ABSTRACT

TAMPOS, SHEILA MAE. Cultural Concepts and Structural Processes: What the *Pangajow* Killings Reveal. (Under the direction of Dr. Shea McManus).

The academic attention on acts of violence perpetrated by marginalized and indigenous groups such as suicide bombing and mob lynching has led to various theoretical approaches. Instead of framing these practices within a single analytical category such as 'culture' or 'structure', a productive framework considers the dynamics of culture and processes at the social, economic, and political level. Employing this integrative framework, the study examines a practice among the Agusan Manobo of southern Philippines called *pangajow*, a term understood as revenge killing, slave raiding, prestige killing, and armed revolt. Drawing on ethnographic interviews and participant-observation in two Agusan Manobo communities, three cultural concepts emerged as overarching themes: *banua* or “community”, *ginhawa* or “breath”, and *bantug* or “respect”. It is argued here that *pangajow* killings are reproduced in terms of how oppressive conditions through structural processes are being reinterpreted by the people using their cultural concepts. The Agusan Manobo model of *ginhawa* or ‘breath’ is evident of this claim: pain results from a process of inhaling or taking in the experiences of structural processes (e.g., poverty) both as an individual and as a member within a community who uses respect as a reference for social equilibrium; and, it is through rage, which manifests in the killings, that this buildup of pain is released or exhaled. The theoretical relevance of this view on understanding violence among indigenous and marginalized groups is an important aspect to be taken into account in formulating effective initiatives to address these practices which continue to yield devastating consequences in the concerned communities.
Cultural Concepts and Structural Processes: 
What the Pangajow Killings Reveal

by
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To Chami and our Manobo friends
BIOGRAPHY

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CHAPTER 1

The Agusan Manobo and Pangajow Killings: An Introduction

There were banana leaves laid flat on the ground, heavy excavating equipment in the middle of a banana plantation, and people behind a yellow cordon covering their noses. This scene from a news report often flashes through my mind when asked why I am interested in studying violence in Mindanao, the southern island of the Philippines where I was born and raised. The excavating equipment, a backhoe, was pulling out crumpled vehicles from a newly dug pit. The green banana leaves were used to cover the disfigured corpses pulled out from the same pit. Some were said to have been buried alive. Many of the females were raped, mutilated, and shot in the genital. Some males were beheaded, skulls crushed. A total of 58 bodies were found. This was referred to as the Maguindanao massacre after the province in Mindanao where it took place in 2009. An incumbent political clan was said to have orchestrated the slaughter to eliminate a rival gubernatorial candidate from another political clan. The massacre, which remains unresolved, was among the numerous cases of clan feuding in the indigenous communities of southern Philippines. When I first learned about all the gory details, I thought it was just utter senseless and beyond comprehension. This inspired me later to pursue an anthropological interest in gaining perspectives to understand violence. As I became familiar with the literature on clan feuding in Mindanao, it appears that a general dichotomy exists between “structure” such as the weak rule of law (e.g., CHD 2011, Mercado 2010, Rasul 2005) and “culture” such as the concept of family
and honor among Islamic groups where the clan feuding is most rampant (e.g., Durante et al. 2007, Husin 2010, Torres 2007). What I find most interesting though is the inter-relatedness of cultural concepts and structural processes in the context of violent acts. This study reflects my attempt to pursue this interest. Here, I focused on a practice among the Agusan Manobo of southern Philippines called pangajow.

The Agusan Manobo use the word pangajow to refer to different forms of killings, namely, slave raiding, prestige killing, revenge killing, and armed protest. The research informants in this study only discussed these types of killings, hence I limit my use of the word pangajow to these four forms. In the literature, other acts that are generally considered in the same class as pangajow include special raids to procure human sacrifices for certain rituals and mortuary ceremonies of displaying heads of the enemies during the Spanish colonial period (Cole 1913). The Manobo term pangajow is a variation of the more commonly used 'pangayaw', which, according to analysis in historical linguistics, is a word for 'headhunting' or 'headhunting expedition' among ancestral Austronesian languages (Blust 1999). This implies that the word had long existed in the Agusan Manobo language prior to colonization.

These different forms of killings that are all referred to as pangajow have a few commonalities. One shared feature is that all of these killings are premeditated. In the case of slave raids, informants explained that killing is necessary since raiding a community to capture slaves always entail resistance. Another similarity is that the attacks are generally

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1 In using the term 'structural', I intend to highlight the role of social structures, groups, institutions, and other governing bodies in large-scale processes.
conducted in places far from the attacker's territory. Exceptions apply to revenge killings between neighbors, which were said to be rare since the community's traditional leader can easily initiate the arbitration process between the concerned parties.

Based on actual cases and temporal estimations provided by the informants, these different forms of pangajow may be divided as 'bygone' and 'contemporary'. Prestige killing and slave raiding were no longer practiced, while revenge killing and armed revolt were still observed until today. Armed revolts in these areas peaked in the 1980s but is still considered a contemporary form of pangajow since it is viewed to have remained as an option until today especially in their struggle for autonomy over their ancestral domains and against large-scale mining and logging groups. Below is a timeline that simplifies this approximation. It has to be noted that the goal of this table is not historical accuracy but to show that the four pangajow killings were associated with certain periods.

Table 1. Timeline of different pangajow killings
(Based on cases collected and temporal estimations of research informants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASES</th>
<th>PERIODS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slave raiding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge killing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed revolt</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
In general, *pangajow* or *pangayaw* is used as a term to refer to the same forms of killings among different non-Islamic indigenous (Lumad) groups in Mindanao. This paper, however, will only focus on *pangajow* as described by the Agusan Manobo. The Agusan Manobo belong to a broader Lumad group which is the Manobo. Lumad started to emerge as a collective term in the 1980s to refer to the non-Islamic indigenous groups in Mindanao amid the peak of the chaos among Muslim and non-Muslim natives against the Christian migrants. Lumad literally means 'earth' or 'soil' which signifies their rootedness to the island. (Rodil 1994). The Manobo group is considered one of the largest indigenous groups in the Philippines based on population count (NCCA 1994). Given the diverse Manobo subgroups, I specifically referred to the participants in this study as the Agusan Manobo, which is how they generally classify themselves. This is primarily based on their location which is the Agusan del Sur province.

