

*The Ullalim Festival of Kalinga, Northern Philippines
as a Peace-Building Strategy for a Multiethnic Community*

Scott Mágkachi Sabóy, University of the Philippines Baguio, Philippines

The Asian Conference on the Social Sciences 2014
Official Conference Proceedings
0629

Abstract

The Kalinga is an indigenous community in northern Luzon, Philippines which, although often depicted as a homogeneous society, is actually composed of 47 *ili* (communities). Its cultural diversity has also meant sporadic conflicts, often sensationalized in news reports as “tribal wars.”

The institutionalization of the annual *Ullalim Festival* in the Province of Kalinga has brought Kalinga culture to the stage of the eco-tourism industry being aggressively marketed globally by the Philippine government. The festival is a three-day agro-industrial and cultural fair that celebrates the founding of the province. It is held in the capital city of Tabuk, one of the places which the Kalingas marked out as a *matagoan* (zone of life) – i.e. an area where tribal conflicts cannot spill over. The concept of the *matagoan* issues from the *bodong* (local peace pact system) and its *pagta* (code or law) that govern all Kalinga subtribes.

This paper presents the festival as a peacebuilding strategy by looking into how this event (a) portrays multiple narratives that counter the single story of the “primitive” Kalinga spun by colonial historiography and media reportage, (b) balances intra-*ili* and pan-Kalinga consciousness, (c) creates channels of creativity through socio-economic activities, and (d) reinforces the *bodóng*. It also presents some tensions among the Kalingas that can undermine the current peace and development institutions and initiatives in the province.

Keywords: Ethnolinguistic group, Tribe, Kalinga, Ullalim Festival, *Bodóng*

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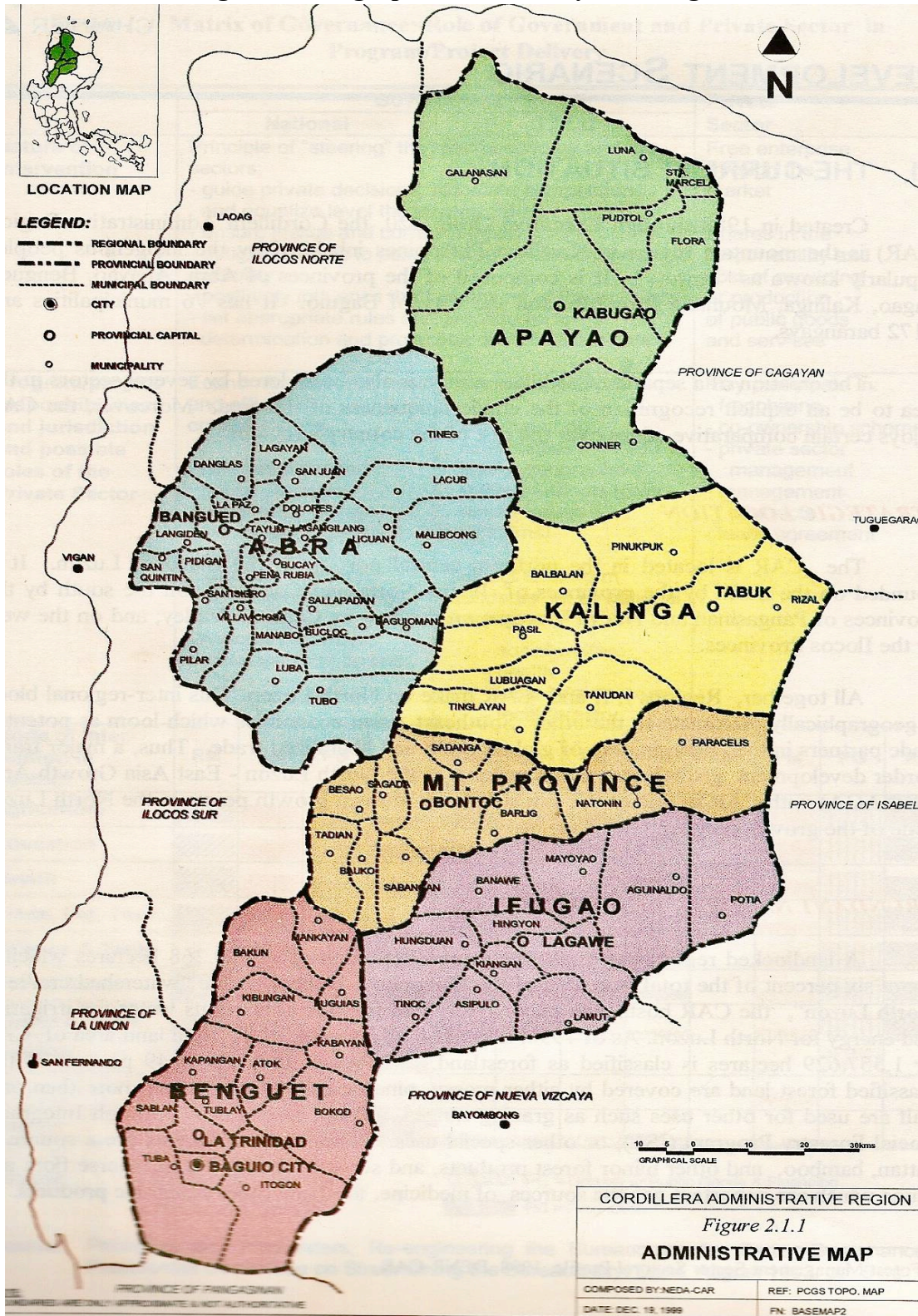
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Introduction

