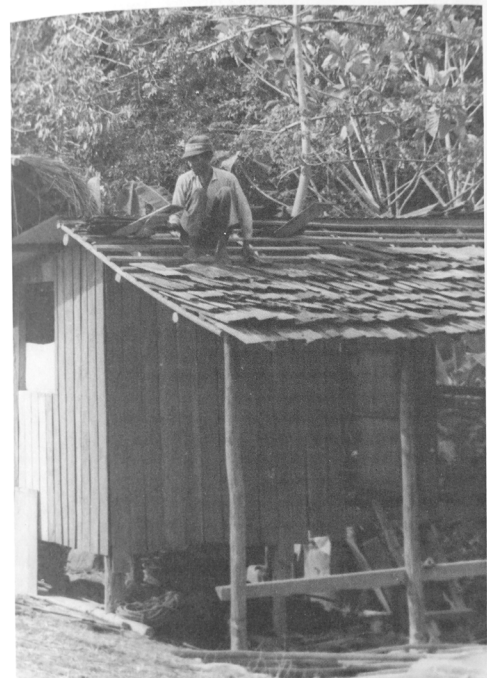
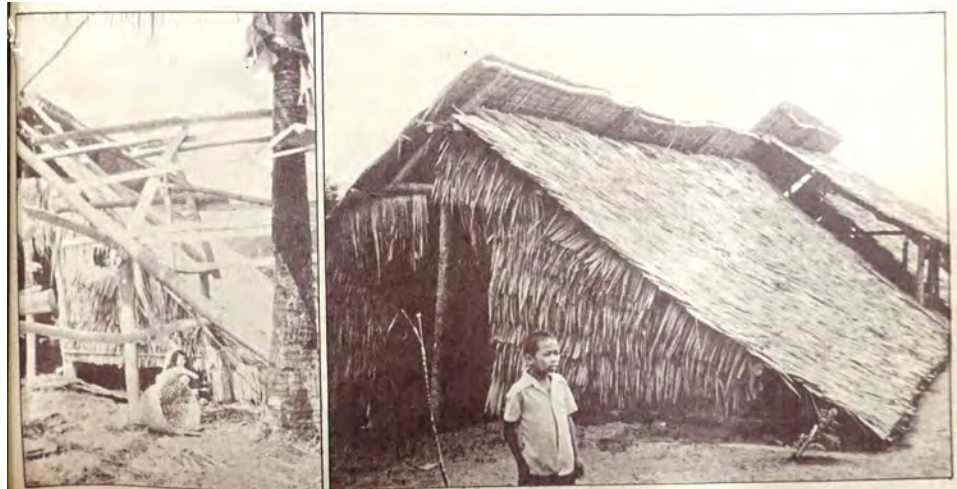
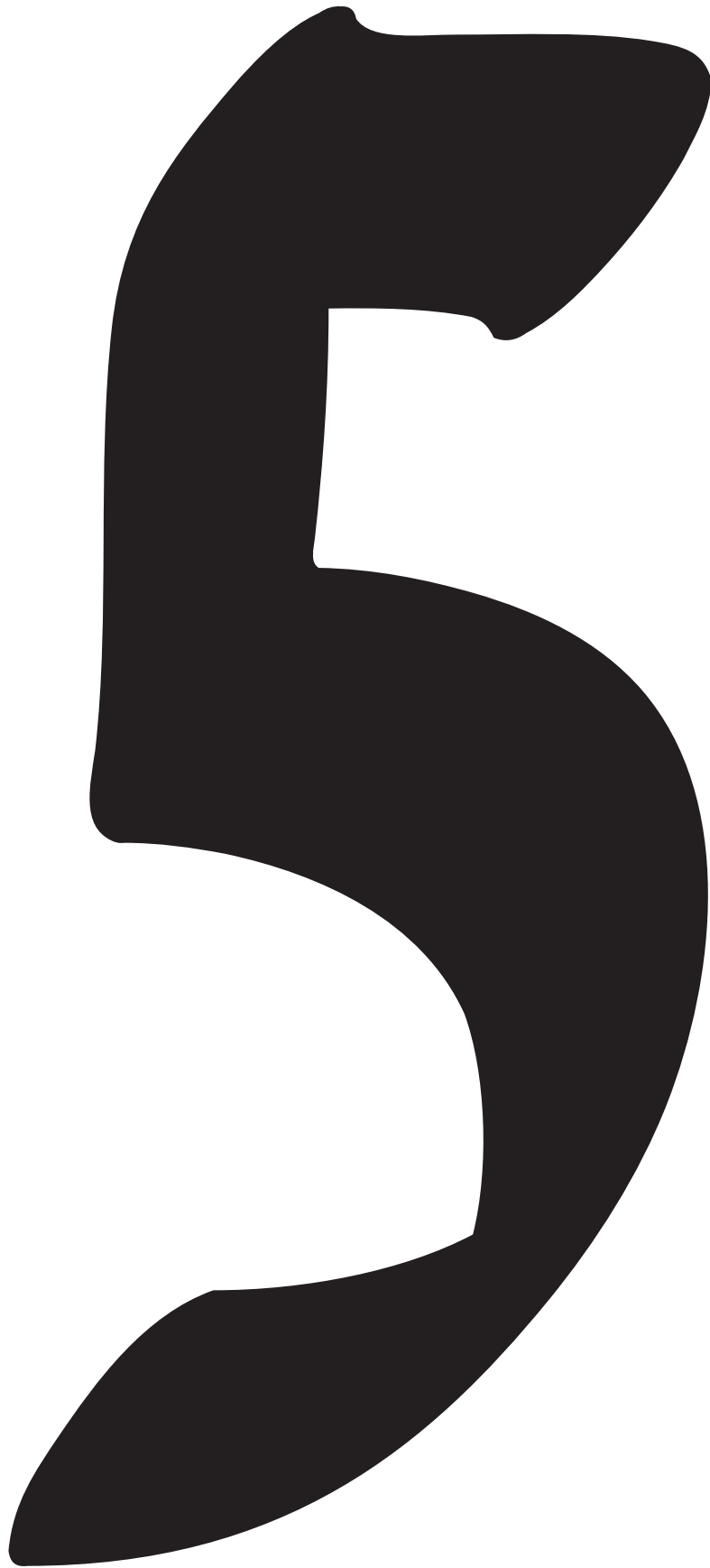




Fig 4.51 Higaonon lands bulldozed to qualify for Panamin assistance. “The Political Uses of Panamin” from *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, No. 67. Berkeley, Southeast Asia Resource Center. October 1979, 19.

Fig 4.52 “STRATEGIC HAMLET: Philippine Experience.” *Tribal Forum*, Vol. III, No. 6. Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos. September-October 1982, 9–11.





5

Loneliness and Disappearance

Dorothy Pelzer, Imelda Marcos, and the Culture of Loss

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CHAPTER 5

Loneliness and Disappearance

Dorothy Pelzer, Imelda Marcos, and the Culture of Loss

In November 1969, while finalizing drafts of her book *Houses Are People*, Dorothy Pelzer called her friend, the architect Lim Chong Keat from her home in the Cameron Highlands of Malaysia. “Chong Keat, can I come to see you... I’m desperately lonely. Do you have a recording of Bartok’s *Romanian Folk Dances* I could listen to with you?”¹ Between 1962 and 1972, Pelzer created a sprawling catalog of traditional house forms in Southeast Asia. She photographed nipa palm fronds woven into wall panels in the Philippines, and the dense thatched roof of the *ravi* in Papua New Guinea. Pelzer was meticulous and relentless, her travels—she roamed Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Laos, Malaya, Philippines, Sarawak, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam—according to her diaries, exhausting. (fig 5.01) “Village forms, structure, use of materials, roof shapes, planning, privacy, decoration, prefabrication, expressive significance and various non-functional factors such as orientation and symbolism” all contributed to her sprawling project.² Pelzer never finished her book, *Houses Are People*—she died from cancer in April 1972—but perhaps she saw herself cast in the figure of Bela Bartok, that modernist composer visiting the Romanian hinterland of yore, an observer, recorder, translator of something that was disappearing. When Bartok lugged a phonograph around remote Romanian villages to record folk songs in 1918, it was because he asserted that the rural

¹ Recorded in personal interview with Datuk Lim Chong Keat, May 2018. Pelzer met the Malaysian architect Lim Chong Keat during their studies at MIT in 1950.

² Dorothy Pelzer, cited in: Ong Choo Suat, *Biography of Dorothy Pelzer*, Southeast Asian Cultural Research Project (SEACURP, Singapore, 1982), 6.

peasantry was “under the influence of urban culture [and had] given up their old customs and the corresponding ceremonies.”³ Indeed, in an introduction to an exhibition of her photographs, Datuk Lim would write “with the hill tribes of Vietnam and Luzon, the tribal modes [...] have given way to guns and jungle-green. In the urban fringes, the popularity of T-shirts and jeans not only parallels the decline of batik and ikat, but also the loss in the craft of traditional roofs and decorations.”⁴

In her role as head of the Ministry of Human Settlements, Imelda Marcos oversaw hundreds of building projects during the two-decade reign of her husband.⁵ She was notorious for pushing building projects to completion at breakneck velocity, her reputation does not precede her. Among the ghost stories she espoused was the death-by-drowning of nine workers when they fell from a poorly constructed scaffold into quick-drying cement while working through the night on the Manila Film Center, to meet an ambitious deadline for the center’s opening. After the incident, Imelda told the construction teams to keep on working. “If there is a link to be made between the madness of power and the production of space commensurate to its circulation,” the curator Patrick D. Flores writes, “Imelda creates that link.”⁶ The madness of Imelda, however, obscures the very real world with which her ideas grappled, influenced, and took hold. Though Imelda was not an architect, she exerted unparalleled influence on architectural form, made close

³ Bartok would later transcribe these pieces as the *Romanian Folk Dances (Magyarországi román népi táncok)*. Béla Bartók, *The Hungarian Folk Song* (SUNY Press, 1980), 10.

⁴ Lim Chong Keat. Introduction to exhibition catalog, “Habitat in Southeast Asia: A Pictorial Survey of Folk Architecture.” Museum & Art Gallery, Penang, May 1989. “Jungle greens” is the popular term for the green fatigues worn by guerrilla armies in Southeast Asia (from the Malaysian MNLA to the Philippine NPA)

⁵ I follow the naming convention of Primitivo Mijares and others’ by referring to Imelda Marcos simply as “Imelda” throughout the chapter, to avoid confusion with that of her husband Ferdinand Marcos.

⁶ Patrick D. Flores, Foreword, Gerard Lico, *Edifice Complex*. Ateneo de Manila, 2003: ix.

friendships with architects, and paid attention to the range and quality of cultural production in the Philippines. Among this cultural production was the funding of museums, founding of magazines, and “projects for upliftment” for the country’s Indigenous peoples, then termed “national,” “tribal,” or “cultural minorities.”

This chapter considers Pelzer and Imelda through the conceptual boundaries of the term “ethnocide,” ratified by UNESCO in 1981, it describes when “an ethnic group is denied the right to enjoy, develop and transmit its own culture and its own language, whether collectively or individually.”⁷ This denial is also a process, “an extreme form of massive violation of human rights and, in particular, the right of ethnic groups to respect for their cultural identity, as established by numerous declarations, covenants and agreements of the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies.” The term is notable for its mellifluous, theoretical relationship to “ecocide,” a descriptor that was popularized by the activist Barry Weisberg in the context of the ecological destruction wrought on an industrial scale by the war in Vietnam. Weisberg’s 1970 book *Ecocide in Indochina: The Ecology of War*, and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in June 1972, mark out a moment when the Cold War was hot, ecological destruction was not passive, but an intentional part of “base denial operations” and “free-fire zones.”⁸ If the concept of ecocide came about in the context of war, then ethnocide was brought about chiefly as one of the consequences of rural development, that is, destruction of cultures through the rise of agribusiness, hydroelectric dams, mining and monocropping.

⁷ Declaration of San José, adopted by the UNESCO Meeting of Experts on Ethno-Development and Ethnocide in Latin America, San José, December 11, 1981, UNESCO Doc. FS 82/WF.32 (1982).

⁸ Barry Weisberg, *Ecocide in Indochina; the Ecology of War* (San Francisco, Canfield Press, 1970).

Pelzer and Imelda were in their own ways forecasting the losses associated with ethnocide through their work, which sought to preserve, catalog or promote different forms of tradition. Ecocide and ethnocide were closely spun together in Pelzer and Imelda's realms.⁹ The kind of warfare—paramilitary, guerrilla, insurgent—that chapter 4 discussed, was one of the bedfellows of international development in the Philippines, of which the countryside was both a zone of extraction and an arena for conflict. This chapter extends the insights on cultural and ecological destruction from the previous chapter by examining the way in which Imelda and Pelzer grappled with the concept of loss in intersecting geographies with contrasting means.

Until his falling out with Imelda in 1983, Manuel Elizalde, took direct orders from her on the activities of Panamin, which, though established as a private foundation, would become a government project, something that might have chafed with Elizalde's freedom of maneuvers, not to mention being unaccustomed to taking orders as heir to the fifth wealthiest family in the Philippines. It is unlikely that Pelzer was aware that Panamin was a foil for his family's many agribusiness ventures—in 1968 few observers suspected the connection—and whether she actually met anyone from Panamin remains to be seen. However, the address of the agency—headquartered in the plush offices of the Elizalde Building on Ayala Avenue (the Ayala's were family friends and major shareholders)—was reserved a spot in her Manila diaries of 1968, jotted down in red pen, then scribbled out in blue. (fig 5.02) A change of heart, perhaps? At any

⁹ In this regard the chapter takes up architect Sascha Roesler's call for an architectural history that engages with questions inherent to their timeframe, "Die Architektur," Roesler explains, "wird sich in Zukunft nicht mehr allein auf empirisches Faktenmaterial anderer Disziplinen wie der Ethnologie, Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte verlassen können, sondern sie bedarf eines Argumentariums, dass sich aus den (historisch verbürgten) interkulturellen Konstellationen der modernen Architektur selbst herleitet: Exil, kolonialer Urbanismus, Feldforschung und Entwicklungshilfe stellen dafür die zentral Erfahrungssituationen dar, die in Bauten und Texten nachweisbar Spuren hinterlassen haben." Indeed the borrowing from other disciplines that Roesler mentions was commonplace in Pelzer and Imelda's time, and present the historian with a contextual field that each chose to employ, that this chapter is wary of. Roesler, Sascha. *Weltkonstruktion: der aussereuropäische Hausbau und die moderne Architektur : ein Wissensinventar*. Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2013, 385.

rate, these characters and caricatures used the same words to describe the same things and were sponsored by the same foundations and friends with the same international set of individuals. However, more interesting than the obvious differences between Imelda—winner of a beauty pageant-turned infamous First Lady—and Pelzer—American architect who landed in Southeast Asia via the International Volunteer Service (IVS)—are their overlaps. The chapter examines three themes with which Pelzer and Imelda orchestrated, wrestled with, and encountered in their pursuits.

The conceptual framework of ethnocide as a discourse that, though it emerged in the Indigenous populations of South and Central America, took on global momentum through discussions on intangible cultural heritage and the Declaration of San José on ethnocide, rooted its lineage with the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948. This concern for cultural genocide and particularly the loss of lived tradition is captured in Dorothy Pelzer’s work on her book project, *Houses Are People*. An oft-cited anecdote tells that a language falls out of use at the rate of one every two weeks, primarily because it was never recorded.¹⁰ Just so, like architecture, if not recorded, did it exist? This was the premise by which one might position Pelzer’s approach to her subject, something she believed was not being recorded, and was being lost. When MoMA’s doors opened on November 11, 1964 to reveal a patchwork of photographs by her friend Bernard Rudofsky, mounted without captions to a grid of stark frames, Pelzer was in Bangkok getting rolls of film developed from her previous months spent in Laos and Cambodia. While the intention for “Architecture Without Architects” was to celebrate, ponder, disorientate with, this supposed

¹⁰ John Noble Wilford, “World’s Languages Dying Off Rapidly,” *The New York Times*, September 18, 2007, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/18/world/18cnd-language.html>.

anonymity—like language, a “vernacular”—would Pelzer have taken issue with it?¹¹ These were buildings constructed by people (or peoples), and had a genealogy unto themselves. Were Rudofsky’s exhibition instead a review of unwritten languages, to Pelzer it would have come across as so many randomized words, out of context, and unknowable.