The Manobo were generally represented as warlike and vengeful in colonial accounts. Faye-Cooper Cole (1913), for instance, who referred to the group as “the most troublesome people of Southern Mindanao”, used the word *manobo* as a synonym for *kulaman* which is...
said to literally mean 'bad man' (p. 57). John Garvan (1929), meanwhile, wrote that the “instability and hot headedness” of the Manobo is one of their feared characteristics (p. 39). These representations of hostility, however, were never explored in context and were not sustained in the literature after the colonial period.

Majority of the Agusan Manobo informants in this study were farmers. Their main produce include rice, corn, sweet potato, and cassava. Swidden agriculture is common in the highlands while wet-field farming is common in the lower areas. Given the importance of agriculture as the main source of livelihood, the number of recent typhoons that hit the region were indeed very devastating. Agusan del Sur belongs to the Caraga region which is considered the most prone to landslides and flooding in the entire country according to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (Ranada 2013).

In conducting this research on pangajow among the Agusan Manobo, I aimed to address two main questions. First, how do the Agusan Manobo articulate their understanding on the practice in terms of their local or cultural concepts? By 'cultural concept', I refer to a term or a phrase that reflects the shared ways of understanding developed within a social community.
group as they collectively adapt to changing social, political, economic, and ecological conditions. These are concepts used and developed in distinct ways as different social groups make sense of varying processes and collective experiences. These are related to what Clifford Geertz (1983) referred to as the “experience-near concepts” which a group of people use spontaneously and colloquially. These are commonly employed in the everyday life and are explicitly used to articulate what one or his fellow feels, sees, hears, thinks, imagines, and so on. I find it relevant to qualify the concepts on which I focused in this study as “cultural” because I intend to characterize them based on the descriptions of the informants and the ways they applied it to their own, distinct experiences. This emphasis on cultural concepts is based on a general assertion that an act of violence is best understood from the perspective of the people directly experiencing it. In this case, I believe that a productive way to gain an understanding of pangajow is through the categories or concepts that the Agusan Manobo use to talk about the practice.

Secondly, how do these cultural concepts relate to their views on their social, political, and economic conditions? This question is predicated on the assumption that the practice of pangajow and the salient cultural concepts used to characterize it are not detached from the social, political, and economic processes to which the Agusan Manobo are subjected. This means that there is an assumption that in articulating their understanding and views on pangajow using cultural concepts, the Agusan Manobo are also situating themselves within the prevailing socio-political and economic processes in their communities.
An underlying framework that served as the basis in forming and addressing these questions reflects an assertion that acts of violence reveal the dynamics between cultural concepts and large-scale processes at the social, economic, and political levels (henceforth, structural processes). Contrary to the common dichotomy in Mindanao literature that puts varying emphasis on “culture” and “structure” in understanding different acts of killings, I believe that cultural and structural aspects are highly inter-related and should not be considered as a dichotomy. As I intend to show in this paper, cultural concepts and structural processes are equally important, since people re-apply cultural concepts as they continuously adapt to changing social, political, and economic conditions. This means that a focus on cultural aspects of these forms of violence will require equal attention on the large-scale processes through which such concepts are made explicit; at the same time, a focus on structural conditions will require how the people re-apply their cultural concepts to make sense of the processes.

This idea about how cultural concepts are re-applied in relation to large-scale processes has been applied to a few studies on violence such as in what Alexander Hinton (1998) refers to as the “genocidal bricolage”. Here, Hinton points out how the Cambodian genocide reflects the re-application of local frames of knowledge such as liver-eating as actors adapt to the dominant ideological themes that do not specifically invoke such acts. This framework is inspired by Claude Levi-Strauss (1966) who introduced the term 'bricolage' to refer to a meaning-making process where people draw upon a preexisting set of resources in adapting to new circumstances. People will have new understandings as they
relate to new conditions but these are not without traces of already existing concepts. This is because people have conceptual tools that they re-purpose for multiple applications as they make do with 'whatever is at hand' in engaging with new projects. In this sense, tools in the form of cultural concepts are heterogeneous in nature; it does not have a single, determinate purpose. People make local frames of knowledge dynamic as they continue to be subjected to different social, political, and economic processes as social beings. In the case of the Cambodian genocide perpetrators, therefore, the Khmer Rouge cadres were not merely acting out of their submission to fundamental communist principles but because they also used their own local frames of knowledge, such as 'honor' and 'face', in adapting to the prevailing dogma.

Hinton's application of the concept of 'bricolage' aims to show that perpetrators are not “homogeneous automatons” who simply obey orders and are easily persuaded by dominating ideological themes or figures (Hinton 1998:33). Instead, people engage in a meaning-making process of reinterpreting their experiences using cultural concepts as “tools” as they engage in new conditions brought about by structural processes.

This approach that gives importance to the dynamics between local concepts and structural processes is what I believe is most relevant in presenting a view on violence especially among indigenous and marginalized groups. I aim to contribute to developing this framework in this study by incorporating a methodological consideration in terms of explicitly presenting the process of determining the salient cultural concepts and by
presenting how the link between cultural concepts and pangajow killings reveals relevant perspectives of the Agusan Manobo on their current socio-political and economic conditions.

I gathered the data for this study during a two-week ethnographic research in two Agusan Manobo communities\(^2\) which involved semi-structured interviews, informal focus group discussions, and participant-observation. The research inquiry consisted of three interrelated phases. The informants were initially asked general questions relating to how they view the present conditions in their communities. This phase provided contexts on the historical, social, political, and economic processes that they consider as highly relevant. Secondly, I gathered views and narratives on different pangajow killings and determined the salient cultural categories that the informants used in expressing their views on the practice. I did a line-by-line coding of the transcripts from interviews and notes from field observation and participant-observation in order to determine the key terms. I then projected the relations between the key terms through a network visualization aid. And, thirdly, I determined through the ethnographic and archival data how the salient categories were used in relation to the social, political, economic, and historical processes to which these communities were and are subjected. Based on the interviews, these relevant processes were the following: the creation of the modern Philippine state, the imposition of land laws, economic poverty, and the indigenous-migrant social dynamics.