Kalinga is one of the Philippines' estimated 70 to 140 indigenous ethnic groups (Carino 2012, pp. 3-5). It is among the major ethnolinguistic groups collectively known as "*Igorots*" (lit., "from the mountains") located mainly in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in the northern part of the country. Geopolitically, its territory is in the Province of Kalinga; culturally, it covers portions of two neighboring provinces (see Fig.1). Often depicted in popular and academic studies as a homogeneous group (i.e., one tribal community), it is actually comprised of distinct 47 *ili* (communities, village clusters or ethnolinguistic groups) which the locals themselves call as "tribes" or "subtribes."¹ Each subtribe has its own distinct language or dialect, but the *Ethnologue* (Lewis, Simons, and Fennig, 2013) lists only seven Kalinga languages.

¹ The colonial baggage often attached by academics to "tribe" is generally not an issue among Kalingas. The latest Philippine census puts the total population of the province at 201, 619 (NSO, 2013). About 65.8% of the population identify themselves as Kalinga, while the rest belong to various other ethnic groups like Ilokano (18%), Bago (2.4%), Bontok (2.9%), Applai (2.2%), Kankanaey (2%), and Tagalog (1.1%) (NSO, 2011).

Figure 1. The geopolitical territory of Kalinga.



The cultural territory of Kalinga extends to at least two municipalities (Daguiman and Malibcong) in the Province of Abra to the west and a portion of a municipality (Natonin) in the Mountain Province to the south.

The Kalingas' reputation as a fierce, head-taking warrior-tribe during the Spanish and American colonial period is mentioned in standard references written by foreign writers (e.g. Willcox, 1912, pp. 223-224; Worcester, 1913, pp. 1213-1215). The so-called "pacification campaign" of the U.S. military government, the missiological forays of Catholic and Protestant churches, the establishment of educational institutions, and the strengthening of the *bodong* (the time-honored peace pact system of the Kalingas) contributed to the end of *káyaw* (raids on or armed conflicts with other tribes usually coupled with the taking of heads as battle trophies) (Jenista 1987, 260; Fry 2006, 46; Coben 2009, 81). The last known case of head-taking is supposed to have occurred in the 1970s (Howard 2000, 58). A few tribal conflicts continued sporadically up to the present, leading to the media's branding of the province as "a/the land of tribal wars" (see Fig. 2).

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PHILIPPINES

Kalinga, a land of tribal wars and fragile peace

by Sonny Evangelista

The Church has the hard task of changing the culture of war and vengeance of some Filipino tribes.



Manila (AsiaNews) – Helped by the police Father Luis Katutubo (not his real name) recently led a raid against a bar used as a cover for a prostitution ring. The bust was successful and netted the bar's owner, a member of the Tulgao tribe, who was arrested. Father Luis had previously led another raid against a notorious thief, a member of his own Tinglayan tribe. Both tribes live in Kalinga, a province located on the island of Luzon, north-east of the city of Baguio.