The action of freezing cultures is examined through Imelda Marcos’s “Land and People” book series and Nayong Pilipino, a museum built to showcase tribal traditions. The histories that the Land and People series told drew on motifs of folklore, each from the particular region of the southern island of Mindanao from which they derived. These books, however, were part of a larger propaganda campaign for development—understood in its widest sense—Imelda wanted to be able to “develop” people as well as the resources of the landscape. “History and tradition” she writes “can set the basis for the pace, the quality and the direction of such development,” the introduction to each book notes. Such language is not far from the UNESCO Declaration of San José, which insists that “ethno-development” is the “extension and consolidation of the elements of its own culture [...] to direct its own development and exercise self-determination.”¹² Each pavilion of Nayong Pilipino was designed by a different pet-architect of Imelda’s; each area of the museum, which was open-air in the manner of a theme park, represented a region of the Philippine archipelago. These pavilions were also stores that would sell tribal wares direct from the source through Panamin’s outreach missions.

¹¹ Felicity Scott makes a case for Rudofsky’s approach to the exhibition as being a mode of disorientation in order to “outwit” emerging globalizing forms of power. Felicity D. Scott, *Disorientation: Bernard Rudofsky in the Empire of Signs* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 102.

¹² Declaration of San José, adopted by the UNESCO Meeting of Experts on Ethno-Development and Ethnocide in Latin America, San José, December 11, 1981, UNESCO Doc. FS 82/WF.32 (1982).

Like environmental degradation, cultural extinction was human-induced, yet it took time to develop a language for cultural preservation. Through the ostensibly well-meaning projects of Pelzer and Imelda, a web of positions are created on the way that ethnocide became both construed of and created. The vignettes into Pelzer and Imelda reveal how architectural taxonomy and tribal objectification are aspects of a similar gaze employed to different ends, both figures provide the opportunity to study the extreme ends of a dichotomy of displacement. Pelzer, like Rudofsky or Bartok, was a self-appointed prefect of culture whose intrepid mission was encyclopedic and interminable. Imelda, a meddling lowlander who contained culture, both in books and museums, but also on reservations constructed for Indigenous peoples displaced by land-grabbing and guerrilla warfare.

Disappearance and an institutionalization of loss

To begin, a brief note on how the terminology of ethnocide came about. Though the linguist and lawyer Raphael Lemkin proposed the term ethnocide as an alternative to genocide in 1943, it was Robert Jaulin, a French ethnologist who popularized the term in his *La paix blanche: introduction à l'ethnocide* (1970).¹³ He used it to describe what he saw happening to the Bari Indigenous peoples in the 1960s, on the border between Venezuela and Colombia. When he

¹³ Robert Jaulin, *La Paix blanche: introduction à l'ethnocide* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970); Jeanne Favret-Saada, "Jaulin Robert, La paix blanche. Introduction à l'ethnocide.," *Revue française de sociologie* 13, no. 4 (1972): 591–92; Robert Jaulin, ed., *L'Ethnocide a travers les Amériques: Textes et documents réunis par Robert Jaulin* (Arthème Fayard, 1972).

spoke at the Royal Anthropological Institute in London in May 1974, his speech, “Ethnology and History,” drew out the parallels that he saw across time in the destruction of cultures,

This civilization of ours—or rather, this movement of emptying, or decivilization—was not always presented in the same way. “Christian” they stressed in the sixteenth century when they were butchering American Indians. “Formed by nations and the fatherland” they shouted during the French Revolution which was lost to Hitlerism. “In the name of liberty and progress” they tell us today, with bombs to back up their argument in case we are in danger of not understanding, as was proved in Vietnam.

Relating the series of anecdotes to the war in Vietnam, approaching its climatic end in 1974, Jaulin’s concern was one history’s absorption into another. These “multiple human histories” that met in the colonization of Africa and Asia were confronted with “A History that we call western or white. These multiple histories were absorbed into our History.”¹⁴ Such absorption, of course, into Universal History, resulted in loss.¹⁵

The defining metric of calculating genocide is measured in the deliberate killing of people from a particular nation or ethnic group, but how to measure ethnocide, particularly when destruction is passive? The question is examined by *Ethnocide: Is it Real?* (fig 5.04) A 1993 publication of the Media Mindanao News Service, which takes its source material from oral histories over the prior two decades on development aggression on Lumad lands. “Ethnocide is a strong word,” they write in the preface, “because it implies systematic intent in destroying a culture. In fact, ethnocide’s controversial implications stem from visions of widespread loss of culture and ethnic identity among the estimated 2.3 million indigenous members in Mindanao”

¹⁴ Julian Pitt-Rivers and Robert Jaulin, “Ethnology and History,” *RAIN*, no. 3 (1974): 2.

¹⁵ Lucia Allais locates “universal history” in the universal museum through the description of the UNESCO Museum, “under UNESCO’s watch, the open-air museum also became one of the birthplaces of the distinction between tangible (artistic) and intangible (folkloric) categories of heritage.” *Designs of Destruction*, 193.

[roughly half of the overall population of Indigenous peoples in the country at the time].¹⁶ As became clear in chapter 4, Mindanao was subject to some of the most militarized forms of expropriation and agribusiness in the world through the 1970s, a case study in Indigenous dispossession at the hands of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the paramilitaries of plantations, mines and logging. In 1980, however, it was also the site of Imelda's Land and People project for the development of knowledge on regional traditions on the island.

If the "realness" of ethnocide was to be legitimated through the series of testimonies that *Ethnocide: Is It Real?* relates, then it was through the potency of accounts of people being reduced to internal refugees on which the term relies. Such reliance revealed a slippage between loss and life: even while lifeways are lost, life itself remains. To preserve lifeways, then, would require the effort of actively keeping peace and the possibility for maintenance of tradition. Of the estimated 350–600 million Indigenous peoples in the world by the 2010s, a significant number of governments do not recognize the term "Indigenous." The only country in Asia to recognize Indigenous peoples is the Philippines, and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) is a government agency that formed out of what was left of Panamin in the mid-1980s.¹⁷ India, has "Scheduled Tribes" and most sub-Saharan African countries argue that all their citizens are Indigenous. Some governments are also reluctant to recognize such groups as Indigenous because they are aware that if those groups do appeal to the UN or International Court of Justice, they may challenge the state for more autonomy and self-determination.

¹⁶ Media Mindanao News Service and Investigative Team, *Ethnocide: Is It Real?* (Davao City, Philippines: Media Mindanao News Service, 1993), iv.

¹⁷ Robert K. Hitchcock and Samuel Totten, "Editors' Introduction," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 4, no. 1 (2009): 1–7.

For three days in Geneva in September 1977, 250 delegates, observers and guests representing sixty Nations and peoples from fifteen countries across the Americas came together to discuss the term.¹⁸ These representatives gave testimonies and evidence to the international community of the ways in which discrimination, genocide and ethnocide operated, and for many it seen as the foundational moment of “Indigenous global politics” of the 1970s.¹⁹ The Final Resolution of the 1977 stated:

While the situation may vary from country to country, the roots are common to all: they include the brutal colonization to open the way for the plunder of their land and resources by commercial interests seeking maximum profits; the massacres of millions of native peoples for centuries and the continuous grabbing of their land which deprives them of the possibility of developing their own resources and means of livelihood; the denial of self-determination of indigenous nations and peoples destroying their traditional value system and their social and cultural fabric. The evidence pointed to the combination of this oppression resulting in the further destruction of the indigenous nations.²⁰

The meeting was spearheaded by the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), an organization founded in June 1974 in Standing Rock, South Dakota, with attendance of over 5000 from 98 Indigenous Nations. With its recognition as an NGO in 1977, it had consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council. This international organizing gained strength from the social movements of the 1960s and 70s, but had extra clout through the long-established pan-Indigenous organizations in the United States like the Society of American Indians (founded 1911) and the National Congress of American Indians (founded 1944). These organizations (the SAI advocated for a seat at the League of Nations Paris Peace talks in 1919) were a movement

¹⁸ Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, United States of America, Venezuela.

¹⁹ Jeff Benvenuto, “What Does Genocide Produce? The Semantic Field of Genocide, Cultural Genocide, and Ethnocide in Indigenous Rights Discourse,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 9, no. 2 (October 1, 2015), 26.

²⁰ International NGO Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in The Americas. Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland. September 20–23, 1977.

for an internationalism that exceed the form of the nation-state and the forms of sovereignty associated with it.²¹

In their submission to the conference on discrimination against Indigenous populations in Geneva, the IITC describe international abuses with postcolonial commonalities. “Indigenous populations do not constitute just a handful of ‘lost tribes’ in a few countries of the world,” citing the Montagnards of Vietnam, Indians of the Altiplano of the Andes, the thirty-eight million tribal populations of India.²² The injustices perpetrated against these people “cannot be blamed entirely [...] on government malevolence,” for “Indigenous populations are caught in the wider dilemma of rapid, uncontrolled technological development of resources.”²³ Whether through the racialized settler colonialism of the US or Australian context, the state-sanctioned rule-by-business of the former oligarchs such as in the Philippines or India, as anthropologist Patrick Wolfe notes, “the question of genocide is never far from discussions of settler colonialism.”²⁴ It was thus through these commonalities that the international Indigenous movement gained rhetorical force and legal legitimacy, by embracing and insisting on international human rights law.²⁵

The categories that emerged with “ethnocide,” Wolfe notes, are insufficient for a variety of reasons. For one, genocide has been subject to election results (the Holocaust was endemic to Nazism rather than Germany; the Cambodian Genocide to the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot, not

²¹ Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, “How Indigenous Peoples Wound Up at the United Nations,” *The Hidden 1970s* (Rutgers University Press, 2010), 115.

²² IITC Report, 2.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 387.

²⁵ Dunbar-Ortiz, 115.

Cambodia), which means that the particularization of Indigenous genocide, a “special kind of genocide” associated with settler colonialism is not as easily defined. “They are never quite the real thing, just as patronizingly hyphenated ethics are not fully Australian or fully American.”²⁶ How to account for the deprivations associated with the lack of opportunity to use a language, practice a religion, create art in customary ways, preserve traditions?²⁷ When delegates met in 1981 for the UNESCO Conference on Ethnocide and Ethnodevelopment, even though the meeting had no official capacity to inform international law, it created the setting to propose working standards. Their final report heavily cited the International Bill of Human Rights with special effort to identify where it concerned the “right to culture,” Article 27, for example, in which “everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community” or Article 22, where “everyone, as a member of society, has the right to [...] realization, through national effort and international cooperation in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.”²⁸ The emphasis of the San José Declaration was on

²⁶ The problems of understanding how to categorize genocide can be linked to assimilation, Wolfe notes how, “depending on the historical conjuncture, assimilation can be a more effective mode of elimination than conventional forms of killing, since it does not involve such a disruptive affront to the rule of law that is ideologically central to the cohesion of settler society.” Wolfe, 402.

Because of the way that assimilation is folded into modernization and urbanization, ethnocide becomes a precarious and amorphous category. Indeed, Bischooping and Fingerhut argue that “because Indigenous experiences are regarded as ‘ethnocides,’ not genocides, many genocide researchers exclude or discount them from comparative research.” Katherine Bischooping and Natalie Fingerhut, “Border Lines: Indigenous Peoples in Genocide Studies*,” *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 33, no. 4 (1996): 484.

²⁷ Beardsley, cited in Kuper, L. *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University, 1981, 31.

²⁸ Cobo, José R. Martínez. “Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations.” E/CN.4/Sub.2/1983/21/Add.3, page 3.

“ethnodevelopment,” a positive spin to counter the notion of ethnocide that promoted self-determination over destruction.²⁹

Aside from the language of these treaties and statements themselves, they reveal a concerted effort to ratify cultural destruction as on a par with human destruction. As a mode of naming this was difficult to identify.³⁰ The working definition proposed by the UN Sub-Committee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization described that

[Indigenous populations are] those descended from peoples who inhabited a land when outsiders came and reduced them to a non-dominant condition, and who now conform more to their own customs and traditions than to those of the country where they live, in a state structure incorporating the characteristics of the predominant segments of the population.³¹

Indeed, the account that the report opens with comes from an 1837 Committee on Aboriginal Tribes in the British House of Commons, for whom “savages are dangerous neighbors and unprofitable customers.”³² Culture, dominant or not, pertains to the sustaining activities of those that partake in it. Ethnocide was its purposeful destruction by the dominant culture that was at issue, one given moral equivalence to genocide.

If in the previous chapter, a constructed political economy of indigeneity was forged first through land-grabbing and second the resistance movements against it, then what is at stake here

²⁹ Jeff Benvenuto, “What Does Genocide Produce? The Semantic Field of Genocide, Cultural Genocide, and Ethnocide in Indigenous Rights Discourse,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 9, no. 2 (October 1, 2015), 31.

³⁰ That this ratification had a direct, tangible relationship to the settler-colonial, imperialist, mercantile-capitalist domination of the world-system since 1492 was not amiss in these definitions, but added to its vague boundaries. Benvenuto, “What Does Genocide Produce?” 2015.

³¹ Special Rapporteur for the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 8.

³² Alpheus Henry Snow, *The Question of Aborigines in the Law and Practice of Nations*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1921, 11.

is understanding how loss, as a conceptual category in and of itself, was rendered through the work of a network of individuals in the 1960s and 70s. Indeed, loss was the abiding concern that both Pelzer and Imelda's work took up, the threat of disappearance was a codex with which to retrieve culture. In my analysis, Pelzer is a cipher with which to understand this pursuit, and in the pairing of Pelzer and Imelda, rather strange as it is, Imelda operates as a foil to any straightforward definitions of international cultural protection. By taking up loss itself as a political category that contained both narrative possibilities and social actualities, Imelda was able to secure funding, build museums and print books that used the same terminology as Pelzer.

Denizens of disappearance

To trace the arc of Pelzer's career as an architect is to trace the circuitry of two international architectural worlds. On the one hand she moved among an international set, studying under Buckminster Fuller, Gyorgy Kepes and Moholy Nagy, becoming friends with foreign students such as Lim Chong Keat, and close friends with the Rudofsky couple when visiting Japan. On the other hand, she became involved in international aid, working for the IVS in Laos building schools and hospitals, and where she was initially charmed by the traditional architecture she encountered. Though seemingly different—modernism and aid—these fields often intersected in surprising ways.³³ Pelzer followed what she called “a more or less

³³ Of the discussions on architecture and international aid in recent years Panayiota Pyla, Ijlal Muzaffar, Ginger Nolan and Felicity Scott have each discussed modern architects' interest in and involvement with international aid projects. M. Ijlal Muzaffar, “The Periphery within: Modern Architecture and the Making of the Third World” (2007); Ginger Nolan, *The Neocolonialism of the Global Village* (U of Minnesota Press, 2018); Panayiota Pyla and Aga Khan Program at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, eds., *Landscapes of Development: The Impact of Modernization Discourses on the Physical Environment of the Eastern Mediterranean* (Cambridge, Mass:

conventional liberal arts education,” attending Cornell University and Principia College, Illinois obtaining a BA in 1937.³⁴ She studied a further two years under László Moholy-Nagy at “The New Bauhaus” IIT Institute of Design in Chicago in 1940 while working as an architectural designer for the Container Corporation of America, owned by Walter Paepcke, who was also one of the main benefactors of the Institute of Design’s founding in 1939. She worked there until 1947, when she enrolled in MIT, receiving an M.Arch in 1950. Here she was a teaching fellow under Gyorgy Kepes, and took classes with Alver Aalto. After graduating from MIT she was an Instructor in Art at Wellesley College, specializing in architectural history, she later registered as an architect in the state of New Hampshire. In 1958–59 she took a seven-month study tour of Japan, documenting Japanese traditional architecture. She meets Bernard and Berta Rudofsky in Kyoto in January 1959, researching *The Kimono Mind* on a Fulbright. Inspired by Japanese traditional architecture, she builds her own house on return to New Hampshire. The interest in urban form and house form of Pelzer’s mentors and friends, taken alongside her impressions on these earlier travels might be read as clues to the larger project she would take on in the 1960s.³⁵

Pelzer traveled to Laos in 1962 with the IVS as a practicing architect and teacher, working on school buildings in Luang Prabang and Pakse. Founded by Christian leaders in the

Aga Khan Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2013); Felicity Dale Elliston Scott, *Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity/Architectures of Counterinsurgency*, 2016.

³⁴ DPC, NAA/SI. Book notes, 176.