Based on the findings from the ethnographic data, the Agusan Manobo use these three cultural concepts as salient categories in discussing the different pangajow killings: \textit{banua} ("community"), \textit{bantug} ("respect"), and \textit{ginhawa} ("breath" in relation to pain and rage). It is

\(^2\) For the confidentiality and security of the informants, the research sites will not be specified in this paper.
argued here that *pangajow* killings are a result of how oppressive conditions through structural processes are being reinterpreted by the people using their cultural concepts. This is evident in the Agusan Manobo model of *ginhawa* or ‘breath’: pain results from a process of inhaling or taking in the experiences of structural processes (e.g., poverty and land conflicts) both as an individual and as a member within a community who uses respect as a reference for social equilibrium, and it is through rage, which manifests in the killings, that this buildup of pain is released or exhaled.

The use of the concept of *banua* (“community”) to characterize bygone forms of *pangajow* killings such as slave raiding and prestige killing reflects how the informants viewed collectivity as a means of addressing the challenges (e.g., raiders) during such periods and the lack of this same sense of collectivity today amid their struggle from the interrelated issues stemming from the imposition of land laws in indigenous communities and the arrival of migrants. The use of the cultural concept of *ginhawa* (“breath”) to talk about these contemporary forms of *pangajow* reveals how the Agusan Manobo linked the concept to structural processes, specifically economic poverty, in terms of a sense of desperation and vulnerability which fuel pain and rage in *pangajow* killings.

Meanwhile, the emphasis on respect during old forms of *pangajow* killings was in terms of leadership, an important element in consolidating a community to face challenges through collective security during such points in history; the emphasis on respect today as applied in revenge killings and armed revolts focused on the restoration of balance,
compensation, and resolution which they felt deprived of amid the prevailing socio-political and economic processes.

These findings are relevant in the anthropological discourse on violence and conflict because it shows how the theoretical importance of cultural concepts and structural processes can be integrated in the context of understanding acts of violence. This relevance will extend to laying the initial steps to understanding communities directly experiencing these issues in line with the effort to inform policy-making initiatives. Inter-group violence in the Philippines is considered “the most common source of violence in the country” (SWS 2005). Displacement is one of its primary consequences, since people had to evacuate to safer areas to avoid the crossfire. With the destruction of agricultural farms and loss of livestock during encounters, economic rehabilitation for displaced families becomes another problem. Literacy rate is also affected not only due to the conversion of schools into evacuation centers but the lack of teachers willing to be assigned in the conflict-prone areas. Probably the most alarming of it all is the steady rise of revenge killings in Mindanao since the 1980s (Torres 2007). These damaging consequences could be prevented if a more informed lens can be used in viewing and addressing these practices.

One limitation of this study is that it is not framed to apply to other forms of killings that may be considered as aimless or random. For the Agusan Manobo, the most common type of random killing is an amok fight by or among intoxicated men, since it is viewed to be primarily driven by the influence of alcohol. (The lack of awareness in these forms of killing is not considered an excuse though; in fact, many random killings led to waging of pangajow
by the victim’s kin.) As I previously mentioned, *pangajow* killings are premeditated. The analytical framework of this study does not apply to acts of violence that the Agusan Manobo considered to be devoid of aforethought. Another limitation is that the a number of data especially regarding bygone *pangajow* practices were based on handed-down narratives rather than being based on direct experiences. I addressed this limitation by achieving consistency from multiple sources.

In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the related literature which theoretically informed this study. Chapter 3 will focus on the methodology. The cultural concept of “community” and its relation to slave raiding and prestige killing will be presented on Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I will present how the concept of respect is used as an important cultural category to characterize both old and new forms of *pangajow* killings. And, in Chapter 6, I will discuss how the concept of *ginhawa* or “breath”, especially under the themes of 'pain' and 'rage', is used to characterize revenge killings and armed revolt as contemporary forms of *pangajow*. These three chapters will be weaved together in Chapter 7.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review: The Link between Cultural Concepts and Structural Processes in Violence

Violence as a topic of specialization in cultural anthropology has only been firmly established in the past two or three decades (Thomas 2012). Most of the contemporary anthropological studies in this field are based on accounts of violence rather than direct observations of it (Dentan 2008). Pragmatic limitations aside, this anthropological interest in how other people perceive violence rather than directly witnessing it shows the importance given to the subjects' points of view and their narratives. In other words, a prevailing contemporary approach to violence in cultural anthropology is not to interpret violence but to 'interpret how other people interpret' it. Rather than merely describing and explaining violence like a physician diagnosing a disease, this approach considers crucial an understanding of violence based on how the concerned communities make sense of their conditions.

Given an emphasis on the importance of the perspectives of the people involved, a number of contemporary anthropologists focus on key cultural concepts that the people use to understand violent phenomena and the dynamics of these cultural concepts with large-scale processes at the historical, social, economic, and political levels (henceforth, structural processes). This present study on the Agusan Manobo revenge killings is situated within these broad discourses. I aim to understand how the Agusan Manobo make sense of the
different pangajow killings by taking into account the overarching cultural concepts through which they view the practice and the relations of these cultural concepts with the structural processes in the Agusan Manobo communities. These cultural concepts are viewed as categories that are continuously being re-applied as people experience and adapt to various structural processes at the macro level. In this chapter, I aim to discuss the literature which informed these theoretical considerations. I will first present the discourse on the importance of cultural concepts in understanding social phenomena especially violence. This will be followed by a discussion on the related literature which view cultural concepts, especially in the context of violence, to be continuously being reinterpreted by the people as they adapt to changing social, political, economic, and historical processes.