In doing what he did Father Luis stepped out of line and violated tribal rules. What could happen to him? To answer one must first understand the local culture.

Unlike crimes committed in Manila or other regions of the Philippines, which are normally dealt with by the judiciary and the courts, tribal culture in Kalinga is still strong and often leads to feuds and cycles of violence.

Despite the local Church's commitment against violence, intertribal warfare is commonplace. In Kalinga culture, a victim's family must find peace and solace in vengeance. So deeply ingrained is the practice that it has been nigh impossible to eradicate. Death and murder fuel such a desire for vengeance that tribesmen

Figure 2. Media (Mis)Representation of Kalinga.

The headline itself is misleading because it give the impression that "tribal wars" are common among the Kalingas when in fact, as the article itself reveals, only a few members of a few tribes are involved in attempted or consummated vengeance killings. Image available at <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Kalinga,-a-land-of-tribal-wars-and-fragile-peace-1336.html>, accessed 05 March 2014.

Often left out in the construction of the popular image of Kalinga are the various peacebuilding activities implemented by the *papángat* (elders) within the matrix of the *bodóng*. This study presents one of those activities, the "Ullálim Festival." The following discussion shall be organized as follows: (a) Traditions that provide context

to the festival – a socio-political institution (*bodóng*) and a verbal art (*ullálim*); (b) Brief description of the festival; (c) Significance of the festival to peace-building; and (d) Challenges to peace-building efforts in Kalinga.

In line with the theme of this conference, this paper seeks to highlight a marginal, indigenous narrative and bring it to this center of academic discourse and join the discussion on how communities can, amidst differences, “harness the synergy that emerges from the interactive dialectic generated by these differences.”

Cultural Context of the Ullalim Festival

The Bodóng

The *Bodong*² is the indigenous conflict management system of the Kalingas. Like the concept of the “state,” it has four basic elements: *búgis* (tribal territory), *págta* (law), *binodngán* (people covered by the bodong), and sovereignty or recognition. The fourth element is evident in the inter-tribal pacts voluntarily entered into by each *ili*. It is also expressed in the principle of *kulligóng* (“to encircle”), which means that the authority of the bodong extends to the *binodngán* and his or her property located outside the *ili*. This is similar to the idea that a foreign country’s embassy in the Philippines is considered an extension of that country’s sovereign territory. Under this principle, certain places where Kalingas reside like the cities of Tabuk and Baguio have been declared as *matagóan* (peace zone or zone of life). This means that no conflict among the Kalinga subtribes should extend to these areas. In the ‘80s and ‘90s eventually spilled over these cities and other localities outside Kalinga, prompting students to return home and temporarily stop their studies. Fortunately, due to the persistent efforts of many Kalinga leaders, the problem was eventually kept in check.

With some Kalingas using the *bodóng* to blackmail and bully *binodngán* and non-*binodngán*, there have been calls to abolish it. Despite the abuses of committed in the name of the bodong, however, this indigenous peace pact system continues to be relevant to the Kalinga. It is because of the bodong that the Kalingas continue to own the largest ancestral domain among the Igorots of Northern Luzon.³ It has also been proven as an effective tool for conflict resolution, when implemented properly. In 2009, Tabuk City bagged the “Galing Pook Award” for its innovative and successful peace and order program through its *Matagoan Bodong Consultative Council* (MBCC). Created in 2003 as the *Matagoan Bodong Council* (MBC), the MBCC is composed of the city mayor as head and dozens of male and female elders and leaders coming from the nine subtribes of Tabuk and representatives of the seven municipalities. Binodngan and non-binodngan immigrant communities in Tabuk also have one representative each in the council. The MBCC has been successful in

² Kalinga *papángat* I spoke to suggest at least three terms for the origin of *bodóng*: *podon* (holding of hands), *bobod* (to bind, a binding material), and *beddeng* (boundary). The word thus carries the idea of people meeting together or of making people’s minds meet to forge a peace pact, especially in relation to boundaries.