³⁵ Indeed toward the late 1950s, both Kepes and Rudofsky both had an abiding interest in the legibility of urban form. Felicity Scott describes how for Kepes, a reintegration of the subject’s perception within an increasingly chaotic urban milieu was to be achieved through the functional model, while Rudofsky, she posits was interested in the opposite, his travels in Japan an opportunity to “embrace disorientation.” Perhaps some of Rudofsky’s interest in house forms filtered through to Pelzer during their Kyoto meetings: Rudofsky wrote that “the Japanese house represents, as it were, the equivalent of an experimental laboratory on a nation-wide scale from which we might gain, indirectly, a better comprehension of our own problems of building and living.” Cited in Felicity D. Scott, *Disorientation: Bernard Rudofsky in the Empire of Signs* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 54; Rudofsky, letter to Mr. Edward D’Arms, Rockefeller Foundation, January 24, 1956, Rudofsky Archives.

US in 1953, the IVS promoted a “people-to-people” cooperation, under government contract or through support of donors such as the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.³⁶ Like most aid organizations at this time, the IVS were funded under the auspices of spreading democracy and abating communism (seen as a threat in Laos at the time). In 1963 she designed the USA Exhibition Pavilion for the *That Luang Fair* in Vientiane, a circular, roofless bamboo structure, and took first prize at the fair. Leaving IVS in October 1963, she traveled Laos, Thailand, Sumatra and Bali, photographing traditional architecture.

Imelda’s influence on architecture between 1965–1986 has been well-documented. The big projects, Manila Film Center, the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Coconut Palace, the Philippine Heart Center and Makiling School for the Performing Arts are staple examples in the oeuvre of Imelda’s reign. The “mania for identity” as Gerard Lico calls it, permeated Filipino architects’ scramble for Marcos-funded projects found form in so-called neo-vernacular concrete structures, and Lico’s 2003 book *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth and Marcos State Architecture* is a staple in the analysis of the Marcos couple’s self-image projected in concrete.³⁷ Less known, however, is Imelda’s work with tribal Filipinos, some of which happened under the auspices of Panamin and some which took place of her own initiative. Nayong Pilipino, a museum in Manila to draw together a “far-flung network of Filipino villages in one beautifully landscaped site,” was an overt example of exhibition architecture in the service of a play on the exchange between

³⁶ The IVS was founded by Mennonite, Brethren and Quaker organizations in 1953. *International Voluntary Services: 1953-2003*. Harpers Ferry, WV: International Voluntary Services Alumni Association, 2003.

³⁷ Not to be confused with Deyan Sudjic’s book of the same title, published two years later in 2005. Sudjic’s chapter “Inventing a Nation,” takes up Leandro Locsin’s work for Imelda. Gerard Lico, *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture* (Quezon City [Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003]; Deyan Sudjic, *The Edifice Complex: How the Rich and Powerful Shape the World*, First Edition (New York: Penguin Press HC, The, 2005), 153–155.

tradition in the provinces and culture in the city.³⁸ To take up the comparative approach with Pelzer, this chapter examines four of Imelda's publications as part of the Land and People series, alongside the Nayong Pilipino theme park. Imelda had a specific approach to how she wanted the culture of Indigenous peoples to appear. On the one hand, she placed a premium on the development projects being undertaken by the New Society (Bagong Lipunan) of the dictatorship, infrastructural projects that would both physically connect the archipelago (such as bridges) and provide energy (such as hydroelectric projects). However, in addition to this approach was a concerted effort to connect the country's pre-colonial, indeed pre-historic underpinnings to the present, and the folk stories of Indigenous peoples published in the Land and People series are an undisguised attempt at that.

To pull together the activities of Imelda and Pelzer then is to negotiate the unstable terrain of a distant past and an unsynchronized present. Traditional culture was available to both in the freeze-frame of architecture, providing the opportunity to photograph, measure, draw and recreate the otherwise rapid process of ethnocide. The analysis follows this unfolding, first of how each handled time and tradition, then to how systems of category availed themselves, and finally to a discussion of the relationship between the making of a world and the making of the self in relation to it. At stake in this chapter is less the question of the political economy of indigeneity than its constant metamorphosis with each attempt at its capture.

³⁸ Imelda Romualdez Marcos and Ileana Maramag, *Imelda Romualdez Marcos Action Programmes*. Manila, 1973, 32.

I

Origins, or the problem of tradition

For thousands of years, at evening time, as the sun goes down in Manila Bay you can see the dark velvet slopes and peaks of Mariveles take the shape of a woman at rest. We call her the Sleeping Goddess, born of earth and stone, fused in the elemental creative fire. Through all these years, she has lain there, a silent witness to the rise and ebb of the tides of history that have flowed around our islands. She alone has endured, her beauty and freshness undimmed, while around her lie the ruins and scars of history, the fallen monuments of brass and stone and the sunken argosies of those who sought to possess this land and who were overwhelmed by time.³⁹

So began Imelda's speech "Sanctuary of the Filipino Soul" at the formal dedication of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) on September 10, 1969. The Sleeping Goddess was a convenient starting point for the 88-hectare complex, which was then being built on reclaimed land in Manila Bay, and would eventually host a folk arts theater, convention center, film center, hotel and museum. A "silent witness," she gave Imelda the opportunity to choose from the tides of history around the islands that suited her tastes (rather than the ruins and scars) and craft an image of the Filipino Soul that fit with she and her husband's "conjugal dictatorship."⁴⁰

It took a concerted effort from Imelda to reorganize the chronology of the archipelago to fit her vision, and the moment of the CCP's dedication, which concluded four years of fund-raising, was really the beginning of a decade of chronomania. I have chosen to bracket her pursuit of reorganizing the cultural present of the country with the 1980 publications of the Land

³⁹ Marcos, Imelda Romualdez. *Cultural Center of the Philippines*, 1970, 31.

⁴⁰ The "conjugal dictatorship" phrase was popularized by Primitivo Mijares with his book of the same title. Mijares, erstwhile journalist and confidant of Marcos, was Chairman of the National Press Club, and ran the Media Advisory Council, a state agency established to censor the press in 1973. He defected from the regime and published the book in 1976, within four years of Martial Law, and went into hiding. Primitivo Mijares, *The Conjugal Dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.

and People Project. Based on the histories of four regions in the southernmost island of Mindanao, they represent a culminating force in a region historically most removed from the arm of Manila politics. Not only is Mindanao a Muslim-majority island, it is also home to the largest and most diverse concentration of Indigenous peoples in the country, sitting on mineral-rich agricultural and mining territories. Thus, if the Land and People Project, a series of four publications that attempted to describe the history of these Indigenous peoples as central to the history of the Philippines, it was the final component in a re-writing of origin stories that were neatly assembled in line with the tenets of her husband's New Society. Published by the Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation and Development of Southern Philippines, of which she was chair, Imelda wrote the Preface and Introduction to each volume of the series, while the rest of the book was written by a research team of the PCRDSP.

Each title drew on folk motifs from the particular region of Mindanao they describe:

HAYLAYA: Celebration After Spiritual Renewal (Region IX)

LINIBUNG: Spiritual Longing for Immortality (Region X)

BAGANI: Man of Dignity (Region XI)

DARANGEN: Epic of History (Region XII)⁴¹

The content of each volume followed the same template, exploring topographic and geographic features of the landscape, an ethnographic profile of the various tribal groups in each region, how their traditions were met with in the face of Spanish and American colonization, and present-day concerns. "Chanting the *Darangen* epic is a way of touching tradition," book four begins, "a way of establishing contact with one's center in a world full of constantly changing values."⁴² Yet in

⁴¹ These four regions cover the large southern island of Mindanao clockwise, hence the numbers beginning at IX.

⁴² Marcos, Imelda Romualdez. *Darangen: Epic of History*. The Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation and Development of Southern Philippines, Metro Manila, 1980, 3.

this world of change, it was looking inward that the book advocated, “there is nothing more interesting than our own story, our hometown, ourselves. [...]

To look into the mirror of our traditions or values and see in it not only the reflection of our uniqueness but also the norms and traits that makes us belong to one nation is, I believe, something worth doing. This book is a small mirror of our tradition. However, there are distinctions and practices, even customary laws or *adat* which need to be more known. And understood. This study is an attempt to comprehend these norms.⁴³

Going “beyond the story of a region,” for Imelda, was an opportunity to expand to the scale of the nation a distinct folk history, to transition from the “they” of Panamin propaganda a decade earlier, to an “our” of Imelda’s making.

It was when Imelda was making her speech on the Sleeping Goddess at CCP that Pelzer’s book project was beginning to take shape, it looked more feasible now that she had received the first of two grants from the JDR 3rd Fund through Porter McCray in 1968, the same fund that Imelda used to help get CCP off the ground a year before. The drafts and notes for Pelzer’s book, *Houses are People*, are detailed enough to build an image of what she intended it to look like.⁴⁴

(fig X) A sprawling, four-hundred page work, it was divided into four parts, the first part, “Setting the Problem” introduced and explored the major questions behind the project, which was followed by “Laying the Background,” exploring the ecological and cultural context of

⁴³ Marcos, Imelda Romualdez. *Darangen: Epic of History*. The Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation and Development of Southern Philippines, Metro Manila, 1980, 3.

⁴⁴ The book had the former title of the more prosaic *Houses of Southeast Asia: Tradition and Transition*. Both Imelda and Pelzer secured funding from the JDR 3rd Fund through the intermediary of Porter McCray, its director, friend to both Imelda and Pelzer, board member of MoMA and former director of its International Program in the 1950s. In *Cultural Center of the Philippines*, Ileana Maramag writes that “In January 1967, Mrs. Marcos met with Porter A. McCray, visiting director of the JDR 3rd Fund in New York, whose expertise the First Lady had sought, the performing arts being one of the Fund’s chosen fields of activity. Through representations made by Ileana Maramag, in behalf of the First Lady, the JDR 3rd Fund awarded two grants to support the Cultural Center’s staff development program.” Cultural Center of the Philippines. Imelda Romualdez Marcos and Ileana Maramag. CCP, 1973, 14. “The JDR 3rd Fund awarded Dorothy Pelzer two grants (in 1968 and 1971) in recognition of the importance of her documentation work. The trustees of her estate discovered that, among her last papers, she had expressed the hope that the task of carrying on her work could be assumed by Porter McCray, the Director of the JDR 3rd Fund, and her Malaysian architect friend, Datuk Lim Chong Keat.” *Trek Across Indonesia*, 105

Southeast Asia, “Comparison Across the Boards” detailed drawings with images of house types and lastly “Building the new Asia,” which examined how modernization was affecting tradition at the time of putting the book together in the mid 1960s. Reflecting on this tradition in her travel diary, *Trek Across Indonesia*, Pelzer wrote that “there are no hard outlines of ‘fact’ in Asia,”

To discover “fact” in Asia is a long patient process of delving into the shadowy mass of legend and dream and unwritten history, of asking the same question many times over—of many different people, and of the same person under different circumstances.⁴⁵

To Pelzer, this presented more of a challenge than an opportunity. In order to build a “cultural history of Southeast Asia” she approached it through “the medium of the house.”⁴⁶ An expression of fixity in the shadowy mass? The book, Pelzer believed, “must express my conviction that house form is the prime expression of ideas and ideals of living—fundamental ideas the often unconscious which vary for every people—just as they do among individuals in the more highly individualized societies of the Western world.”⁴⁷ People, then (these unreliable informants), could be removed from the equation as architecture was better suited to the understanding of their origins and histories, especially now that these were under threat.

Yet, later in her travel diary of Indonesia (which she moved through between May and December 1965) Pelzer meditated on the fact that architectural materiality, seemingly so fixed, was vulnerable,

Even on the outlying fringes there was blowing the wind of change. That it could be felt in such out-of-the way places was perhaps a sign that modernization could not now be resisted. My project had been undertaken to preserve a record of the traditional houses under whose eaves the *adat* of each culture was taught and administered. How long would it take for these houses to disappear completely or change drastically in their form? [...] Straw, wood, even stone may be more vulnerable than the amalgam of

⁴⁵ Pelzer, *Trek Across Indonesia*, 99

⁴⁶ DPC, NAA/SI, Book Notes Box 4 (unnumbered page).

⁴⁷ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4.

superstition, non-logic, fantasy and collective conformity which constitutes Asian thought.⁴⁸

Among Pelzer's notes are re-typed annotated pages from George Edinger's *The Twain Shall Meet* (1960) and William O. Douglas's *Beyond the High Himalayas* (1954), hardly classics now but bestsellers in their time.⁴⁹ A literary genre that mused on postwar geopolitical change conceived through a haze of McCarthyism, Pelzer had copied out such excerpts as “we [the west] have the energy of the male, Asia the lasting wisdom of the female” (Douglas); and “the white man must show strength in Asia” (Edinger). In the era of decolonization, these latent colonial ideas suffused American-english-language media, and it is with this in mind that Pelzer's thoughts—easily read as antiquated now—must be taken into consideration. Unlike Imelda, this also provided Pelzer with a sense of remove, looking on perplexed at a world system rearranging itself to gain, as a book proposal draft notes, “an insight into Asian thinking.”⁵⁰ Pelzer could not easily, it seems, take on the role of cultural arbiter. In an apparent address to Southeast Asian architects she writes,

This is your tradition. Don't be ashamed of it. Don't lose it! Build on it! This is something you have that nobody else has. What can you make of it? It is important to us. We can use it. The movement is not all West to East.⁵¹

This was “their tradition,” and in this reading Pelzer's book title *Houses Are People* performs a double duty: houses could be read—they were legible—and houses were code for people. Imelda

⁴⁸ Dorothy West Pelzer, *Trek across Indonesia* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1982), 103.

⁴⁹ Douglas was an associate justice of the Supreme Court (1939–1975), nominated by Franklin D. Roosevelt.

⁵⁰ Dorothy Pelzer Collection (NAA/SI), Book Notes Box 3.

⁵¹ Dorothy Pelzer Collection (NAA/SI), Notes Box 1-2.

saw Indigenous culture differently. For her it was “our tradition” and something one gained knowledge on through introspection, people were a media with which to do so.

Provided that each allocated alternative origin points to tradition, for Pelzer something shifting and difficult to contain, Imelda as something to be pinpointed within the self, how did they each formulate a to reproduce it? For both, the link was to be found in category systems that could facilitate a journey across (Pelzer) and inward (Imelda).

II

Anxieties and vertiginous categories

While the location of fixed origin points was an issue of theoretical concern for Pelzer, it was durability that posed a set of practical problems. “The most interesting of these houses” to be recorded in her photographs and measured drawings were “fast becoming lost—built as they were in perishable wood, bamboo, and thatch, in a physical climate taking heavy toll of such materials, and in a mental climate fast abandoning old forms in the rush for imported ‘progress.’”⁵² In Pelzer’s search for this architecture of soft materials, perishability posed two problems: a punishing tropical environment of humidity, typhoons, heat and rain, and a mental climate of abandonment provided a sense of urgency to locate a system strong enough to contain this desertion.

⁵² Dorothy Pelzer, cited in: Ong Choo Suat, *Biography of Dorothy Pelzer*, Southeast Asian Cultural Research Project (SEACURP, Singapore, 1982), 2.

Yet creating a system of order that neither existed prior to Pelzer's arrival, nor availed itself in the encounter played on her mind. Under the heading "Looking for order where there is none" in her notes, Pelzer cited the nineteenth-century Dutch orientalist, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, saying "the error of supposing that previous to the disorderly present, lies an orderly past."⁵³ She later corrected it to read:

We must beware the fallacy of believing that the present disorder is the break-down of a former static state where everything was a perfect form. Disorder is the nature of life. The *adat* has always been in a continuous state of change.⁵⁴

Clearly this was a recurrent thought for Pelzer, evinced in the fact that she went back to check and correct Snouck Hurgronje's epithet, famed in his time for studies on how Islam affected the system of *adat* in Aceh. Due to the different forms of *adat*—Muslim customary traditions in Southeast Asia—Pelzer found that she may receive conflicting information from informants. *Adat*, which she mentions frequently in her drafts and is both the prevalent traditional custom in Indonesia, a descriptor for the house type *rumah adat*, and also a transliteration of Indigenous and tradition.⁵⁵ Being wary of the multiple ways that *adat* was interpreted in Muslim societies in Southeast Asia was a prudent measure that was certainly confusing at times. "Folk tradition is an organic development" Pelzer writes, "this is not a science [...] the *adat* has never been brought

⁵³ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4. The quotation comes from his book *The Acehnese*, C Snouck Hurgronje and A.W.S O'Sullivan, *The Acehnese* (Leyden: Brill, 1906).