Deborah Thomas (2012) mentions that one reason behind the late resurgence of violence as an anthropological topic might be due to the former dominance of evolutionary and functionalist approaches in anthropology. The evolutionary approach considers violence as natural and is grounded in innate mechanisms. In line with this view, Napoleon Chagnon (1988), who wrote about the revenge killings among the Amazonian Yanomami, suggests that the cycle of retaliation between clans is aimed at the reproductive success of the people involved. For him, this explains the special status of women in warfare and the higher number of offspring among warriors. One refutation was posed by Brian Ferguson (2001) who points out that the biological framework cannot explain the archaeological evidence showing that violence among social groups particularly peaked during the expansion of Western empires through colonization. For Ferguson (1984), “wars were caused by pressures
of the material conditions of life (p. 311). It has nothing to do with genes but about a struggle to protect and further material interests. He also pointed out that Chagnon's link between warfare and the reproductive value of women does not hold in communities where chiefs have more wives than other men even with the absence of constant and prolonged wars.

Theoretical attacks against the biological approach, such as Ferguson's, were basically asserting the primacy of external influences to violence as opposed to inherent and genetically-predetermined factors. The functionalist approach maintains this emphasis on non-biological aspects by viewing warfare and conflicts as a mode of maintaining the structure of a society. The influential factor, in this sense, is not an innate mechanism within an individual but a shared interest among people to organize themselves as one cohesive social unit. E. Evans-Pritchard (1940), in his account of the hostilities among the Nuer of Sudan, talks about blood feuds as regulating mechanisms to keep a society cohesive. Shared knowledge on the potentiality of a blood feud is a form of security for members within a community who recognize the same set of laws. The presence of feuding and its potentiality deter an individual from violating the laws, since it follows that a transgression will lead to retaliation. Max Gluckman (1959) elaborates on this view in his famous phrase “peace in feud”. Feuds, for Gluckman, are constitutive of overlapping loyalties established through different allegiances which in turn create a form of social cohesion. In line with what Evans-Pritchard suggests, feud becomes a regulating mechanism within a community where relations through multiple allegiances are highest. Applying the same approach in understanding the Corsican revenge killings in France, Roger Gould (2000) suggests that
threat of revenge keeps members of one group in constant monitoring of each other's behavior which, in turn, creates order in the community.

One issue raised against the functionalist approach is its incapacity to account for the agentive actions of the people who can adapt in varying ways with the changing socio-economic, political, and historical conditions. Cristopher Boehm (1986), in understanding blood feuding among the indigenous Montenigrins, points out that the practice of agency in the form of strategizing on the part of the actors is an important aspect to understand. Feuding, as he proposes, is an active problem solving. For him, revenge is a strategy and a "legitimate form of self-help" in societies where no centralized political power addresses homicidal conflicts (p. 66). Boehm goes beyond the concept of function by emphasizing that violence is a conscious effort to strategize under certain circumstances. In Montenigrin communities where no centralized body exists to address conflicts, revenge killings became a legitimate process with particular rules of engagement and standards for resolution. This is not because revenge killing has an inherent function. Rather, for Boehm, it is due to the idea that the Montenigrins are social agents who actively strategize as they engage within larger groups in different conditions.

A focus on function, however, does not have to be viewed as antithetical to a focus on agentive actions. John Holmwood (2005) argues that functionalism, specifically in anthropological understanding, is not to be viewed through the classical logic of causal argument where cause precedes the consequences. Instead, “functionalists reverse this sequence and assign causal powers to effects” (90). As Holmwood cites for an example, rain
dancing among the Hopi through a functionalist lens is not based on what made the Hopi dance but on what happened when the Hopi danced. In viewing the functional approach this way, agency and function are not necessarily incompatible but simply vary in terms of putting emphasis. A focus on agency looks at the factors that have been relevant before an action is taken, while a focus on function looks at the aspects that became relevant after an action is taken.

A more general consensus among cultural anthropologists in opposition to the biological framework is the assumption that violence is mediated by cultural influences. Aside from focusing on function and agency, some scholars put an emphasis on how culture, or aspects of it, legitimize or justify violence. Johan Galtung (1990) suggests the phrase “cultural violence” to refer to acts and processes wherein the use of aspects of culture such as religion, language, art, and cosmology are used in legitimizing direct and indirect forms of violence. The problems with this framing, however, are its implications on culture as static and a view on violence as something that requires legitimacy or justification. Galtung views culture as a resource for ideas that “have been and are still strong” (298). However, culture is a dynamic and a creative process that people engage in to make sense of their social experiences (Kapferer 1976, Wagner 1981). As Roy Wagner (1981) mentions, “there are no perceptible limits to the amount or the extent of the contexts that can exist in a given culture” (35). Aspects of culture such as “religion” is not a contained domain that is permanent and

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3 The term “culture” remains evasive of precise definition since, for one, it is not an entity in the external world but an abstraction. I use “culture” in this paper to refer to a process that primarily involves shared ways of understanding developed within a social group as they collectively adapt to changing social, political, economic, and ecological conditions.
unchanging. Rather, it is linked with multiple other domains and processes. A more productive way to look at the link between culture and violence, then, is to understand how cultural concepts are re-applied to make sense of the social, economic, political, and historical processes to which the people are subjected. It is in this sense that I use the concept of culture; it is a process through which local categories are employed in the everyday life and the ways of living of a social group as they continue to adapt to changing social, political, economic, and ecological conditions (Paluga 2012a). By 'cultural concept', I refer to a term or a phrase that reflects the shared ways of understanding developed within a social group.