³ This is an assertion articulated by authorities on Kalinga customary laws through Tabuk City Administrator Lawrence Bayongan in an interview with the author on 18 December 2013 in Dagupan, Tabuk City, Kalinga.

resolving many cases involving Kalinga and even non-Kalinga residents in Tabuk through the *bodóng* system.⁴

The *págta chi/di/ji bodóng* are the laws governing the *bodóng* that have been deliberated upon by the leaders or representatives of two conflicting tribes or of two communities with no prior conflict but wish to enter into a *bodóng*; they become operational once they are proclaimed publicly. The *págta* used to be committed to memory by the *bodóng* holders and passed on orally. Today, all peace pacts are recorded in writing. The 1998 *Bodóng* Congress in Tabuk adopted a new or “proto-*págta*” which became the primary reference for specific peace pacts entered into by each Kalinga subtribe. Generally, the *págta* includes a preamble and about 15 articles. These articles include matters involving the *búgis*, principles and policies of the *bodóng*, *nangdon si bodóng* (peace pact holders), the *binodngán* and their rights, specific crimes and penalties, crimes against womanhood, and crimes against property. Several important changes have been introduced into the new *págta*. One such change is the prohibition of automatic retaliation for offenses or crimes committed against a member of a Kalinga subtribe. In the old *págta*, the *bodóng* holder and his relatives were expected to immediately avenge the death or injury suffered by a member of their *ili* (KBCI, 1999).

The *Ullálim*

The *ullálim* is arguably the best known representative of Kalinga oral tradition. Lambrecht and Billiet (1970, p. 1975) provide the earliest – and to date are still the most exhaustive – scholarly studies on this chant. The two scholar-priests define the *ullálim* as songs of the Kalinga about

the feats of their fictitious culture heroes, thereby proclaiming the bravery of their people and their innate pride of belonging to that ethnic stock whose valor overcomes danger and fear, whose ambushes display cleverness, and whose headhunts powerfully function as the fulfillment of duty toward kin and clan. (1970, 1)
They classify the *ullálim* as a ballad, it being sung by bards; an epic, as it is a tale of a fabled hero’s adventures; and a romance, for it also tells a story of love (1-2).⁵

The Ullalim Festival and Peace-building

The “Ullalim Festival” is among the more than 600 festivals held all over the country each year.⁶ It is a three to five-day agro-industrial fair and cultural gathering in the capital town of Kalinga that celebrates the founding anniversary of the province. It boasts of a wide array of agricultural produce and handicraft, technical competitions,

⁴ Tuso (2011, p. 260) lists 12 attributes shared by indigenous conflict resolution systems across the globe, all of which characterize the *bodóng*. I shall make a full treatment of this in a forthcoming paper.

⁵ The *ullálim* tradition, however, includes a non-epic form called the *sogsógna* which has the same melody as the epic form. It is an extemporaneous, improvisatory chant sung in festive occasions to deliver a message.

⁶ I counted 622, with the highest numbers in February (60), March (81), May (60), December (76). See complete list and descriptions at <http://www.dotpcvc.gov.ph/VPY-calendar/vpy-janmarch.html>, <http://www.dotpcvc.gov.ph/VPY-calendar/vpy-apriljune.html>, <http://www.dotpcvc.gov.ph/VPY-calendar/vpy-julysept.html>, <http://www.dotpcvc.gov.ph/VPY-calendar/vpy-octdec.html>.

indigenous games, ecotourism activities, and artistic performances. Trumpeted by its promoters as a “Festival of Festivals,” it brings together all the municipal fiestas of the province.⁷ It was launched in June 1995 and eventually grew into a huge local tourist attraction with increasingly varied programs and activities displaying Kalinga's "rich cultural heritage and bountiful resources in pursuit [of] peace and development" (Geraldine Dumallig. "Kalinga sets *Ullálim* fest from February 14 to 16," *Baguio Midland Courier*, 01 February 2009, p. 8).