⁵⁴ Snouck Hurgronje, *The Atjehnese*, 190.

⁵⁵ Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin, "Introduction. The Power of Indigeneity: Reparation, Readjustments and Repositioning," in *Adat and Indigeneity in Indonesia: Culture and Entitlements between Heteronomy and Self-Ascription*, Göttingen Studies in Cultural Property (Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 2017), 5. For architectural interpretations of the *adat* and *rumah adat* see: Roxana Waterson, *Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia* (Tuttle Publishing, 2012), 67.

together in any reasoned way. It is not ‘standardized.’”⁵⁶ To apply standards and systems to the *adat*, Pelzer realized, would not only be in error, but antithetical to the context of its formation.

While locational specificity was sensitive, she was aware too of her propensity to adapt what she saw in a global sense. She gathered together her “various apologies re: research” in her notes to the introduction of *Houses Are People*, under which heading “Putting things Asian into Western categories” gathers together a number of these problems. Here, Pelzer copied out a quote from M.R. Kukrit Pramoj, a renowned Thai scholar and politician (whom she likely met in Bangkok 1963–1964) she notes as saying “Westerners come here and try to put things into their categories.” “[It is] difficult for a Westerner in the East” Pelzer writes, “or among primitive societies (in Indonesia or Borneo) to look at things in the context of the thinking that produced them, and not to put things into the categories of Western thinking.”⁵⁷ These notations provide clues as to the larger problems that Pelzer found herself wrestling with, that is, working in isolation, using her own observations “rather than repeating or drawing on the observations of others” and embarking on a project with extraordinarily broad categories, that is, house forms and Southeast Asia, attempting to delineate her own category systems within them. No such project had been undertaken previously with the depth of information she intended to include, indeed, even the name of the region was a recent (and foreign) invention. The archipelagos and coastal countries that make up the region were demarcated in 1941 by the South East Asia Command for the allied forces, the first overt political grouping of the region of its kind.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4.

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ It had been referred to previously through either colonial names, the “Dutch East Indies,” “French Indochina,” “British Malaya” or toponyms such as the Malacca Straits. The grouping would be further reinforced through the ASEAN membership of states, also organized by the US. Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (London [u.a.: Verso, 2011), 2–5.

Pelzer was pursuing, in this sense, a recent geographical formation framed from the outside by Japanese occupation and allied war in the Pacific and from the inside through the decolonial nationalist movements of, among others, Sukarno's Indonesia, Magsaysay's Philippines or Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore, all of which were self-consciously internationalist in approach.⁵⁹ Southeast Asia was marked by difference more than similarity, aside from the unusual "mottled imperialism" in the region.⁶⁰ "Why am I doing all this in SE Asia instead of in some other region?" Pelzer asks herself, "Because of the 'unity in diversity'—the wealth and variety of the forms."⁶¹ Yet diversity was also puzzling—sometimes diversity is simply too diverse. "To the extent that the Filipino and Philippine architecture culture embody Spanish influences," she remarked in notes taken during her visit in 1968,

he and it are more allied to Latin American than to Southeast Asia and are to be treated with Latin America. Why am I ready to neglect all the Spanish influences in the Philippine "tradition" when I accept Muslim (certainly an imported culture) for the Malays? Because I am looking for Asian not European forms (think this out some more).⁶²

Did this mean that for Pelzer, certain parts of Asia were simply not Asian enough? Or was it the self-conscious realization—"think this out some more"—that a region with entangled religious histories sent any logical ordering of architectural form into disarray?

⁵⁹ Pelzer was also forced to move among and between these political frameworks as caprice would have it. Pelzer was in Nias, off the west coast of Sumatra when Sukarno's regime was faced with a coup d'état that dramatically transformed Indonesia for the next three decades.

⁶⁰ Benedict Anderson describes this patchwork of imperial possessions as "marked by an irregular arrangement of patches of color" in Southeast Asia which was "the strange history of mottled imperialism in the region. Only the Belgians and Italians were missing. The British in Burma, Malaya, Singapore, and northern Borneo, the Dutch in the Indies, Portugal in eastern Timor, the Spaniards and Americans in the Philippines, and the French in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam: plus the buffer-state of quasi-independent Siam, surviving on sufferance between the colonies of rival London and Paris." *Spectre of Comparisons*, 4–5.

⁶¹ Notes to introduction of *Houses Are People*, DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4. Book notes, unnumbered page.

⁶² DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 3. Philippines notes, page 1.

She sought out the archaeologist Robert B. Fox while in the Philippines, who, in 1968 was also an advisor to the UNESCO Commission to the Philippines and the Marcos administration's Panamin projects, well known through publications like "The Prehistoric Foundations of Philippine Culture" of which Pelzer had a copy (Philippine prehistory one of Imelda's abiding interests).⁶³ But in the end it was architectural form that brought Pelzer back to category. Of the four-hundred pages planned, three hundred were devoted to her photographs and measured drawings of house forms, the "houses and their societies" section. (fig 5.06) The section was organized according to architectural elements: pilotis; roof shapes; structural systems; planning; use of materials; constructive specialties; decoration; demountability and prefabrication; non-functional factors (the house as cosmos); and village forms. Morphology and materiality then were the primary determining factors for the system, which would allow for difference within its framework. This was also a part of her argument, as she asserts in the introductory notes, "if you build with wood in the same climate you do not necessarily get similar forms."⁶⁴ Error, in the search for category, then, was one of the factors that brought Pelzer back to an architectural systems as the framework for her organization. Long lists resembling shopping receipts convey a sense of the proliferating categories with which she wrestled. (fig 5.07) Even existing names were too unstable to be depended on:

Names of people differ.
What people call other people.
What people call themselves.
Same people called by different names across a political boundary: eg "Bajau" in Philippines and in Sabah. "Murut" in Sarawak and in Sabah.

⁶³ Fox would later become embroiled in the Tasaday controversy. "The Prehistoric Foundations of Philippine Culture" was published in *Solidarity*, 19.

⁶⁴ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4. Book notes, unnumbered page.

House form might be a straightening-out factor.⁶⁵

The suspicion with which Pelzer regarded her surroundings permeated her use of secondary sources too. “The artist is not a structurally or architecturally competent observer” she observed, “his purpose is not architectural documentation but rather decoration.”⁶⁶ Indeed, engravings “done in Europe from rough sketches of the traveler” too were faulty for Pelzer, where there was “lots of room for error and fantasy and quaint romanticism,” an example she cites with a catalog of a photographic exhibition about Ayutthaya, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Siam, that she saw in Bangkok in 1967. “My photographs are my text,” she adds resolutely, however,

to show these houses in photographs is difficult, because what is important to me—i.e. the spatial composition and the spatial feeling—is not before the camera lens [...] what is before the camera lens—the dirt and clutter incidental to living—is not able to be deleted.⁶⁷

Suddenly in the transfer of the real there was too much reality. If Pelzer was to locate the substance of “spatial composition” she would have to make do with everything that came along with it. (fig 5.08–09)

Folklore and magic played a role that Pelzer found it difficult to reconcile in her attempts to allocate house forms to categories. “Many things—e.g. orientation—are based on magical reasons. Because magic has no future in the modern rational world (!!!) can we neglect it?” Not only were orientation and construction practices related to the spiritual realm, but these affected her relationship with informants too. “Fear of the spirits” Pelzer reminded herself, could also

⁶⁵ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4. Book notes, unnumbered page.

⁶⁶ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4. Book notes, unnumbered page.

⁶⁷ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4. Book notes, unnumbered page. c. 1967

lead to conflicting information. “If something has a magic meaning—people usually don’t dare mention—for fear of the spirits,” a commonality to working with informants that she would have encountered frequently. The prevalence of folk beliefs in building practices, particularly those involving ghosts, luck, or the dead—all of which have determining effects on siting, orientation, to construction itself—would have meant she was frequently aware of the fact she was not privy to important information on certain traditional building techniques.⁶⁸

Category, in Imelda’s *Land and People* book series, appeared to pose fewer issues than it did for Pelzer. Each book consisted of seven chapters, and though their subjects differed, each book took up roughly the same organizational scheme, summarized as follows:

- i. A general introduction to the topography of the region.
- ii. The history of the ethnic groups of that region, usually about four or five.
- iii. Historic encounters between state, people and colonialism pre-19th century.
- iv. Colonialism as part of oral histories and folklore.
- v. Social transformation and American colonialism post 1898.
- vi. Maintained cultural traditions.
- vii. Development and the present.

Because of their organization in this way, any variation between tribal groups was organized so that their particular individuality was composed of a series of responses, to geography, Spanish colonialism, American occupation and the developmentalism of the 1970s. Like Pelzer’s house form as “straightening-out factor,” a historical timeline provided the superstructure among which each Indigenous group added flavor to the whole rather than was constituted with any individuality. By going further back into the past, the books were able to leapfrog the uncomfortable realities of recent years, and there is a conspicuous absence of both the NPA and Panamin throughout the books, or indeed any mention of the Philippine

⁶⁸ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4.

Constabulary and the Armed Forces, who at the time were accused by the church and human rights groups of herding people into strategic hamlet style reservations. “Fortunately,” wrote Imelda, “the remains of the land, the fossilized traces of the ancient past, the preserved traditions of societies, and the written records, however foreign, provide insight into the underside of history.”⁶⁹ In *BAGANI*, for example, “a close look at the past will show that the cultural minorities are not ungovernable. The Spanish and the American administrative experiences with the native groups are ample evidence of this fact.”⁷⁰

Discussion on their “traditions against colonialism” and “encounters with imperialism” served as a backdrop to an embrace of Marcos developmentalism rather than resistance to it as part of a history of resistance as others pointed out. Only three years prior to their publication, the historian William Henry Scott had read a paper at the Third Folklore Congress in Cebu that pointed out the similarities between Indigenous resistance to the Marcos regime and resistance to both American and Spanish colonization. Scott (whom Pelzer visited in 1968) noted that “it is an ironic fact that the most serious challenge to the Kalinga cultural community should be presented by a fourth regime, which is more dedicatedly committed to the welfare of the Filipino people than any of its predecessors—the New Society.”⁷¹ Indeed the tactics of Panamin that I discussed in chapter 4 return in the *Land and People* series through Imelda’s transitory measure of resituating and incorporating tribal resistance into the larger Marcos development project.

⁶⁹ Imelda Marcos, Introduction, *HAYLAYA: Celebration After Spiritual Renewal*, 4.

⁷⁰ *Bagani: Man of Dignity*, (Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation and Development of Southern Philippines, 1980).

⁷¹ William Henry Scott, “Old Folkways, New Societies,” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 7, no. 1/2 (1979): 78.

The subject of development is taken up in the final part of each volume, an epilogue that sums up the development programs being undertaken in the region covered in the book, complete with an appendix with a foldout section that describes the development projects in progress in each administrative region of Mindanao concerned in the book. (fig 5.12) It focuses on the “travails of survival and what the future holds for them [...] the evolution of the role tradition plays in modern life and how the new thrust of technological growth and modernization affects the value of tradition itself.” How would the inevitable “thrust” of technological growth affect tradition?

The regional structure [is] a viable mechanism for development purposes, a means of creating an identity, a sense of destiny for a geographic area on the basis of its role or place in a new socio-political order, a new society that is being shaped for the entire archipelago.⁷²

Time was running out for tradition. The Marcosian New Society involved massive development projects across the country, meaning that tradition would somehow have to be consolidated within the framework of agribusiness, logging, monocrop planting and mining. “Development proceeds with a future perspective,” wrote Imelda in the preface to each edition, “yet, history and tradition can set the basis for the pace, the quality and the direction of such development [...] this is the overriding motivation behind this interest to start a tradition of historical literature on the land and people of each region of our country.”⁷³ Historical literature was the means, then, with which tradition could be consolidated through the *Land and People* project.

⁷² *Bagani: Man of Dignity*, (Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation and Development of Southern Philippines, 1980).

⁷³ *Bagani: Man of Dignity*, (Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation and Development of Southern Philippines, 1980).

Each publication mirrored this consolidation in its design as well as literary scope. Each cover followed the same format, an illustrated tear separating the title from the lower portion of the book, with four squares set on a red background. (fig 5.13) Within each of the squares, a pattern or motif could be seen, these were taken from different aspects of the Indigenous groups discussed within the book, though there was no logic to their provenance—whether they came from Manobo grave markers, sacred woven *t'nalak* cloth of the T'boli or flowing *okir* designs—all were set within the same pattern and subject to color-coordinated duotone printing. Like the cultures discussed within, these are set within a framework of four squares, the imagery serving as decoration for its own publicity. As with the vague treatment of tribal groups within, graphic design, like administrative boundaries, are the markers that separate more than language or tradition.

While for Pelzer category produced vertigo, a kaleidoscope of self-conscious possibility that could only be recuperated through the structural form of the house (even that was supple), for the *Land and People* series of Imelda's PCRDSP creating category systems through design, book structure, and historical fabulation, there was an opportunity not to be missed.

III

Positions, viewing the self within and without

At this stage the analysis considers the structure of positions created by each figure, where for Pelzer we explore dimensions of outwardness through her positionality, and for Imelda, the opposite, staking out positions within an artificial world in order to go inwards, the

“mirror of tradition” with which to see oneself, as she put it. Nayong Pilipino, “Philippine Village,” a theme park built in 1969 on land adjoining the Manila International Airport, was an exercise in worldmaking, combining seven Philippine villages around a giant man-made lagoon “each village reflecting the way of life of a particular region of the Philippines.”⁷⁴ The first cultural theme park in Asia, said to have inspired Queen Sirikit of Thailand and Madame Suharto of Indonesia to build their own.⁷⁵

On a Saturday afternoon of November 14, 1971, Mrs. McNamara was given a guided tour of Nayong Pilipino while her husband presided over private meetings with congressional and business leaders on the World Bank’s projects in the country, meeting, as irony would have it, some of the chief funding sources behind the park.⁷⁶ Its foundation was certified by Presidential decree to “formulate a comprehensive social welfare program for the upliftment, improvement and amelioration of the social and economic conditions of the unfortunate destitute members of our society with the end in view of availing maximum utilization of their potentialities in the solution of the country’s problems.”⁷⁷ Conceived a decade prior to the *Land and People* series, it was one of the earliest schemes with which Imelda sought consolidation among a fragmented archipelago. Margaret McNamara’s visit, and other state visits by Queen

⁷⁴ Marcos and Maramag, *Imelda Romualdez Marcos Action Programmes*, 32.

⁷⁵ Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park) opened in Jakarta in 1980 and Muang Boran (Ancient City) in Samut Prakan of Thailand in 1972.

Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 57. Nayong Pilipino Foundation was established through Presidential Decree 37 on November 6, 1972.

⁷⁶ World Bank Group Archives, Travel briefs. Folder 1772605.

⁷⁷ The park was begun in 1969, and had a foundation established by presidential decree in 1972. Part of the purpose of the decree was: “To formulate a comprehensive social welfare program for the upliftment, improvement and amelioration of the social and economic conditions of the unfortunate destitute members of our society with the end in view of availing maximum utilization of their potentialities in the solution of the country’s problems.”

Sirikit of Thailand (1968) and Madame Suharto of Indonesia (1971) have been historicized as events in which the park conveyed Imelda's mastery over a compressed palimpsest of country's cultural diversity.⁷⁸

Replicas of regionally specific house forms were designed by eight prominent Filipino architects, and a Museum of Philippine Traditional Culture, where the "fascinating life, customs and cultural heritage of the country's ethnic groups," was overseen by Panamin, and acted as the receptacle into which ethnographic objects and tribal products siphoned from their medical missions would filter in.⁷⁹ (fig 5.14) The museum was organized in tandem with Panamin, collating four tribal groups in the exhibits complete with blowguns, woodcarvings, the syllabic bamboo scrolls of the Hanunoo in Mindoro and "five superbly costumed mannequins" in ritual dress.⁸⁰ As if, Gerard Lico notes, they were "frozen in time inside a cabinet of curiosities," the museum was at once an odd celebration of living traditions, complete with artisans working in each village, and a time capsule. (fig 5.15–16) With uncanny duality to Pelzer's appeal, "This is your tradition. Don't be ashamed of it. Don't lose it!" to Southeast Asian architects, according to Imelda, Nayong Pilipino "preserves many of our fine handicraft and arts which are dying."⁸¹

⁷⁸ Edson Cabalfin, "Condensing the Country: Identity Politics in the Design of Nayong Pilipino (Philippine Village) and 1998 Expo Pilipino Theme Parks" *Espasyo: Journal of Philippine Architecture and Allied Arts Volume 1, No. 6*, 2014–2015. 26–39.