With this view on culture as dynamic rather than unchanging and permanent, it is productive to look at its relation with violence based on how the people themselves understand it amid their continuous adaptation to varying conditions. In an attempt to understand how other people understand, or as Clifford Geertz (1983) refers to as “the understanding of understanding” (p. 5), anthropologists need to take into account “words, images, institutions, behaviors – in terms of which, in each place, people actually represented themselves to themselves and to one another” (p. 58). Since no one can really perceive what someone else perceived, an attempt to understand, say, an actor or a victim is to understand the means with which they perceive. In other words, the task to understand other people's understanding is to explore what they perceive “with”. It is in this regard that concepts in the form of terms or phrases are relevant, since these are the primary means with which people express what they perceive.
Geertz (1983) suggests that there are generally two types of concepts that anthropologists are interested in. First are the experience-near concepts which people use spontaneously and colloquially. These are commonly employed in the everyday life and are explicitly used to articulate what one or his fellow feels, sees, hears, thinks, imagines, and so on. According to Geertz, it is due to this spontaneous and mundane nature that these types of concepts are not necessarily recognized as “concepts” at all by the people. The second type are what he refers to as experience-distant concepts. These are categories that a specialist, such as an anthropologist, employ in order to organize a description or a claim. It is not a concept that the people use verbally or explicitly but a proposed category that is defined to characterize a broader thought reflected from experience-near concepts. So, examples to differentiate the two would be “poor” as an experience-near concept while “social stratification” is experience-distant. In this study, the foundational data are the experience-near concepts of the Agusan Manobo in relation to the different forms of pangajow killings.

For Alexander Hinton (2003), as people are subjected to different social, political, and economic processes, they re-apply their cultural concepts. This idea about the relationship between cultural concepts and structural processes has been applied to studying violence in what Hinton (1998) refers to as the “genocidal bricolage”. Here, Hinton argues that the actors in the Cambodian genocide re-purposed their cultural concepts such as of honor, shame, and face while adapting to the dominant ideological themes during such period.

Hinton's assertion that people reinterpret their local frames of knowledge as they adapt to structural processes is inspired by the concept of ‘bricolage’ by Claude Levi-Strauss
This idea refers to a process of drawing upon a preexisting set of resources as people continue to adapt to changing circumstances. Levi-Strauss applied the concept in arguing about mythical thought as a process of building “structured sets by means of a structured set... it builds ideological castles out of the debris of what was once a social discourse” (1966:21). People make meanings of new conditions using preexisting ‘tools’, which, in this case, are cultural concepts. Instead, they apply the concepts under new conditions through “addition, deletion, substitution, and transposition” (Chandler 2007: 206). They re-purpose their local frames of knowledge dynamic as they continue to be subjected to different social, political, and economic processes.

In the case of the actors in the Cambodian genocide, Hinton shows that the communist cadres were not merely acting out of their submission to fundamental communist principles but also used their own local frames of knowledge in adapting to the prevailing dogma. The cultural concept of face, for example, highlights the importance of one's social image from the evaluation of other members of the community based on honor and power. In order to secure a place in the social order, one has to maintain his face and engage in mutual face-saving with others. Although the communist ideology considered rank and face as regressive since these are “manifestations of private property”, the cadres explained their killings as an act of face-saving which provided an advantage for gaining a better position, more food, and access to other resources.

Hinton's approach to understanding a violence using the concept of 'bricolage' is very helpful in understanding actor motivation in relation to acts of violence. In showing that the
actors are not “homogeneous automatons” who blindly obey orders, his study implies that both the structural processes that were dominant during such period such as the communist ideological themes as well as their cultural concepts are equally relevant factors in the genocide (Hinton 1998:33). Instead, people engage in their own process of reinterpreting their experiences using cultural concepts as “tools” that are readily available in engaging with and adapting to new conditions brought about by structural processes.

As much as understanding perpetrator motivation is highly relevant in the study of violence, it is equally important to understand violence from perspectives other than the actors’. Other members of concerned communities especially among marginalized and indigenous groups also engage in reinterpreting cultural concepts in relation to social, political, and economic processes. Phillip Bourgois (1995) refers to this as a “culture of resistance” which is a “complex and conflictual web of beliefs, symbols, and modes of interaction, values, and ideologies” that is produced by people as they reinvent concepts of dignity and respect within social and economic contexts (p. 8). This reinvention is a form of resistance since it emerges in opposition to socio-economic marginalization. People still assert their agency in redeeming a kind of social importance (that is, respect) that they could have achieved under improved conditions. In Bourgois’s study, he shows that the people's views on underground economies such as drug dealing are shaped within this culture of resistance. Drug dealing is viewed to provide the means for people to search for respect and dignity and such framing is one way that members of the concerned communities make sense of the destructive and violent behavior associated with these underground activities.
Another study on violence that implies this dynamics between cultural concepts and structural processes is Mahmood Mamdani’s (2001) book on the Rwandan genocide where he particularly gives focus on the importance of historical contexts. In *When Victims Become Killers*, the Rwandan genocide was understood based on how local conceptualizations of social identities among the Tutsi and the Hutu eventually developed as extreme oppositions within various historical processes. Mamdani views this extreme antagonism between the two groups in terms of these opposing concepts of social identities that developed though colonialism, the expansion of the Tutsi military power under the British colonial rule, marginalization of Hutu religion, and the Hutu social revolution. For Mamdani, these processes contributed to how local perceptions of Hutu and Tutsi identities changed through time which is, for him, was one of the most crucial factors that led to the genocide.

This link between cultural concepts and processes will be presented in this study through a discussion on how the Agusan Manobo express their views and understanding of the different forms of *pangajow* killings. I will focus on the cultural concepts that they employed to talk about slave raiding, prestige killing, revenge killing, and armed revolt. These concepts include *banua* in relation to ‘community’, *ginhawa* in relation to emotion (specifically pain and rage), and *bantug* in relation to respect. I will also present how the use of these cultural concepts in the context of *pangajow* killings provide perspectives on how the Agusan Manobo situate themselves in their present conditions. It was revealed that the relevant conditions include economic poverty, the imposition of land laws from the colonial period until the creation of the modern Philippine state, and the native-migrant social dynamics. I
intend to contribute to developing this framework in this study by incorporating a methodological consideration in terms of explicitly presenting the process of determining the salient cultural concepts. Also, by presenting how the link between cultural concepts and *pangajow* killings reveals relevant perspectives of the Agusan Manobo on their current socio-political and economic conditions, I will be able to present a support for the equal relevance of cultural concepts and structural processes in viewing acts of violence among indigenous and marginalized groups. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the methodological considerations of this study. I will discuss the coding process of the data and the limitations that were involved in the inquiry.
CHAPTER 3
Research Methods

In understanding how the Agusan Manobo view *pangajow* killings, I considered highly important the cultural concepts that they used to talk about the practice. Specifically, the inquiry was based on two main questions. First, what salient cultural concepts do the Agusan Manobo use to discuss the different forms of *pangajow* killings? Second, what does the link made between the cultural concepts and the killing reveal about how the Agusan Manobo view their present conditions? In this chapter, I intend to present the methods I employed in my inquiry to answer these questions. I will also discuss the process of coding the data I gathered to come up with the salient cultural categories which become the main focus of this study. Some methodological limitations will also be discussed along with the means through which I addressed such conditions.