The festival's twin goals of "peace and development" betray a long-standing concern about the image of the Kalinga historically encapsulated in different forms -- the general branding of the Igorots as *los salvajes* by the Spaniards, and the portrayal of then Kalinga sub-province Lieutenant Governor Walter "Sapao" Hale as one who was "just as much of a wild man as any Kalinga" (cited in Finin 2005, 45). This picture of the savage (i.e., morally or culturally deficient and economically backward) Kalinga persisted even after the American occupation, slowly becoming less pervasive and pronounced recently.

On the other hand, Kalingas have turned their Otherness into a tool of counter-essentialism. As Stallsmith (2011, p. 41) observes:

In some ways the Kalinga have used this exoticism and otherness to their own advantage. National media outlets portray an essentialised Kalinga place that exists between the ‘postcultural top’ and the ‘pre-cultural bottom’ – i.e., somewhere between the colonised lowlanders and the ‘uncivilised’ Negrito groups (Rosaldo 1988). In presentations for tourists, television programs, and ‘cultural interest’ stories for national media outlets, Kalinga is showcased as a place where the preservation of cultural rituals and materials are the only necessary component for a well-functioning, indigenous society (Cabreza 2005; Caluza 2006; Salvador 2006). The cultures of the Cordillera often function as an Other within mainstream Philippines societies, contributing both tangible and intangible cultural materials to a collective national identity. These appropriations, combined with a tendency to assume that current Kalinga practices are ancient, have fuelled movements to preserve and strengthen the bodong system. Even lowlanders may seek to strengthen their own links to the land by vicariously appropriating the timeless antiquity of the Kalinga.

So in this sense, the Festival maintains the *ullálim* tradition as a throwback to Kalinga's “primitive” state while refashioning it into a chief representation of the collective creative prowess and unique identity of the “modern” Kalinga. In so doing, it maintains a degree of exoticism while downplaying what is adjudged to be the *ullálim*'s original cultural context marked by violence. Nevertheless, scenes of Kalingas performing in full native attire and armed with indigenous weapons somehow reinforce the stereotyping of their ethnicity.

Countering the Single Story

The current provincial governor of Kalinga Jocel Baac underscored this continuing stereotype in his interfacing with local media during the 2011 *Ullálim*

⁷*Manchatchatong* (Balbalan), *Lága* (Lubuagan), *Salip* (Pasil), *Pasíngan* (Pinukpuk), *Matagóan* (Tabuk), *Podón* (Tanudan), *Únoy* (Tinglayan), and *Pinikpikan* (Rizal).

Festival. One news item on the interview (Ma. Elena Catajan, "Kalinga sans war image pushed," *Sun.Star Baguio*, 16 February 2011, p. 1) reports:

Baac, during the Ullalim festival, said he wants to scrap the image of the province as a land of tribal wars as it scares away tourists and investors.

Baac said even Kalinga students in Baguio have been reported to have a difficult time finding boarding homes because homeowners are frightened of the province's supposed notorious image....

"The province is perceived by outsiders as a dangerous place to travel and visit by personal impressions and by the media," he said.

The governor lamented news items often exaggerate tribal wars, adding there is no such happening going on today....

Baac, however, admitted before any change in image can take place, change should also start from the Kalingans. "We should talk about this among ourselves first."

This news excerpt reveals the internal and external forces that shape ethnic classification and identification. Ethnic classification, if imbibed by its object, can be a self-fulfilling prophecy of identification. The natives' real and perceived (mis)conduct or peculiarity conspires, as it were, with media narrative and tourist gaze to create a reified ethnic identity. Illustrative of this process of image construction is the following introductory narration to Lars Krutak's Philippine segment of his popular television documentary on *Discovery Channel*, "Tattoo Hunter":

The Kalingas live in the rugged Cordillera mountain. They are a fierce warrior tribe known for taking human heads. Kalinga means "outlaw" and for hundreds of years they were known to brutally slay their enemies. For every head taken a Kalinga warrior received a tattoo...

But today headhunting is a lot less common so the Kalinga tattoo tradition is in danger of going extinct... This is a great opportunity for a tattoo anthropologist like me but it's also dangerous....

...Even today, they are wary of outsiders....

The documentary's virtual portrayal of a Kalinga fraught with conflicts finds resonance with the perceptions of many non-Kalingas and among a few Kalingas themselves who tend to generalize isolated cases of personal vendetta and clan feud and to conflate the dozens of subtribes into a homogeneous ethnic group.