⁷⁹ Luis Araneta for the Central Luzon Village, Carlos Arguelles for the Nayong Bisaya, the Mañosa brothers Manuel and Francisco for Bicolandia Village homes, Gabriel Formoso for the stilted restaurant and open-air theater, Leandro Locsin for the Northern Luzon Village, Angel Nakpil for the Government Center, and Lorenzo del Castillo for the Muslim Village.

⁸⁰ The regional groups represented in the museum were: Ifugao and Bontoc, ethnic groups of Palawan and Isabela, the T'boli, Mansaka and Manubo and the Tasaday, the Muslims and the Samal.

⁸¹ Imelda Romualdez Marcos and Ileana Maramag, *Imelda Romualdez Marcos Action Programmes*. Manila, 1973, 32. Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 57–59.

The curatorial approach of Nayong Pilipino runs counter to typical claims on both ethnographic museums and world's fairs.⁸² If objects, buildings and their ruins are straightforward to describe as the relics of cultural patrimony (they exist, are tangible) where does that leave soft materials and the human knowledge that transforms them? In this case they must be built and rebuilt (to use another term, fabricated). The “ongoing nature of imperial process,” Ann Laura Stoler claims, can be refigured through “ruination,” as a term that helps move away from the optics of ruins themselves.⁸³ At Nayong Pilipino, Kwame Anthony Appiah’s question “what does it mean, exactly, for something to belong to a people?” can be asked with the granularity of the transferal of objecthood. Looking into the mirror of tradition was tied to a process of ruination that was occurring in the provinces at the whim of Manila bureaucrats and businesses was the same process that motivated the return of culture to the capital city, cultural extraction akin to resource extraction.

The same year that Imelda commissioned Luis Araneta and Leandro Locsin to design portions of Nayong Pilipino to imitate tribal villages, Pelzer sought out Araneta and Locsin for advice on where to photograph actual Ifugao villages and houses constructed with nipa and bamboo. (fig 5.17–18) Locsin urged Pelzer to look into the “nipa hut” as “Filipino,” she wrote in her diary in the Philippines that “Nipa hut is the real Philippine ‘tradition’ [...] without class distinctions [...] the unselfconscious solution to living.”⁸⁴ This fell in line with her search for the “physical expression of the way of life of a people [...] unconscious expression” yet was

⁸² The archaeologist Dan Hicks’ claim that “the ethnological museum must take its place alongside the fortified trench, barbed wire, the Maxim machine gun, and the tank, as part of the coming techno-brutality of the twentieth century.” Hicks Dan, “Chronopolitics,” in *The Brutish Museums*, The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution (Pluto Press, 2020), 193.

⁸³ Ann Laura Stoler, *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Duke University Press, 2013), ix.

⁸⁴ Philippine diary, page 16. DCP, NAA/SI, May 1968.

thwarted, perhaps, by her meeting with Araneta, who, she wrote, “scorned” the nipa hut as an expression of poverty, “houses of the poor.”⁸⁵ Pelzer’s interactions with two of Imelda’s pet-architects are revealing. On the one hand they reveal the complexity of her singular positionality when in the field. Her sociability with architects in Southeast Asia led her to particular aspects that her project was interested in: even though she was interested in houses, which “have been neglected—totally overlooked—as being ‘little things.’ [...] But the story on houses is not a little thing,” she was sent to particular places based on the advice of her informants. On the other hand, we see the more simple aspect of her being solo would have taken an affect her travels in particular ways. Take, for example, her movements in 1965. “This was the only day for seeing Solok,” she wrote remorsefully in *Trek Across Indonesia*, “And—alas with my poor Indonesian—I would not be able to understand anything.” Yet she was surprised that the *Bupati* (regional director) had organized a tour for her without her knowledge,

A Landrover was being made ready, and escorts were being summoned. We were all aboard! Beside the driver, there was a young lady schoolteacher who could speak English, a friend of hers just going for a ride, a man from the Public Works office and a man about the *adat*; and, for police protection, two soldiers with sub-machine guns.

We stopped first at the most “modern” houses—all changed and not of interest, where I tried to be polite and still convey the idea that this was a search for the “authentic” (traditional) houses. I would catch a glimpse of something interesting as we went by and say “Oh, look!” Then we would stop and all pile out. The man informed about the *adat* would inquire of the little lady at the door if we might enter. She, taking a look at the sub-machine guns, would naturally say yes. The sub-machine guns would march in behind us and stand at the ready during our conversations about culture. It was a fine day!⁸⁶

In this swashbuckling anecdote we see both of the aspects present in the Philippines happening in Indonesia too: the expectations of her native informants—stopping at the most “modern” houses—and the singular character of her trips that her solo travel took on.

⁸⁵ Philippine diary, page 16. DCP, NAA/SI, May 1968.

⁸⁶ Pelzer, *Trek Across Indonesia*, 88–89.

As a white woman in Asia, Pelzer belonged to a minority that was privileged by race as well as profession. Yet as a foreigner, she would not have struggled to grasp many of the languages spoken, where over 180 languages are spoken in the Philippines, and more than 250 in Indonesia alone. She believed, however, that as an architect the language necessary was that of drawings and plans. “I dropped by the Public Works office. The Chief couldn’t speak English, but with pencil and paper we were soon deep in discussion of construction details—in the recurrent pleasure of finding that however far apart our words and grammar, in plans and sections our language was the same.”⁸⁷ Again, like the perceptible self-consciousness with which Pelzer sought out, and eventually circumvented the need for categories by relying on the morphology of the house itself, we see how positionality played a role in the creation of her project. Unlike the staking out of the self in the theme park of Nayong Pilipino, the fact that Pelzer was alone was enough for the fluctuations of possibility in the field to affect her return to the rigidity of architectural form as stability, while a galaxy of house forms and field excursions spiraled around her. As if informed by the contours of error itself, Pelzer wrote that “Architects also can warp the truth (like anthropologists!)—because although they are good observers they see a formal architectural idea developing, and then interpret as if it existed fully in the *adat*, instead of maybe only unconsciously or inadvertently.”⁸⁸

Pelzer’s work was marked by the persistent self-consciousness of her position in the field (she devoted two pages of “various apologies re research!” to her publisher that describe some of the flaws with which she was aware that she encountered while gathering data and photographs), as a stranger attempting to glean specific information on house forms, her trips were marked by

⁸⁷ Pelzer, *Trek Across Indonesia*, 66.

⁸⁸ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4. Book notes, *Houses Are People*, unnumbered page. c. 1967

the difficulties of predicting her informants' own expectations. Because she sought to uncover the “unconscious expression” of houses as the “physical expression of the way of life of a people,” this was a major pitfall in attempting to get information about unconscious states from conscious informants. “People are not usually very sensitive to or [the] connections of their own influences, the influences that shaped them.”⁸⁹

By 1966 she had settled in Ringlet, a village in the Cameron Highlands in Malaysia. Formerly a holiday town for colonial expats living in British Malaya, the high plateau of the Cameron Highlands were developed in the 1930s as a “sanatorium, health resort and open farmland” in line with plans of the Resident of Perak (1887–1889). From here, Pelzer would spend the next five years, drafting and organizing the material for her book project, writing letters and organizing her various trips. Her letters describe an individual of diplomatic dexterity, “if should be coming up for a change of air,” she wrote to her friend Francis Galbraith, the American Ambassador to Singapore in 1967, “please look me up. We can arrange hot buttered scones any tea-time.”

I have been sitting up here in the cool [Cameron] Highlands for two months already, banging away on the typewriter—organizing the main draft on my opus on house-types of Southeast Asia. [...] What would you think of the chances for such an expedition [to Sumatra] visa-wise and transportation-wise?⁹⁰

Galbraith wrote back a week later,

Dear Dorothy [...] I wish I could arrange to see you in Cameron Highlands and perhaps have a chance to read some of your magnum opus in draft. [...] With your ability to charm your way through Indonesian official control and with all the experience you have had in making your way around in eastern Indonesia, I shouldn't think you would have any trouble in South Sumatra.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Miscellaneous book notes, DPC, NAA/SI, 1969.

⁹⁰ Letter to Francis J. Galbraith, DPC, NAA/SI, June 15, 1967.

⁹¹ Letter from Francis J. Galbraith, DPC, (NAA/SI), June 23, 1967.

In her photographs we see this again, here there is no staging of indigeneity seen in Panamin publications (of the previous chapter), but sociability: an image captioned “headhunters!” a girl grins back at the camera between two friends who play out a mock battle with spears, complete with Kalinga regalia. (fig 5.21)

These fragments provide patches of information about a persona that, while they were affable and outgoing, were introspective and self-conscious to a degree that had a particular impact on a project that revolved around periods of restless travel and periods of solace. To chart these interactions with her life story reveals a further degree of insularity. As a Christian scientist, Pelzer drew on the contacts of missionaries for beds, baths and transportation while travelling, however this also meant a particular relationship to her personal health.⁹² From her home at Ringlet, shortly after her 51st birthday, she would become aware of the throat condition that would eventually cause her passing in 1972, and did not seek medical advice on the matter.⁹³

In the staking out of positions discussed in this section, Pelzer and Imelda used the same language to go in different directions, and the relationship between self and pursuit affected

⁹² Pelzer “had the Christian missionaries of all denominations as her friendly hosts on every island, providing her with clean beds, baths, food and (above all) transportation. Missionary ships carried her to islands; missionary jeeps, trucks and motorcycles took her from town to town or village.” Le Clair, Dorinda & Robert. Introduction to *Trek Across Indonesia*, 1976; 1982, v.

⁹³ In a letter to her Christian Science friends in Boston she confided in her fear that she may have a serious illness, what turned out to be cancer. She confided in a friend:

“For the past month or so I’ve been increasingly conscious of a condition in my throat, which now has me quite scared. Not an ordinary sore throat sort of thing, but a more frightening suggestion of tumor or cancer or something [...] Several months ago I happened to notice in the mirror that the gland on one side seemed larger than normal. Externally now that doesn’t mean different but internally it is troublesome so that it is now becoming hard to swallow. With my own efforts . . . I seem to get nowhere, and I’ve been sorely tempted in recent days to get a doctor’s diagnosis - to see what I’m dealing with. The fearful suggestions of what may be called for if it waits too long -- and all that stuff. I am up here in the mountains, where I have a lovely place to write.

[Undated letter, likely Spring 1966, cf. Barbara J. Anello, *Dorothy West Pelzer: Photography and Architecture in Southeast Asia 1962–1972*. Masters Thesis, 2006, 63.

output in different ways. Pelzer confirmed the necessity for the work being undertaken by Imelda in her own notes— “the underdevelopment of these countries includes the underdevelopment of the study of their own history, achievements, and values—in relation to the rest of the world”— an unknowing acknowledgement of the literal direction that Imelda took it, in creating a world in a theme park.⁹⁴ If we take Imelda at her word (or Ileana Maramag’s, her ghostwriter, whom she wrote each publication in tandem with), the mirror, the self, and tradition could be expanded and understood in its fabrication.⁹⁵ Pelzer, alternately, went outward, creating a stable external world through architectural form, albeit amid spiraling variables, and in contrast to her own hidden interiority.

Loneliness and recuperation (if a tree falls in a forest)

Placing these two individuals and their activities alongside one another presents a spectrum of difference in understanding the nomenclature of preservation discourse as it was emerging in the 1960s and 70s. Both were assisted by the creation of timescales, category systems and worldmaking processes that had variable effects on the reproduction of their subject matter. When interpreted through the collected strands of their work, loss of culture and tradition was a matter of visibility that took on an element of fantasy, whether through theme parks,

⁹⁴ DPC, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4. Book introduction notes “Building the Book,” unnumbered. c. 1967

⁹⁵ All of Imelda’s publications were ghostwritten by or written together with Ileana Maramag, and it is difficult to discern how much influence Imelda herself had on the text.

books, or captured in an 80mm Nikkor lens. Juxtaposing their work, however, must also account for the direct oppositions between the actuality of their endeavors.

For Imelda, instantiating loss itself was performed by re-writing history in order to evade the tribal necropolitics playing out in situ. Shortly after its publication in 1980, villagers in T'boli, the region of Mindanao described in *BAGANI: Celebration After Spiritual Renewal*, fled their homes after sustained government artillery fire. The *Ethnocide* investigative team reported that the army claimed their men were only “testing artillery” aimed at the communist guerrilla New People’s Army (NPA) hideouts, however the T’boli insisted it was “intended to make them leave their homes and thereby pave the way for the operation of a pineapple and asparagus plantation,” owned by the American fruit company, Dole.⁹⁶ Cultural protection was more than simply a matter of celebration for the T’boli, who sat on resource-rich ancestral lands. Imelda Marcos was a convicted criminal who, along with her husband, stole billions from the Filipino people and disappeared, tortured, and assassinated opposition figures and their families.⁹⁷ It can be said that she both created the conditions of ethnocide at the same time as subverting their consequences.

Pelzer is different, but no less complicated. In this act of recuperation, we are assisted by Datuk Lim, with whom we began. Pelzer’s notes, photographs and drawings were entrusted to Lim Chong Keat after her death, and he has staged numerous exhibitions of her work as well as pursuing his own cataloging of traditional architecture. Lim, who was close friends with the

⁹⁶ The authors of *Ethnocide: Is It Real?* assert that ethnocide is a colonial legacy, an effect of “development aggression” that is only controversial as a term due to the “visions of widespread loss of culture and ethnic identity among the estimated 2.3 million Indigenous members in Mindanao.” *Ethnocide: Is It Real?* (Davao City, Philippines: Media Mindanao News Service, 1993), 3.

⁹⁷ Barney Warf, *Handbook on the Geographies of Corruption* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018), 335–338; Ricardo Manapat, *Some Are Smarter than Others: The History of Marcos’ Crony Capitalism*, 1st edition (New York: Aletheia Publications, 1991).

Bucky and Kepes set, is a prolific architect and also a botanist. When I met him at his house in Penang, he described his last interaction with Pelzer,

Her last visit to me was very interesting, she wrote to me and says, “I’m desperately lonely, do you happen to have some recordings of Bartok’s string quartets?” Sure I said I’ve got three versions which one do you want? So she came down to Singapore to record these quartets and I had a party, and she was dressed in the cheongsam, and, she’s a very tight [closed] kind of person, and actually we did not know then that she was dying of cancer, because she was a Christian Scientist she didn’t want any treatment either. But she didn’t want to talk to anybody else except to me and [it was] very awkward you know, I am the host, so I only heard smatterings of her and she recorded the Bartok and it was the last time I saw her.⁹⁸

He then told me how after they collected her “15,000 black and whites in boxes and 4,000 color slides, numerous notes including two unpublished manuscripts,” he attempted to stage exhibitions of her work in Singapore, who “to the extent that [they] were being chauvinistic, they did not want to put on an exhibition [...] we never showed it in Singapore.”⁹⁹ Sexism against Pelzer, however, is only a partial aspect to this sketch, though a crucial one. It leaves an evidentiary clue on the historicity of the moment playing out for Pelzer, she too was subject to occlusion, both in the afterlife and during the 1960s as she hastened to capture a process of loss, even as her own time was running out.

If the commonality between Imelda and Pelzer was an urgent sense of recuperating the disappearance of tradition, then so too were each, in their own way, an encapsulation of a culture of loss. Even while order and change, category and difference were crucial determiners for the work that went into *Houses Are People*, reading the supporting notes for Pelzer’s work, there is an ill-fated sense that amid a universe of multiplying categories this was perhaps an impossible

⁹⁸ Datuk Lim Chong Keat, Personal interview, Penang, Malaysia, May 2018.

⁹⁹ Datuk Lim Chong Keat, Personal interview, Penang, Malaysia, May 2018.

book to create. If the stability of Imelda's projects revealed them to be too fast, too violent, and too finished, Pelzer's was an unravelling that might never end.