Participant-observation is generally “the central and defining method of research in cultural anthropology” (Dewalt & Dewalt 1998). A researcher takes the part of an observer who, at the same time, participates in the events, rituals, interactions, and the daily routine of the subjects of study. This method is an important means to learn about explicit and, to a certain degree, implicit aspects of the social lives of the people. Having employed this method in this research enabled me to understand the social dynamics, colloquial utterances, and the employment of concepts in the everyday life of the people I intend to study. The
naturalistic setting in which these data were gathered provided rich contexts through which I can understand their responses to my queries.

Semi-structured interviewing is another method I used in gathering the data. Given my interest in the concepts that the people use to understand the practice, open-ended questions allowed the participants to bring up their own ideas. To an extent, it also drew my inquiry to topics or domains that end up to be very relevant to the study but which I have not initially considered. This is a very important way to gather the necessary data, since the cultural concepts have to be from the participants rather than the researcher.

For 13 days, I lived in two contiguous municipalities\(^4\) of Agusan del Sur to conduct the fieldwork. It was during this fieldwork that I conducted participant-observation and semi-structured interviews. Both of these communities have a composition of more than 85% Agusan Manobo residents, one of which had recently experienced a revenge killing attack. Although the other community does not have recent revenge killing cases, many of its residents are either relatives of someone killed due to revenge killing or actors in revenge killings years ago. These are both predominantly-Christian communities with different denominations. Migrants of Visayan descent comprise the minority. Although they are the least in terms of numbers, the migrants are the speaker of the Visayan language which serves primarily as the medium in economic transactions, academic instructions, and Christian activities. The dominance of this migrant language in these areas has a long historical root.

\(^4\) A municipality is a local town within a province. In order to protect the identity of the informants of this study, I will not disclose the exact location. Disclosing such information could potentially bring harm to informants especially the actors.
that has made bilingualism widespread. Coming from a Visayan descent, I was able to communicate with the key informants in my vernacular.

I first gained entry to the Agusan Manobo communities in Agusan del Sur two years prior to this fieldwork. The university department where I used to work offered a free summer class for indigenous students in a town in Agusan as part of its summer field school. There was a recent revenge killing attack in one of the areas at that time, and I overheard some students talking about how some of their relatives had to evacuate to another town out of fear. I joined their conversations and asked details about the attack, the practice, and how they feel about it. Their responses were disheartening. I was fortunate to pursue this personal concern when I received a research grant as part of the peace-building development program of the Hiroshima University. It was through this previous research project, in which I also did fieldwork in multiple Agusan Manobo communities, that I first met a number of the key informants in this study and my primary contact persons.

I interviewed 31 Agusan Manobo as key informants in this research. Most of them are around 50 years old (mean age: 49.68)\textsuperscript{5}. They were chosen through purposive and chain-referral sampling. The purposive sampling aimed at key informants with specialized knowledge in relation to the topic. This included local historians, traditional leaders, dispute arbitrators, state officials, ritual performers, traditional healers or shamans, former pangajow actors, victims, and witnesses. It was based on the referral of these informants that I was able

\textsuperscript{5} Most of the data on age, however, were based on estimates. The Agusan Manobo neither celebrate birthdays nor are aware of their birthdates. I made the estimation based on who they said was the Philippine president when they were just kids or whether the Japanese (World War II period) were still in the Philippines when they were born.
to identify additional key informants. As much as I tried to gather female perspectives on this practice, most of the women I approached would refuse an interview saying they have no idea of the topic or that their husbands or their fathers know better. Out of the 31 informants, only 5 were female: two grade school teachers, two wives of traditional leaders, and one serving as an appointed local government officer. Three of the informants explicitly admitted to having waged a pangajow previously. Five other informants were said to have waged one by some residents but appeared anxious about or uncomfortable\(^6\) with pointing it out directly. These 8 informants who were associated to having conducted actual pangajow were also considered as 'victims'. After all, it was because of an offense committed against them that triggered their retaliatory attack. (I believe it is not helpful to strictly identify the members of the community in terms of being a 'victim', 'actor', or 'witness' since these categories overlap especially based on how the Agusan Manobo view 'victims', which I will discuss in Chapter 6.) Eight of the informants lost a family member or a relative to a pangajow attack. There were 10 traditional leaders out of the 29 informants, 6 of whom were considered as tribal chieftains in their respective areas; the other 4 leaders were referred to as manigaon or elderly advisers who work with the chieftain in arriving at decisions or agreements regarding disputes. Although it was previously required for a chieftain to be a baylan (shaman or traditional healer), only 3 of the 6 tribal chieftains practice shamanic healing rituals. Four of these chieftains are considered as state officials for being recognized by their local

\(^6\) By anxious and uncomfortable, I am referring to gestures or indirect messages that imply unwillingness to disclose further information. This included instances when the informant would change the topic when asked about previous experiences relating to pangajow. Some would prefer to just give a grin and discontinue talking while refusing to establish any eye contact.
government unit as an “Indigenous Peoples (IP) representative” who represent their fellow Manobo during council sessions. I considered as local historians the 9 elderly informants aged 60 and above along with 2 younger informants in their 40s who were very keen on historical details. The rest of the informants were Agusan Manobo who have experienced a pangajow attack directly or indirectly.