Another foreign author (Howard, 2000, p. 70) writes:

The Kalinga are notorious for being the most violent and unpredictable of the mountain people, and although my guide was otherwise capable, I still had to pay tribute to virtually every adult male I met along the trail. The Kalinga are the fiercest warriors within all of the mountain provinces – guerilla warfare was widespread in the region for decades—and their demands are usually backed up by a small arsenal of spears, machetes, and guns.

The use of the present tense especially in the first sentence sustains the impression that Kalingas have never really left behind their violent past.

Issuing from all these quotes is a combination of truth and untruth, a common issue in the representation of the ethnic. As Michael Ryan (2010, p. 14) explains: Ethnicity is also one of the languages with which we think about the world. And like so much of the information that circulates in the media and in everyday discourse (rumor, gossip, small talk, etc.), ethnic information is a mix of truth and inaccurate or incomplete representation. Indeed, the danger culture poses for the issue of ethnicity is that cultural representations exist on a spectrum from the objective and factual on the one end to the fictive and conjectural on the other. With cultural representation, we make fictions, but we use the same tools to make truths about the world, and the two often blend and mix in ways that can be harmful.

This squares with Chimamanda Adichie's TED talk titled, "The Danger of a Single story" (2009), in which she speaks of the human tendency to laminate the image of groups within one historico-cultural timeframe:

The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story... [I]t is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person.

What she says on the construction of the imagined picture of Nigeria or Africa holds true to the Kalinga. As already laid out above, some popular notions about the Kalinga are spun from a single narrative – the story of the primitive and homogenous Kalinga.

Adichie also points out that a single story may titillate the gazer's passion for the exotic but it brings down violence upon the gazed. The solution to this problem, she adds, is to bring out multiple stories:

The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar... Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

This is where the *Ullálim* Festival comes in – it brings out multiple narratives by bringing into one place all the smaller fests in the province. Cultural presentations of each municipality narrate and dramatize various facets of local history, economic activities, oral traditions and other cultural practices. The essentialized notion of the "typical" Kalinga physique (tall, lean, high nose, etc.) is debunked by the different physical features of performers and viewers. The picture of a culturally monolithic Kalinga is challenged by the various sights and sounds of ethnic attires, gong beats, dances, and languages or dialects. A nativist (i.e., indigenous culture as pristine, free from outside influences) view of indigenous culture is challenged by the hybrid sounds of local musical performances and innovations made on material culture (e.g.

dress and ornaments). Each export quality food or non-food item churned out by the increasing number of local industries is an account of technological development and local-global exchange. In all these, Kalinga's multiple voices are sounded off – not in the arena of violence and backwardness but in the agora of peace and modernity.⁸

Pan-ethnicity and Ili-centeredness

Tied to the festival's slogan, "Kalinga Shines," are the annual themes which commonly touch on unity, peace, and development, the repetitive emphasis obviously meant to bring about a habit of positive consciousness. For instance, the 19th *Ullalim* Festival held on 12-16 February 2014 ran on the theme, "Cultural Integrity – Towards Peace and Progress." It was highlighted by the *Awong Chi Gangsa* ("the call of gongs") – the simultaneous beating of 1,300 gongs. More than 2,000 men and women in full native attire danced along a two-kilometer highway stretch to the province's athletic oval where they formed the words "KALINGA SHINES" (see Fig. 3). Most of the men next congregated in the middle of the field to serve as a huge "human gong" – a solid round formation with the gongs on their heads – while eight long cloths of various colors bearing the names of the province's seven municipalities and one city were stretched outward like the rays of the sun. Each mayor stood at the end of the cloth representing his constituents. A small torch was then lighted and passed on from the congressman to the governor and the vice governor who, in turn, ran towards the center of the field and passed it to one of the mayors until it got around and finally to the center where it was used to light a giant torch.



Figure 3. Over two thousand male gong players and female dancers form the slogan of the 2014 *Ullalim* Festival. Photo credits: Kenneth Aquino Atiwag, used with permission.