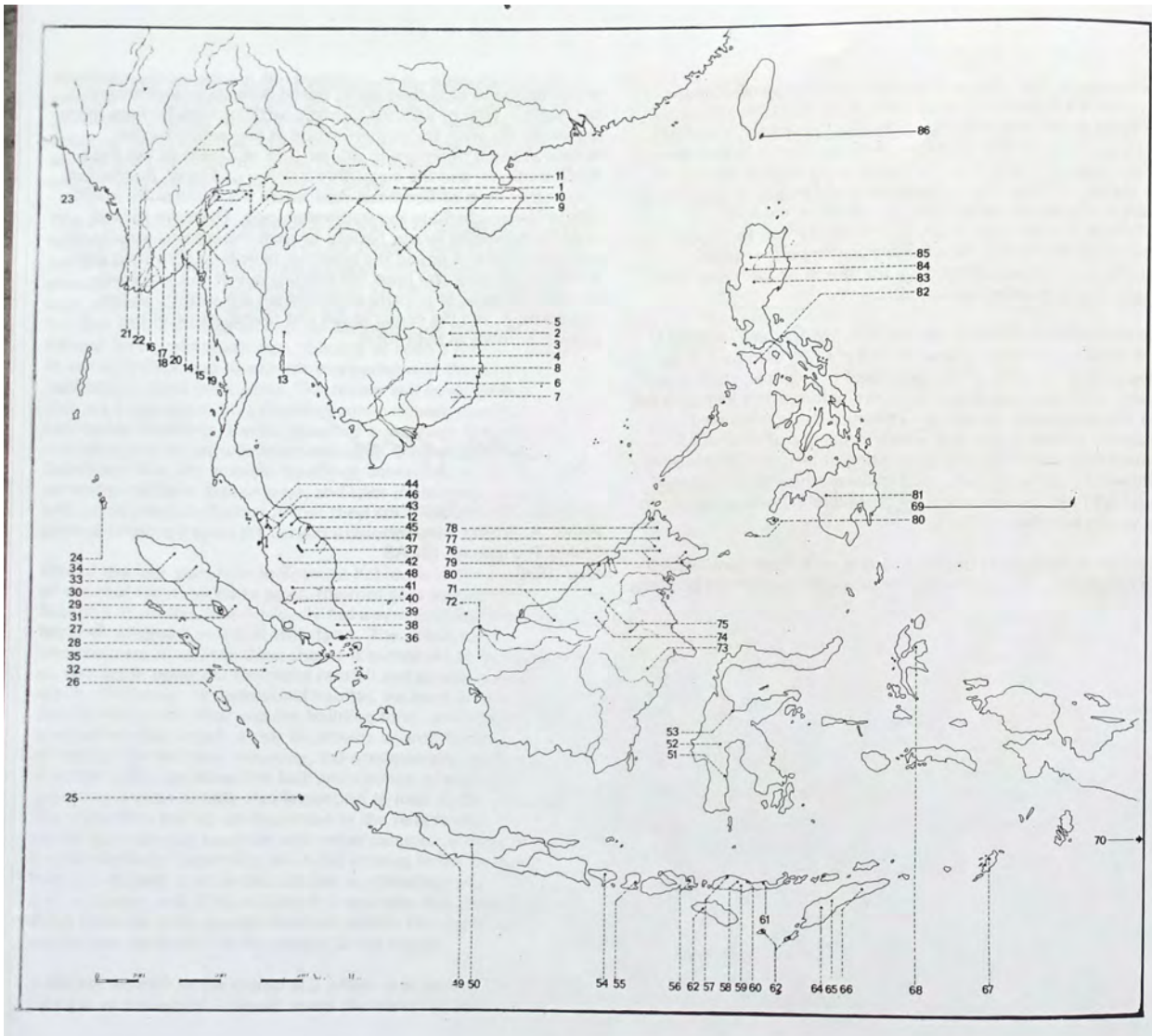
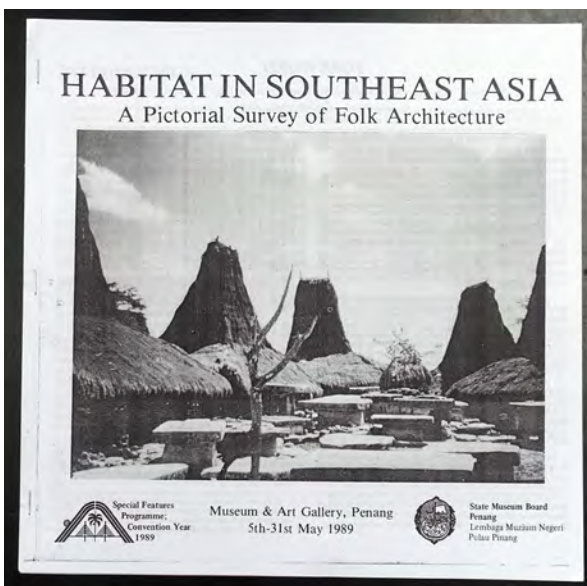


Fig 5.01 Places visited and photographed by Dorothy Pelzer, Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen and Datuk Lim Chong Keat. *Habitat in Southeast Asia: A Pictorial Survey of Folk Architecture*. Penang, Malaysia. May 1989.



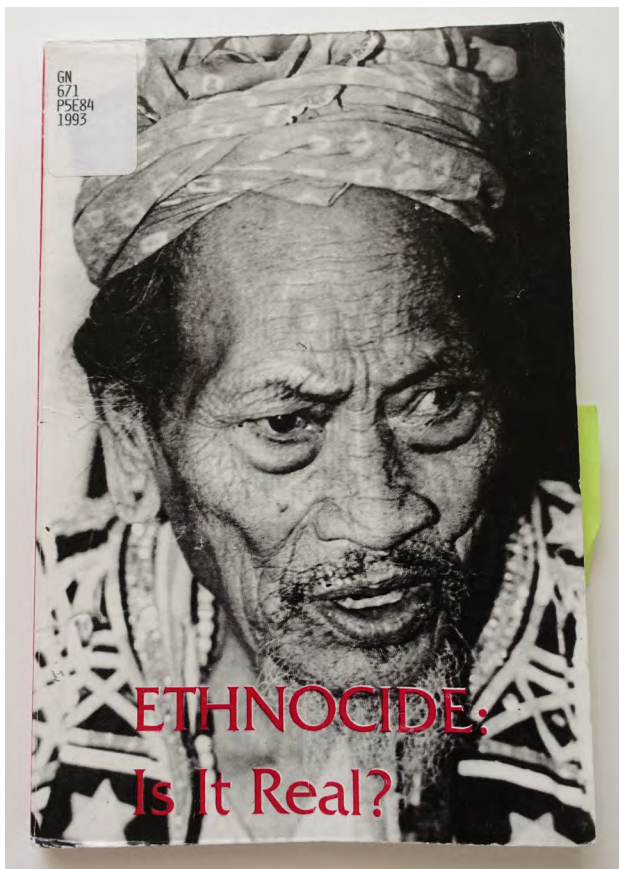
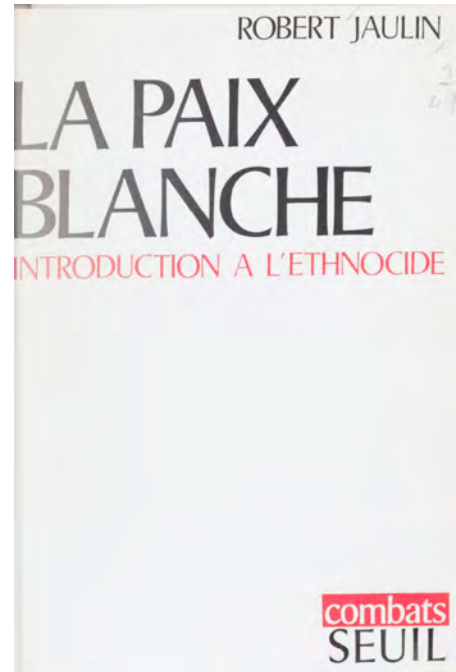
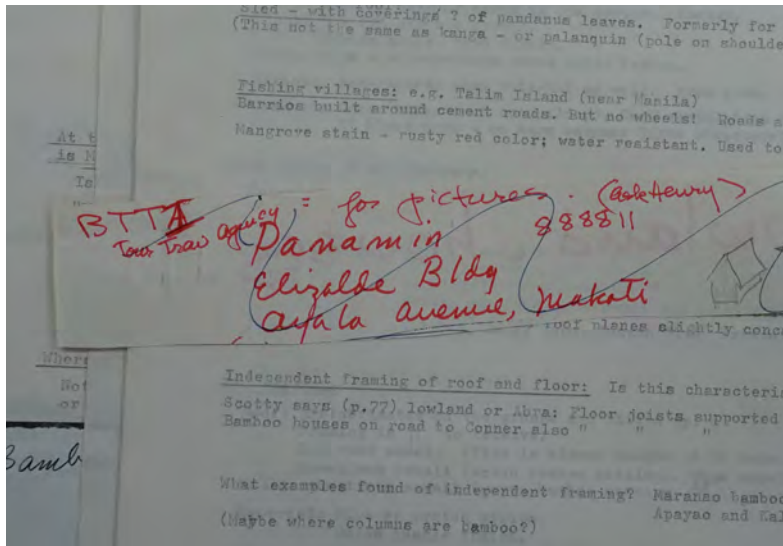


Fig 5.02 Address of Panamin offices in Dorothy Pelzer's notes. May 1968. Dorothy Pelzer Collection. National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Fig 5.03 Robert Jaulin, *La Paix Blanche*, 1970. Jaulin proposed the term "ethnocide" based on his fieldwork with the Bari in Colombia in the 1960s.

Fig 5.04 Media Mindanao News Service and Investigative Team, *Ethnocide: Is It Real?* (Davao City, Philippines: Media Mindanao News Service, 1993).



Fig 5.05 Places visited and by Dorothy Pelzer, marked out on a Malaysia-Singapore Airlines brochure. DPC, NAA/SI, 1966/1967.

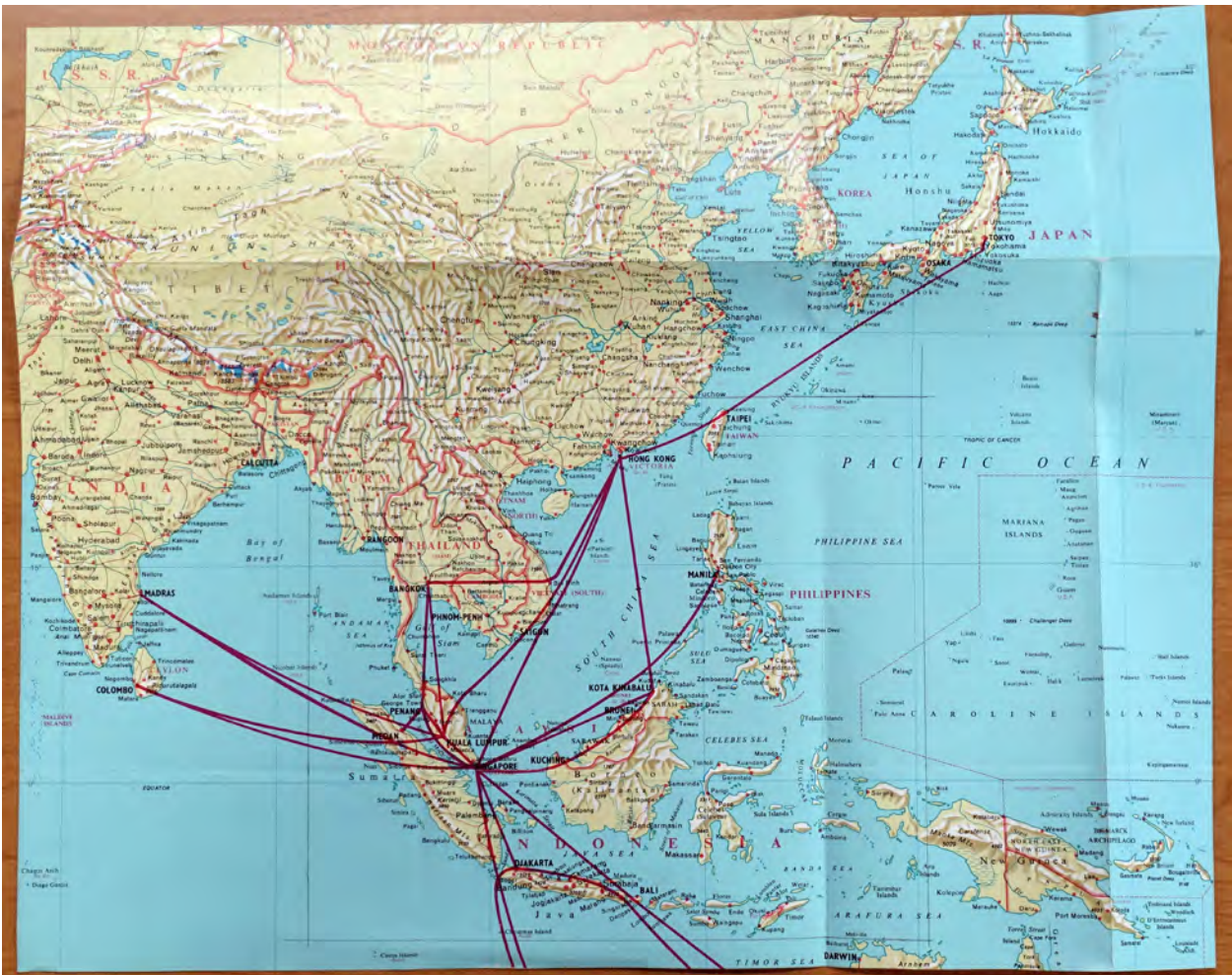


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Fig 5.06 Outline of *Houses Are People*. DPC, NAA/SI, 1969.

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Fig 5.06 (continued) Dorothy Pelzer Collection, (NAA/SI), Notes Box 4.

Looking for order where there is none!

An orderly past.

The tempting error - so easy to fall into:
 "The error of supposing that previous to the disorderly present, lies an orderly past!" (Snouck Hurgronje, The Atjeh)

Not science but folk-lore! (Folk-lore full of quirks!)
 If some other scholar or informant contests any of these points, he is right or wrong. This is not a science. It is all folk-lore. And the terminology and traditions of the folk - and the "reasons" why is so - have their own whims and fancies unconscious quirks. The adat has never been brought together in any reasoned way. It is not a folk tradition is an organic development. Can you say that nature has quirks too, and tries out some forms to be not viable? Forms in evolution?)

Putting things Asian into Western categories:
 the fallacy of believing that the present is a static state where everything was life. The adat has always been this refer

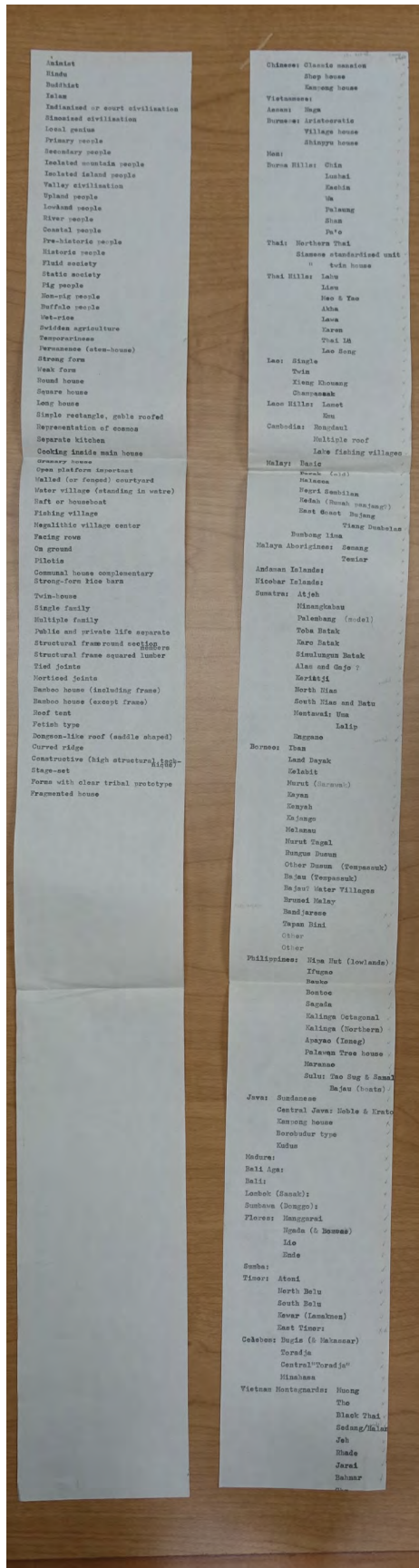


Fig 5.07 Category lists. Dorothy Pelzer Collection, (NAA/SI), Book Notes.