All of the informants were given a pack of goods worth around 75 pesos (or 2 dollars) at the end of the interview. In these communities where many people can hardly afford three meals a day, the pack can provide at least seven meals for a family of three. The average duration of the interviews was 75 minutes with two 5-minute breaks in between, usually for the snacks and coffee that I prepared. Most of these interviews were conducted at the residence of the informant. Others were held in spaces considered as common such as a traditional leader's front yard. The choice of the interview locations was based on the preference of the informant in order to keep him or her feel at ease.

The initial part of the interviews focused on the overall view of the informant on their current situation. Since one of my main interests in the inquiry is the relation between the cultural concepts used to talk about pangajow killings and the structural process, this phase is relevant in determining what processes or situations the informants considered most relevant to them. Depending on what domain they would focus on, this could be about their socio-economic, socio-political, or social conditions. I casually started the conversations with questions such as “How's life?” to which the most common reply was “Still poor” and a grin. I hoped to understand through this part of the inquiry the present preoccupation of the
informants. Most of the time, it was about their livelihood and their ability to provide food for the family. Others also considered as a major issue the social discrimination that indigenous residents experience from migrants. I formulated follow up questions based on an informant's response. At the end of this initial part, I explicitly asked them what issues they consider as most pressing and how they see these addressed. I consider these aspects very relevant in my study, because these provide important contexts in their views on practices such as revenge killings. An underlying assertion in this regard is that pangajow killings are not an isolated phenomenon but is highly linked to multiple aspects of their lives.

The second phase of the inquiry focused on the informant's view on pangajow. I started by asking what they understand from the word pangajow. Most of the responses focused on the causes of a pangajow. Informants with direct experiences in relation to these killings would often proceed with a narrative of their experience and use the story in defining the word pangajow. Regarding the narratives on pangajow practices that were based on handed-down knowledge such as slave raids, I verified the accuracy of the information by searching for consistency from multiple sources. I deliberately framed general questions so as not to limit the response of the informant to a specific domain. For example, others would relate the practice to spiritual aspects while others would focus on its socio-political features. I will pursue whatever domain the informant was interested in by formulating follow up questions based on the responses. All of the quotes from the informants that were presented in this paper were translated from the actual Visayan and Visayan-Manobo sentences.
I took note of salient concepts that were used by informants during interviews. I would later ask an informant to elaborate on it by applying it to a situation (hypothetical or actual) and by using the word in a sentence. Aside from these categories that I gathered from interviews, the field notes I wrote every day from my participant-observation were also helpful in recording specific situations where particular categories or concepts were employed in the everyday context.

The most crucial part in entering these communities to conduct a research with this kind of topic is the researcher's primary contact person or field guide. The reputation of my guide and his relation with the members of the community were very important in establishing the good intent of my research. One could spend months or years in these communities but would still struggle getting people to talk about killings without someone credible enough to guarantee that the inquiry will not get them into trouble. My field guides for this research were the same field guides I had during my previous research project.
One of the fieldwork guides, who was also a key informant, was Datu Leo. He is an Agusan Manobo traditional leader (locally referred to as 'tribal chieftain' or Datu) and a regional coordinator for a non-profit organization focusing on the rights of rural farmers. A friend of mine who is Datu Leo's fellow officer in this non-profit organization served as my link in meeting him. As we have previously worked together in my previous research project, Datu Leo readily understood my current research goals. It was through him that I was introduced to a number of other Agusan Manobo leaders, elderly residents, local historians, and shamans. His family's good reputation, his leadership skills, and his involvement in addressing pressing concerns in many Agusan Manobo communities made him a credible person to guarantee the value of my research and my intent as a researcher. He and his wife opened their house to me for a number of nights. I have also stayed in other houses in the community – one was of another tribal chieftain, a government official, and a small-scale farmer, all of whom are within Datu Leo's network. During the day, Datu Leo would introduce me to a group of residents after which he would go on with his busy schedule. I would then be left with the residents, engaging in casual conversations most of the time as they conducted their daily chores.

My presence was not so much of a shock, since I have engaged with most of these people before and lived in their area for a couple of days during my previous research project. With rice farming as the primary source of livelihood for both men and women, people were at home most of the day. Working hours at the farm start early in the morning.

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7 All of the names in this research, for security and confidentiality purposes, were changed into pseudonyms. The word Datu is a title for a traditional leader.
(around 5:00 am) until before the scalding midday sun (past 10:00 am). Some would resume around four in the afternoon. Between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, most of the adults would gather in someone's house or a small store to chat. When they ran out of topic to discuss, they would often just sit back comfortably and watch as people and motorcycles pass by. Those who were already familiar with my research topic would voluntarily open up a discussion of what they know based on what they have seen, heard, or done in the past. Some of the stories were so interesting that it would even attract the kids playing in the vicinity. It was also because of this community set up that I found it challenging to conduct a one-on-one interview. As people tend to gather most of the time, an interview with one key informant could eventually lead to a focus group discussion. Although these discussions were very helpful and insightful (especially for some informants who tend to be more fluent when in a group), it was a challenge to get an individual perspective on the topic. To address this, I would tell informants prior to an interview that my goal is to gather only his or her own personal view. I also frame questions with an emphasis on the informant's perspective by using phrases such as “For you...”, “In your opinion...” at the start and at the end of each question. This would help remind the informant of the goal I cited prior to the start of our conversation especially when a number of people have already gathered around us.

Another key informant and fieldwork guide was Benjo, an Agusan Manobo student who will soon graduate from college. Benjo attended the summer class I previously mentioned and stood out because of his enthusiasm in sharing his knowledge on their customs and beliefs. He learned most of these from his father who is a tribal chieftain and a
shaman. Many of Benjo's relatives had previously waged pangajow killings in the past. He became my link to residents with this kind of background. Many of his relatives were also victims of revenge killings in the past. Because of the strength of kinship ties in these communities, Benjo was able to credibly assure his relatives who became research informants that my research goals are as what I have described them to be. Many of those who had previously waged a pangajow would become interested, for they consider my inquiry as an opportunity to let others hear their side. (By 'others', they usually refer to their lowland neighbors who they believe have often wrongfully judged them.) Some would also express enthusiasm with the thought of their photos being featured in a book. During my stay in Benjo's town, I spent the nights at a migrant couple's house. They were grade school teachers who contributed to Benjo's academic expenses, since Benjo's father and two mothers cannot financially support all of their 15 children. It was the informants themselves who suggested that staying at a migrant's house in the evening would be better for my safety. At the time of my fieldwork, most of Agusan del Sur province was on red alert status due to ongoing military operations against communist rebels.