Judging from the reactions of Kalingas on the ground and on social media, this unprecedented dramatization of the Kalingas' aspirations of unity, peace and development generally created a profound sense of solidarity – even if it was just momentary. For the organizers of the event, it at least affirmed that what was thought to be impossible could be made possible when this "nation" of dozens of tribes get their acts together.

The strengthening of this notion of a pan-Kalinga ethnicity, however, is balanced by *ili*-centeredness; the subtribes get their chance to showcase their distinctive cultural traits, thus maintaining intra-cultural pride.

⁸ "Modernity", in this sense, refers to what the common folk regard as cultural conditions or developments which were not part of or improve on traditional indigenous life. These include the use of cutting-edge personal gadgets, new technology for livelihood projects, the production and commercialization of hybrid music and clothing, holding of beauty pageants, etc.

Channels of Creativity

The *Ullálim* Festival has served as a marketplace not only of ideas but also of a cornucopia of products from local industries. Kalinga's 311,970 hectares land area is rich in agro-forest resources. Furniture and woodworks continue to be the dominant industry, but food processing, metalcraft or ironworks, and loom weaving are also getting more widespread (PPDO, 2011, p. 42). The acknowledged "Rice Granary of the Cordilleras," its agricultural land covering 178,371 has. has produced an average of 152,857 metric tons of rice from 2008-2010 (PPDO, 2011, p. 35; NSO, 2013). A booming industry in Kalinga is coffee production. The 3,000 has. reserved for coffee plantations promises to produce over two million metric tons yearly. Along with fruit and rice wines and the *únoy* variety of Kalinga rice, these coffee products are slowly finding their way to national and even international markets (PPDO 2009, 43). These are among the processed and fresh products – many of which come from local cooperatives⁹ – that feed the economic activities of the festival.¹⁰ Thus, by creating opportunities for Kalingas to engage in cooperative livelihood projects, as well as to express themselves in creative performances and handicraft, the festival reinforces the declaration of its venue, Tabuk City, as a *matagóan* – a neutral ground where one can freely live and earn his keep without fear for his safety.

Reinforcement of the Bodong

The *bodóng's* network of intertribal alliances facilitates the conduct of a pan-Kalinga event such as the *Ullálim* Festival. The festival, in turn, reinforces the importance of the *bodóng* in at least two ways.

As already noted above, it actualizes the concept of *matagóan*. The root of the term is *tágu* (man or human) which, in Kalinga cosmology, means

[being the] "normal and visible inhabitants of the Earth, i.e., ...not *álan* ('spirits'), who roam around on the Earth...[nor] supernatural beings or deities who live either *ud Ngáto* ('in the Skyworld'), like *Kabunyán*, the Supreme Being, *ud Dolá* ('in the Underworld'), *ud Dáya* ('in the [theological] Upstream Region, or *ud Lágud* ('in the [theological] Downstream Region'). (Lambrecht and Billiet, 1970, p. 10)

From the foregoing, it can be said that *matagóan* does not only cover peaceful co-existence with fellow human beings but also right relations with the spirit world. It is thus not surprising that in the festival, speeches and narratives during performances are replete with references to *Kabunyán*, and that traditional rituals that invoke the spirits are highlighted.

⁹ As of 2008, there are 62 active cooperatives in the province. 22 of these are considered "millionaire cooperatives." *Tabuk Multi Purpose Cooperative* (TAMPCO) tops the list with assets worth over PhP 300-M (PPDO, 2009, pp. 92-94).

¹⁰ The *Ullálim* Festival's trade fair has shown a steady increase in revenues as reflected respectively in the sales from 2008 to 2011 -- PhP 1.385M, 1.65M, 2.19M, 2.280M. Data culled from reports of Philippine Information Agency (PIA)-Kalinga in an email received from Peter Balocnit dated 02 February 2012.

One of the terms used in the *bodóng* to refer to the renewal of peace ties is *dornát/dolnát* (“to make warm”). This is a ceremony in which a *bodóng* holder invites his *kasupáng* (counterpart) for a feast in his own home or *ili* to strengthen their bond (and that of the communities they represent). The terms of the *págta* are also reviewed and/or revised in this occasion. By extension, the festival may be seen virtually as a grand *dornát* where all the representatives of the *binodngán* tribes are gathered in one place to celebrate their being bonded together by the *bodóng*.