Fig 5.08 Beams of Isneg house, Ifugao. DPC, NAA/SI. May, 1968. 1805.17.

Fig 5.09 Apayao, Isneg House #3. May 8, 1968. II 1806.5 DPC, NAA/SI. Prints, Book 9.





Fig 5.10 Pounding palay in Kalinga. DPC, NAA/SI. May 8, 1968. II 1806.36.

Fig 5.11 Imelda Marcos visits T'boli on Panamin outreach event in Mindanao, circa 1971. Ileana Maramag and Imelda Romualdez Marcos Action Programmes. (Manila, 1973), 43.



REGION IX	
PROGRAM/PROJECT/ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
1. Crop Production	Maintain adequate supply of certified and foundation seeds for use of seed growers in the production of registered and certified seeds in support of the seed requirements of Masagana 99 and Masaganang Maisan.
2. Crop Protection	Formulate crop protection program on specific crop maladies for the farmers.
3. Maisan '77	This is to increase the production of corn at 3 tons per hectare and to encourage farmers to adopt the package of modern technology.
4. Establishment of Fish Port	Involves the establishment of fish landing ports and markets.
5. Establishment of Fishermen's Cooperatives	Establishment of fishing cooperatives in major fish producing areas.
6. Refrigerated Dumb Barge Project	Involves the deployment in strategic fishing grounds of five stationary barges of 10-ton capacity which are equipped with blast freezers.
7. Brackishwater Demonstration Fish Farm and Nursery	7-hectare bangus fish farms located in Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Sur, and 22-hectare bangus fish farm located in Taguisa Ipil, Zamboanga del Sur, 19.7 hectare bangus fish farm located in Mampang, Zamboanga City.
8. Municipal Fisheries Training Program	Conducted within strategic areas in Region IX.
9. Ice Plant and Cold Storage	Ice plants and cold storage in selected areas
10. Special Programs Covering Livestock, Poultry and Dairy Industries	
a) Project I—Promotion and development of livestock, poultry and dairy industries.	14 various research studies
b) Project II—Animal Disease Control Services	1,895,259 Animal units and 50 units of Disease Control Equipment.
c) Project III—Livestock and Poultry Development Services	
11. Special Programs Covering Forest Management	a) Program I Development and Conservation of Forest Resources b) Program II Reforestation and Watershed Improvement c) Program III Capital Outlay
12. Coconut Oil Mill	Part of rationalization program for the coconut industry and the region's strategy to replace copra as a major export product.
13. Bakawan Processing	Bakawan pulp is used primarily in textile and paper making.
14. Cassava Flour	To process projected increase in cassava output.
15. Textile Factory	In line with the development of bakawan as a source of fibers.
16. Mini-Industrial Estates Development	Project will be a potent force in motivating efficiency and affording easy access to equipment and machinery.
17. Hospital Services	Establishment of more hospitals.
18. Strengthening of Rural Health Services	Provision of health services to rural population.
19. Control of Communicable Diseases	Reduction of incidence of communicable diseases through case finding and treatment, surveillance, immunization services and public health education.
20. Environment Sanitation	Aims to lower the morbidity and mortality rates of communicable diseases through intensification of sanitation services activities.
21. Education	Curriculum development, establishment of research centers and Development.
22. DAR resettlement Project	For agricultural resettlement purposes.
23. Socialized Housing Program	Intended for the low-income groups who cannot afford to construct dwelling units with sanitary water facilities and lighting.
24. Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP)	Provision of small rolling capital ranging from 50 to 300 without interest to needy family heads, youths, disabled, special groups and the distressed, to help them engage in income producing projects.
25. Major Bridges	a) Polo Bridge b) Pulawan Bridge c) Curuan-Sibuco
26. Sibuguey Irrigation Project	To irrigate 3,520 ha. in Buug, Zamboanga del Sur.
27. Zamboanga Electrification * Proposed yearly funding	Construction of new substations in Aurora, Kabasalan, and Sangali.

Fig 5.12 Development projects in progress in Region IX, Mindanao, in the appendix of *Haylaya*. Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation and Development of Southern Philippines, Metro Manila, 1980.



Fig 5.13 *Haylaya, Darangen, Linibung, Bagani*. The Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation and Development of Southern Philippines, Metro Manila, 1980.



Fig 5.14 "Panamin operates a museum on the contemporary Philippine culture at Nayong Pilipino near the Manila International Airport." *Panamin: Protecting Man's Right to Choice.* 1973, 31.

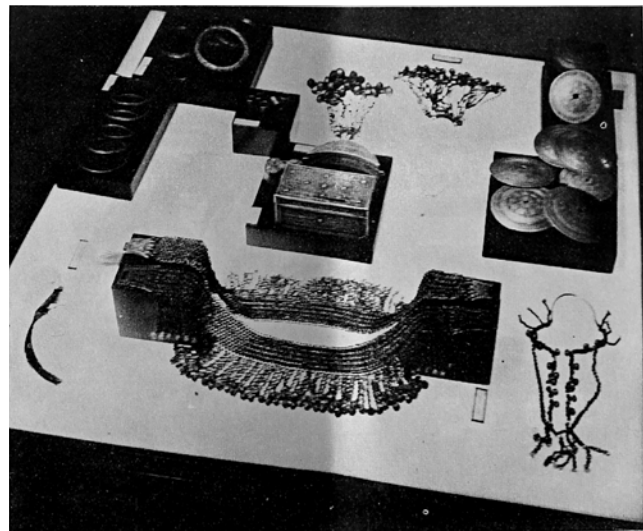
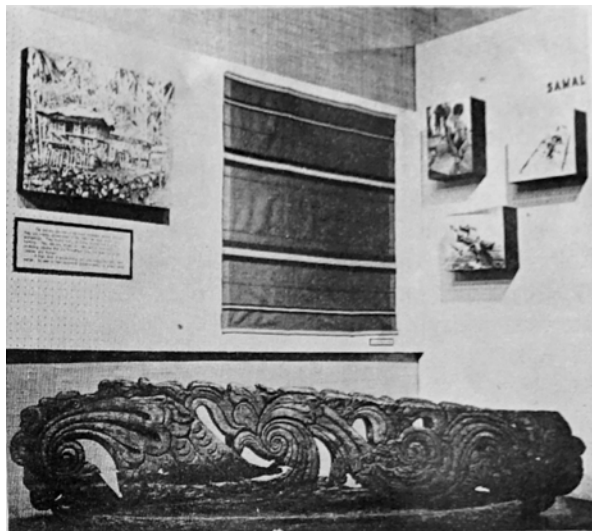




Fig 5.15 Mannequins at Nayong Pilipino. Imelda Romualdez Marcos and Ileana Maramag, *Imelda Romualdez Marcos Action Programmes*. (Manila, 1973), 45, 47.





Fig 5.16 Regional artisans at Nayong Pilipino. Imelda Romualdez Marcos and Ileana Maramag, Imelda Romualdez Marcos Action Programmes. (Manila, 1973), 45, 47.

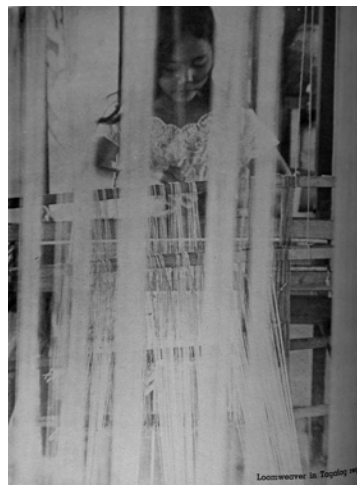




Fig 5.17 Ifugao houses in the rain, Banawe, Mountain Province, May 17, 1968. DPC, NAA/SI, 1811–35-36.

Fig 5.18 Leandro Locsin's Ifugao houses in Nayong Pilipino theme park, 1969. Pictured in: Edson Cabalfin, "Condensing the Country" 2015.



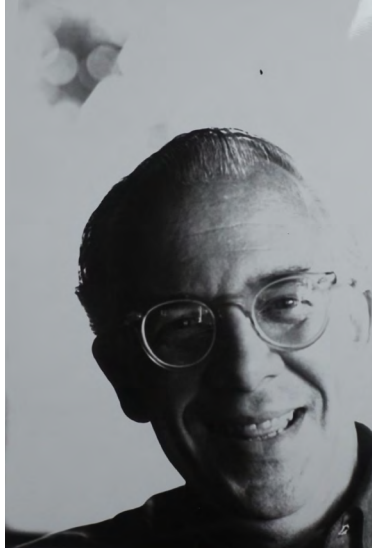


Fig 5.19 Pelzer's portrait of William Henry Scott, whom she visited in May 17, 1968. Sagada, Mountain Province, Luzon. DPC, NAA/SI, 1812-1-4.

Fig 5.20 Ifugao houses in the rain, Banawe, Mountain Province, May 17, 1968. DPC, NAA/SI, 1811-35-36.





Fig 5.21 "Headhunters!" May 8, 1968. II 1805.33
DPC, NAA/SI. Prints, Book 9.

Fig 5.22 Datuk Lim Chong Keat with cultivars of
banana plants, Penang, May 2018. Author's photo.



“You cannot build rocket ships from bamboo!”

Kaya learned from my grandfather how to build bamboo huts that can resist typhoon winds. Today, nobody will learn the bamboo art from him. They all want to go to engineering schools in Manila.

In his 1977 film *Perfumed Nightmare*, Kidlat Tahimik, the protagonist and director of the film is seen sitting talking to his friend Kaya, who is busy building the framework of a nipa hut.¹ (fig 6.01) “Kidlat, one day you will know the quiet strength of bamboo,” Kaya remarks. Later in the film, when he travels to Paris and works as a building construction, Kidlat responds to Kaya from afar, sitting in a stone tower, shouting “bamboo art is doomed to extinction. I am living in a tower that is 500 years old! Kaya, you cannot build rocket ships from bamboo!” (fig 6.02) Led by a delightfully naïve protagonist played by Tahimik himself, *Perfumed Nightmare* follows his work as a jeepney (bus) driver and his obsession with the US space program, which leads him to establish the Wernher von Braun fan club, of which he is president. Once in Paris, Tahimik becomes disillusioned with western society. The film draws diametrical opposites throughout: Tahimik’s life in a small rural town outside Manila, listening to announcements of NASA expeditions on a transistor radio; the bamboo art of building and stone towers; western society and Asian folklore. Rife with allegory, the naivety of the protagonist carries the scenes of a slow-paced tropical life into their juxtaposition with a desire for change and movement; Tahimik is rendered as a child wishing to grow up fast, and an adult in which his world is never quite good enough.

¹ *Perfumed Nightmare (Mababangong Bangungot)*, directed by Kidlat Tahimik and produced by Werner Herzog in 1977.

It is befitting that the decade in which this film was produced was a climatic tipping point for the struggle over land and its use in the Philippines, where the realm of apparent opposites—warfare and folklore; agribusiness and ancestral domain; tradition and technology—met in a context more akin to the realm of science fiction. Reflecting on the epistemic contradictions that appear in developmentalism, the 1983 UNESCO Cobo Report (discussed in chapter 5) notes that, “there are always ‘rational’ elements in the ‘traditional’ and even in the ‘primitive’ views of the world, and the ‘scientific’ views of the world always contain, to a greater degree than is generally supposed, elements of magic or religion.”² In describing how architecture mediated ecological change, the dissertation illustrated how architecture was also the meeting place for the primitive and scientific, the rational and traditional. In the contested landscapes of the Cordillera and Bukidnon, architecture was a connective tissue between agribusiness and displacement, combining the magic of positivist politics of dam building and the new energy futures they promised, with emerging claims to rootedness by Indigenous activists and their advocates, realized by and through the threat of displacement.

Climate change is evidence of human activity that is harmful to ecosystems that support human and non-human life. Dipesh Chakrabarty calls these the “unintended consequences of human actions.”³ Estrangement from consequence, however, is not necessarily a global commonality, nor is climate change experienced the same everywhere. In the contexts explored in this dissertation, changing land relations effected a change in climate in real time, where human actions and their unintended consequences were encountered simultaneously every day. Indeed, the climate crisis as it is absorbed in this architectural history is not immune to the

² Initial remarks on the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations. UNESCO E/CN.4/Sub.2/1983/21/Add.3, 12.

³ Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History: Four Theses,” *Critical Inquiry*. 35, no. 2 (2009), 221.

geographical distances of intention and consequence inherent to Chakrabarty's claim—climate as something unwieldy and abstract; crisis as occurring elsewhere. This contribution focused on the theoretical spectrum represented by the “nipa hut” and the hydroelectric dam to scrutinize the boundaries of architectural history that have, until recently, confined their emphasis to the hard concrete and steel materials of a European climate, as opposed to soft, lightweight tropical ones.⁴ This uneven emphasis has come to represent one of the core critiques of a disciplinary structure lodged within Eurocentrism. Just as Laugier's cabane rustique and Semper's Karabische Hütte were a necessary prop for Europeans to structure their conceptions of being modern, they were concepts to which the protagonists of this dissertation—Tahimik, Pelzer, Elizalde, Imelda, Rizal or de los Reyes—faithfully, if unwittingly, subscribed. In other words, the soft architectural materials that represented modernity's Other were firmly entrenched in perceptions of a changing ecological environment.

This dissertation examined several narratives that propose new ways of understanding how architecture mediated rural transformation through the perspectives of those living through those changes. Taking up Donna Haraway's challenge, to create stories just large enough to contain complexity without sealing off the edges to new connections, I will briefly examine four

⁴ Though it does not necessarily constitute a field in itself, the discussion of architecture and climate in the context of broader interest in the Anthropocene has been taken up by architectural historians concerned with the thermal dynamics of buildings themselves set against the political landscape that enabled the Anthropocene. For example, Daniel Barber and Jiat-Hwee Chang take up the history of modern building construction in terms of climate in terms of American building (in Barber's case) and a colonial and decolonizing Singaporean context (in Chang's case). However, broader themes of “planetary urbanization” have found footing in urban studies and planning, as well as their attendant criticisms (see Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid's work on “planetary urbanization” and Natalie Oswin's critique of them and the larger male-dominated field of the “manthropocene.”) Daniel A. Barber, *Modern Architecture and Climate: Design before Air Conditioning* (Princeton UP, 2020); Jiat-Hwee Chang, *A Genealogy of Tropical Architecture: Colonial Networks, Nature and Technoscience*, 1 edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2016); Cara New Daggett, *The Birth of Energy: Fossil Fuels, Thermodynamics, and the Politics of Work* (Duke University Press, 2019); Matthew Gandy, *The Fabric of Space: Water, Modernity, and the Urban Imagination*, Reprint edition (The MIT Press, 2017); Neil J Brenner, *Implosions / towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*. (Berlin: Jovis, 2014); Natalie Oswin, “Planetary Urbanization: A View from Outside,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36, no. 3 (June 1, 2018): 540–46.

themes that emerged across the chapters.⁵ These themes are examined through the three phases of the initial questions set out in the introduction: How did architecture mediate ecological change? How does architecture help to explain ecological shifts? How does architecture introduce new ways to understand these shifts? Vying perceptions of landscape were mediated by architecture in its technocratic and traditional forms, and rather than a top-down process, the dissertation argued that the battle for resources mobilized both the movement of lightweight dwellings and the resistance movements against developmentalism. The following four concepts illustrate how the dimensions of the arguments laid out in this dissertation can be drawn together into new strands for interpretation: modes of development warfare; cronyism, the ethnographic pastoral, and terraced mediations.

i. Modes of development warfare

The thread of warfare that ran through the dissertation went through several permutations, contributing to the argument in three main ways: in a war of the mind; actual warfare; and warring institutions. Taken together, these three modes constituted a folklore of warfare, where the beliefs, stories and fabric of war became built into the environmental changes taking place. A “war of the mind” was epitomized in the process of anti-communism being transposed onto concerns in the 1950s for a rural social structure that would support agribusiness. This was tested out in the Central Luzon plain first through the EDCOR scheme, a counterinsurgency program in agrarian reform drag, which resettled former Huk guerrilla fighters to farmsteads far to the south on Mindanao in an atomization of collectivity; and second

⁵ Donna Haraway, “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,” *Environmental Humanities* 6, no. 1 (May 1, 2015): 160; James Clifford, *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).

through the UPRP irrigation program, completing the large-scale transition to capitalist relations with the multipurpose Pantabangan hydroelectric dam as its centerpiece. This simultaneous process proved both that an insurgency could be fought through atomization, an early form of hamletting, and that infrastructural transformation could consolidate that change. The acceleration of “actual war” in Vietnam provided the context for further experiments with the precedent of the EDCOR scheme, this time in the countryside of South Vietnam. However, while that scheme resettled farmers calling for land reform, the Strategic Hamlets Program was the opposite. Rather than removing former guerrillas to new farms, they removed peasants away from farms while remaining in the midst of actual fighting. Additionally, strategic hamlets were provided a political narrative by the Diem regime that attempted to provide context for them as a part of a centuries-long Vietnamese history. The strategic hamlets, then, were expected to fulfill complex role of being a container, shell and cocoon under which democratic ideals could be sheltered from communist ideology. As this architectural composite—fence, village, farm—was translated to Mindanao in chapter 4, the civil warfare taking place was mediated by strategic hamlets erected to speed up the reorganization of agribusiness interests. Between Indigenous peoples, caught in the crossfire between the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine Constabulary and the perpetual alibi of the New Peoples Army, it was “warring institutions,” the Church and Panamin, that took center stage. While for Panamin strategic hamlet resettlement centers were artifacts for examination and experimentation, an evolved form that had drifted from EDCOR to Vietnam and back to Mindanao, for the church they gradually came to represent an unwilling social death. Removal and ecological degradation became fused through the construction of a political economy of indigeneity. This political economy both put to work and subverted the systematized mourning of the metropolitan gaze (demonstrated by Pelzer and

Imelda in chapter 5): it was put to work as providing a culture of loss to rally around; and subverted inasmuch as Indigenous peoples were in charge of their own strategies of self-determination and resistance.

Loss, as a consequence of these forms of warfare, was a fact. As Lim Chong Keat put it, “with the hill tribes of Vietnam and Luzon, the tribal modes [...] have given way to guns and jungle-green.” Yet warfare itself was not as self-evident as it would later be revealed to be. Counterinsurgency experts like Lansdale and Bohannon are often presented as the foot soldiers of development, lacking in cultural commitments. Yet as inadvertent social planners they were well aware of the gravity of the claims of the Huk insurgency (land for the landless), translating them into their own schemes via a resettlement program that used that same claim to its advantage. Examples like this show that warfare was not what it seemed, and the combined experiences of such experts (one a former advertiser the other an anthropologist), and the promise of a house and farmland were an outlet through which “counterinsurgency” found format. Following the thematic lineages between chapters 2, 3 and 4, it is with some irony that EDCOR, which began as a kind of land-reform counterinsurgency program, was transformed into the main tool of a land expropriation program with a premise of counterinsurgency under Panamin.

ii. Cronyism

The colonizer-colonized dichotomy has presented discourse on colonialism in architectural history with a convenient power binary, both in the racial politics of the settler colony and in the threads of power in overseas foreign ones. This positioning is convenient because the perspective from which to offer critique is straightforward, from the level of the individual (the bad colonizer and the noble native) scaled up to the level of the state with its all-

seeing, militaristic eye. However, the links that conjoin colonialism, neocolonialism, and cronyism are less conspicuous, and mean that understanding how architecture comes in as a service to cronyism are less visible than those negotiated via the state. Cronyism, as the profit-making allegiances among politicians and business elites, bears an uncomfortable relationship to power as “native-led” and thus less amenable to critiques of governance from outside observers. Cronyism in South, East, and Southeast Asia in the decolonizing 1960s and after was of a particular brand: Ahmedabad had the Nagarsheths, Japan the Keiretsu, South Korea the Chaebols, and indeed, one could take up a discussion of the influence cronyism and big construction conglomerates had on architecture in any number of these countries.⁶ Nowhere else, however, were the threads so tightly woven, the channels so deeply entrenched as between Marcos, his cronies, and the US interests that funded them. In this dissertation, cronyism took on two specific valences. The first of these was its relationship to what I call “paramilitary mechanization.” Discussed chiefly in chapter 2 and 4, business interests were supported by both overt anticommunism, paving the way for agribusiness, and covert links between the military and its expropriation of Indigenous lands for agribusiness. Whether hydropower, the paper mills it powered, pineapple plantations or mining, the gradual rise (in chapter 2) and acceleration (in chapter 4) of paramilitary mechanization meant that the objects that mediated extraction, dams, roads, and bridges, were worthy of security protection more than the inhabitants of the extraction zones themselves.

The second aspect of cronyism was more complex, which was the relationship between the Elizalde business family and their control over land. Control, in this case, was enabled through Panamin as a wing of government with policy-making powers and a privately run

⁶ Arindam Dutta, “Mixed Signals: A Research Mandate.” In: Catherine Desai, *The Architecture of Hasmukh C. Patel: Selected Projects 1963-2003* (Ocean, NJ: Mapin Publishing Gp Pty Ltd, 2017), 355.

organization not easily available to public scrutiny. Unlike other countries where Indigenous affairs are largely mediated by a central government, Panamin operations went unchecked, through which it created “Indigenous holding patterns” that appeared to resolve land insecurity, healthcare and guerrilla fighting in one sweep. Indigenous holding patterns were enforced most visibly through Panamin’s resettlement centers, constituting the major architectural mediation of this change in landscape relations. However, through the media language of Panamin, seen in their advertising in chapter 4, the aesthetics of indigeneity were also a form of holding pattern that accommodated a large portion of society within an aesthetic regime that emphasized a bygone temporality and primitivity of which Panamin was principal adjudicator. What might normally be recognized as the colonizing power’s task, to recognize humanity through their own mediation of it, was here taken up by Panamin by selectively organizing tribal minorities into two holding patterns, physical and aesthetic, in order to secure access for business to land.

iii. The ethnographic pastoral

Just as Pelzer’s curiosity and advocacy for the culture of Indigenous peoples came from a particular perspective on their buildings and personhood, Elizalde understood more than anyone the economic potential of the metropolitan gaze, employing it as a funding tactic for both Panamin and the advertising it hosted. Playing on the economy of urban intellectuals’ mourning gaze for a simple rural life—what James Clifford calls the “ethnographic pastoral”—Elizalde and Pelzer put this gaze to use in their activities.⁷ However, in Pelzer’s case that “loss of ethnographic innocence,” in finding that the business interests that fueled her modernity were

⁷ James Clifford, “On Ethnographic Allegory,” in *The Postmodern Turn: New Perspectives on Social Theory*, ed. Steven Seidman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 205–28; Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, *Allegories of the Anthropocene* (Duke University Press, 2019), 184.

reaching further into the corners of the world hitherto least touched by them were the battery for her own project as liberator of culture. That same drive was what allowed Elizalde to manipulate that affectual paradigm toward the business interests that caused its detriment. Describing cultural difference through these contradictory stories obscure more than they reveal. The cultural difference between those whose names, buildings, and stories were previously of marginal or inferior interest to the state were now at the core of state narratives. Even in chapter 3, Madame Nhu recognized that Montagnard populations were the “true, original Vietnamese” from which she was descended, an aspect that allowed their integration into the strategic hamlet scheme all the more self-evident. Imelda Marcos took this to new extremes in her narrative of the nation’s Indigenous peoples as being the most truly Filipino people in the Nayong Pilipino Museum.

These discussions shed alternative light on the discussion of “land back” initiatives in settler colonies like the US, where the shape of modern life came at the detriment of the world of Indigenous peoples that formerly occupied it.⁸ The unfolding spectrum of villainization, nuisance and exoticization with which Indigenous peoples were portrayed in US mainstream culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries occurred in a compressed timeframe in the Philippines, where colonization without an occupying force that occurred under Marcos provided a political framework within which nuisance and exoticization could happen all at once.⁹ Clearly the

⁸ A prescient example of this negotiation is examined in Manuel Shvartzberg Carrió’s PhD dissertation, in which the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians negotiated the “fragmented jurisdiction” of their territory in Palm Springs, described through the architectural mediation of this structure. Manuel Shvartzberg Carrió, “Designing ‘Post-Industrial Society’: Settler Colonialism and Modern Architecture in Palm Springs, California, 1876-1977” (Columbia University, 2019); Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Duke University Press, 2017); Nick Estes, *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*, Illustrated edition (London ; New York: Verso, 2019).

⁹ Offering an example of this playing out through R.M. Schindler and Vincent Scully, Albert Narath describes how Schindler perceived the buildings he saw in the upper Rio Grande as testifying “to the deep feeling for soil on which

resolutions with which ancestral domain were allocated in the 1960s and 70s did not end pressures on those lands, rather, they represented the beginning of processes around adjudicating sovereignty carried out according to the terms of the administrator. The parallels with the Native question in the US and the way that surveillance was employed also bears similarities. Just as COINTELPRO's investigating and dismantling of the Red Power movement by placing operatives within tribal activist circles, Panamin selectively approached inter-tribal solidarity movements and consciously sought to detach them from their activist allies, chiefly coordinated by the church (and its specific tribal bodies, the ECTF and NASSA).

iv. Terraced mediations

An aesthetics of resistance emerged at several points in the dissertation: through the imagery described in nipa and bamboo of José Rizal's *Noli me Tangere*; and in the increasingly visual materials of the church organized *Signs of the Times* and *Tribal Forum* publications. In the case of the resistance movement against the Chico dam in the Cordillera a particular approach was being fleshed out in the process of a battle over land and life, in which resistance and existence were part of the same agenda. I take up this point here as what I call "terraced mediation." A terrace is a form of landscape modification that creates horizontal edges for an otherwise topographically challenging angle; stability is achieved, in effect, through the construction of many small retaining walls. As well as providing flat areas for agricultural use, terraces are like expanded staircases that facilitate movement up, down and across. In the Cordillera, terraces were forms of hydraulic engineering, modifying the flow of water over the watersheds of Cordillera over several hundred years. As a recognizable silhouette that stood out

they stand" a sense of place. Albert Narath, "Modernism in Mud: R. M. Schindler, the Taos Pueblo and a 'Country Home in Adobe Construction,'" *The Journal of Architecture* 13, no. 4 (August 1, 2008), 407.

against the landscape, the image of mountain terraces came to provide a powerful image for Indigenous development. Contour lines flowed around steep precipices and allowed their traverse. Conklin's research in the 1960s, and UNESCO's recognition of the sites in 1995 merely proved what the people of Kalinga and Ifugao already knew, that these were systems of agriculture that were exceptionally fine-tuned to their environment.

As a mechanism of stability, a terrace provides lateral reinforcement and offers links between otherwise impassable territory. More than just their image, the resistance movements that joined around the shared belief that these landscapes were worthy of protection created their own forms of lateral reinforcement. Through the bodong system of Indigenous governance and church alliances and their distribution channels, links that created powerful frameworks for self-determination emerged in the face of eradication. These proved that Indigenous resistance, just like the products that the imagination-economies of hydroelectric dams and broader agricultural mechanization relied on, could also reinvent existing forms of technology as a centerpiece to the movement (even while Elizalde and Imelda were busy subverting the same imagery to their own ends). The metaphorical duality between the resistance movements that used their imagery, and the terrace itself as robust rural architecture is not inaccurate here, indeed a deeper study of the duality between these facets of this history of the Cordillera would provide a compelling channel for future research.

A world of palm

The connections among chapters through these four thematic convergences—modes of development warfare, cronyism, the ethnographic pastoral, and terraced mediations—propose cross-readings that revise the original argument, that architecture mediated ecological change and mediated how people perceived that change. For all the changes that have occurred since the

timeframe examined in this dissertation, the world is still, drawing on Walter Mignolo, ordered in terms of “polycentric capitalism”—a global economy whose commonality is one that mutates through proliferating modes of decentered control.¹⁰ Development and displacement are not things of the past, indeed, the situations described in this dissertation were the early forming of a more deeply entrenched developmentalist, extractive present. In 2019, the Philippines overtook Brazil as the deadliest country in the world for environmental defenders.¹¹ The stakes for architecture as a format for extractive capitalism are high, and therefore the stakes for worldmaking outside of that paradigm are higher.

Exploring mechanisms of governmentality through architecture’s mediation of them is important, however, to say that architecture simply represents the talons of the state is both to give it too much agency and not enough—this project is not immune to that critique. Too much agency, in that it describes architecture as something that can alone implement and operationalize state aims; not enough because it delineates all architectural forms as signifiers for a particular political paradigm, likely in flux. By bringing in the Ifugao terraces as a form of architecture (constructed, engineered, life-supporting), rural artifacts operate as alternative architectural devices for understanding the complexity of a social and political situation at hand. Ultimately, this approach contributes to a wider understanding of architecture as a mediating force in developmentalism.

Of course, contextualizing these rural conditions in architectural terms requires that objectification and romanticization are handled with care. In *Perfumed Nightmare*, Tahimik

¹⁰ Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Duke University Press, Durham: 2011, xii.

¹¹ the Guardian. “Philippines Is Deadliest Country for Defenders of Environment,” July 30, 2019. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jul/30/philippines-deadliest-country-defenders-environment-global-witness>.

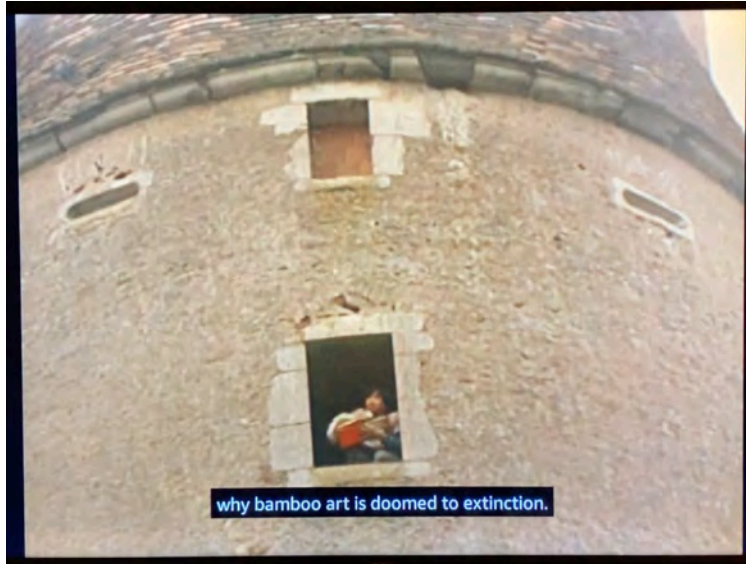
plays on the audience's mourning gaze for simple rural life (also employing Clifford's ethnographic pastoral) in, for example, the desertion of the bamboo art by a younger generation choosing instead to attend engineering schools in Manila.¹² On top of that, it parodies the conditions that allow that mourning. Tahimik places himself in the role of the colonized on a spiritual journey to find and achieve the American dream, inadvertently mocking the colonizer's gaze in the process. Yet, through this simple character ploy the narrative allows more peculiarities to take place: in the West, he finds contradictions. Barefoot on an escalator at Charles de Gaulle airport, Tahimik narrates a letter written to his mother, "Dearest mama, I have arrived in Paris. You cannot imagine what world lies out here: Floors they walk for you, doors they open for you! And so many bridges. Do you know Paris has 26 bridges? Why can't we have progress like this?" Himself a walking contradiction, a Third World visiting the first, there is mourning, but not necessarily for loss or change, the mourning for a lost pastoral is reversed into a pastiche of longing. In the same spirit, this dissertation explored regimes of rural development by providing a multiplicity of narrative strands that were tied together by the architecture of hydroelectric dams, irrigation infrastructure, resettlement camps, and traditional dwellings. Through their juxtaposition, the entanglements I have examined in this dissertation pushed against the power of developmentalism as a given superstructure, showing how architecture can reveal alternative ways of thinking and knowing a changing ecological landscape.

¹² James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," in *The Postmodern Turn: New Perspectives on Social Theory*, ed. Steven Seidman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 205–28; Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, *Allegories of the Anthropocene* (Duke University Press, 2019), 184.



Fig 6.01 Stills from *Perfumed Nightmare (Mababangong Bangungot)*, Kidlat Tahimik, 1977

Fig 6.02 Stills from *Perfumed Nightmare* (*Mababangong Bangungot*), Kidlat Tahimik, 1977



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