Challenges to Peace-building Efforts in Kalinga

There are at least two major factors that are potentially damaging to the achievement of the festival’s goals. One is the complicity of some Kalingas in the mangling of their own image. Illustrative of this is the almost ubiquitous “Kalinguns” stickers or car decals (see Fig. 2) which are as amusing to viewers as they are damaging to the Kalingas’ reputation. For while it is true that many Kalingas take pride in their being a warriors of sorts and assume personal qualities of bravery, strength, and resilience, embedding a symbol of modern warfare in one’s ethnic identity perpetuates the essentialized image of the violent Kalinga. It is also tied to the so-called “*Kawitan* mentality” among some Kalingas. Kalingas are sometimes divided into the *Kawitan* (roosters– i.e., the belligerent ones who readily avenge a perceived or an actual wrong done on them or their kins), and the *Úpa* (hens – i.e., those who choose a peaceful resolution to tensions or conflicts). The former are often accused of bullying the latter by making unreasonable demands coupled with the threat of the *bodóng*’s severance (which marks the start of hostilities). This problem keeps elders and/or *bodóng* holders always on the look out for signs of vengefulness among a few misguided *binodngán*. Had it not been for the proactive efforts of the members of the *Kalinga Bodong Council* (KBC) the MBCC and the various government agencies and civil society groups in the province, the *Kawitan* mentality would have made an event like the *Ullálim* Festival impossible.



Figure 4. The Violent Kalinga. Stickers and car decals similar to this have become fashionable among some Kalingas. (Image courtesy of Io Jularbal)

Another threat to peace-building is religious fundamentalism.¹¹ There are at least 45 Christian denominations and a growing congregation of Muslims in Kalinga (NSO,

¹¹ I use fundamentalism in a narrow sense: a mindset which involves a literal, inflexible interpretation of holy scriptures and an exclusivist soteriology (i.e., salvation belongs only those who belong to their

2010).¹² While the Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and a few other ecumenical churches have been active in the socio-political concerns of the province through the *Kalinga Apayao Religious Sector Association* (KARSA), an increasing number of fundamentalists continue to distance themselves from such secular affairs and aggressively promote their particular brand of theology and in the process threaten, if not dissolve social bonds. It is ironic that while unity was celebrated during this year's *Ullálim* Festival, several fundamentalist pastors and their members engaged in heated debates over theological issues and over mutual proselyting activities that "pirated" some of their members. It is also a common observation among elders that most Kalingas being converted to fundamentalist groups show lack of interest in indigenous rituals due, for instance, to dietary restrictions like vegetarianism and the banning of eating *dinardaraan* (bloody meat stew).¹³

Conclusion

The Kalingas are known as "Peacocks of the North" for being "the most gaily dressed people of northern Luzon" (Worcester, 1913, p. 1223), and the *Ullálim* Festival is a stage where they strut their full colors. Kalinga's grand gala serves as a site of events that feed the performative production of historical chapters in the proverbial book of the Kalinga. The years will tell whether this will add colors to or cause the shedding of their feathers.

But more than just being a spectacle for tourists and a hub of commodification, the festival has become a strategy for instilling unity among diverse ethnolinguistic groups and reinforcing indigenous institutions of peace. Established within the framework of the Kalinga version of a Indigenous Conflict Process Resolution (ICPR) mechanism, it showcases indigenous concepts and practices that can magnify our appreciation of human creativity in this theater of peace.

groups and who faithfully subscribe to their creed). See Ruthven (2007, pp.1-23) for an extensive discussion of the history and definition of the term.

¹² Catholics are most numerous with 134,963 members or 67.1% of the total population. Next to them are Protestants (National Council of Churches in the Philippine) with 19,615 members (9.7%) and Evangelicals (Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches) with 14,588 members (7.3%). Only 27 individuals (.01%) identified themselves as belonging to "Tribal Religions." 146 individuals (.1%) belong to Islam. KARSA, an alliance of Catholic and Protestant church leaders, wields a great influence on Kalinga politics, especially in matters involving peace and order. (NSO, 2010)

¹³See Little (2007) for a fine collection of accounts regarding the positive role religion in peacemaking.

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