All of the interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder. Since informal focus group discussions were spontaneous, there were 2 out of 5 which were not recorded. During the coding, field notes were used in place for these 2 informal group discussions that did not have verbatim transcripts. I transcribed these interviews within two weeks after they were conducted. A total of 32.49 hours of transcripts were transcribed. There were two processes involved in determining the overarching categories. First, I gathered all the key terms from
the transcripts of the interviews as well as the notes from the participant-observation and informal focus group discussions. I gathered these key terms through a line-by-line coding which I conducted using a software, Nvivo. The coding scheme involved is often referred to as “in vivo coding” which means that the terms used as codes were from the actual words used by the informants (Corbin & Strauss 1996: 105). I considered as a key term an important subject in a statement or a paragraph which connects to multiple other terms beyond the specific utterance in which it was used. It is not uncommon that a coded line had more than one associated key term. I collected 71 key terms from the line-by-line coding which I compared with the result of the word frequency count. This juxtaposition narrowed the key terms down to 64 after eliminating the synonyms and some key terms with minimal frequency count.

The second part was the integration of the 64 key terms to identify the overarching categories. This part required that I determine which key terms are related. I determined the relation between key terms based on how the informants used them during the interviews, informal focus group discussions, and in the everyday interactions from participant-observation. For easier organization, I classified the 64 key terms into nouns, verbs, and adjectives and made the links between them based on 6 general classifications: noun-noun, noun-adjective, noun-verb, verb-verb, verb-adjective, and adjective-adjective. In determining, for instance, a noun-noun link between the 64 codes, I will pair two nouns and use the initial coding results to determine whether the two were linked in the narratives. Once a code is linked with another, I will proceed in pairing it with another code. The number of
links between one key word with the other key words determined its density as a node in the diagram. I classified codes that were linked between 1 to 3 other codes as level 1 nodes in the diagram which are the smallest in size. For example, the code *pula* or red was linked to the codes *bantug* (respect) and *bagani* (warrior chief) as reflected in the narratives that describe the *bantug* of warrior chiefs to be signified by the color red such as a red headdress. Level 5 codes represent the biggest nodes in the diagram for having a dense link with more than 10 other codes. As the diagram shows, these biggest nodes are the three cultural concepts: breath, community, and respect. This diagram, therefore, presents how I ended up focusing on these three concepts in this study.

I used Gephi, an open-source software for network visualization and analysis, to plot the links into a Fruchterman-Reingold layout which is a graph that simulates a system of mass particles (Fruchterman & Reingold 1991). The relevance of this network visualization aid was that it uses an algorithm to plot the density of each key term or, technically, a node as it links to other terms. The density is represented through the size of a circle. The size of the circle increases as more links are established in one key term or node. The 64 key terms are presented in the diagram below along with the links between each one.

Three key terms emerged as the most salient in terms of the number of the established links: *banua* which could mean community, land, house, or territory; *bantug* which is related to respect; and, *ghinha* which literally means “breath” in relation to a concept of emotion, specifically pain and rage. The category of *banua* encompasses both concrete (i.e., land and house) and abstract (i.e., collectivity and security) terms. I chose 'community' to translate it
since majority of the informants considered *komunidad* (loan Spanish word for 'community') as a close synonym for *banua*. I will discuss this key concept and its relation to the views on *pangajow* killings in the succeeding chapter. Meanwhile, Chapter 5 of this paper will focus on the concept of *bantug*, as respect based on how it is used in the narratives. The concept of *ginhawa* or breath will be the focus in Chapter 6. I refer to the category *ginhawa* or 'breath' as a domain of 'emotion' due to its relations with nodes relating to states or feelings such as pain, rage, and peace of mind.
Figure 4: Network visualization of the key terms from in vivo coding
CHAPTER 4

Banua or “Community”

One day, one of my field guides decided to visit a shaman after his medication failed to improve the condition of his swollen eyelid. I accompanied him and was able to have a conversation with the shaman's wife while we were waiting for the shaman to return from fishing in a nearby village. Upon sharing her views on the status of today's Agusan Manobo women, she mentioned that the lack of female participation in pangajow killings is due to physical constraints. For her, women, especially after having given birth, do not have the physical endurance and strength necessary to conduct a successful attack in another territory. “But if someone attacks a woman in her house,” she added, “she will definitely fight back. That's a tagbanua [a territorial spirit].”

The statement of the shaman's wife is an example of how a local concept is applied in talking about the practice of pangajow. In this chapter, I will present one of the salient cultural concepts used among the Agusan Manobo when discussing pangajow killings: banua or “community”. As I discussed in Chapter 3, banua emerged as one of the overarching themes employed by the research informants. This concept is most commonly used to characterize bygone forms of pangajow killings such as slave raiding and prestige killing. I argue that the use of the concept of banua (“community”) to characterize these old forms of pangajow killings reflects how the informants viewed collectivity as a means of addressing  

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8 The tagbanua is a class of spirit who consider the forest as their territory and are “neither kindly nor unkindly spirits, and without guile, provided a proper deference is shown them when we trespass upon their domains” (Garvan 1931:44).
the challenges during such historical periods and the lack of this same sense of collectivity today amid their struggle from the interrelated issues stemming from the imposition of land laws in indigenous communities and the arrival of migrants. To contextualize this argument, I will first present a brief historical discussion related to these old forms of pangajow killings (i.e., slave raiding and prestige killing). I will then show how the informants discussed slave raiding and prestige killing using the concept of community. A summary will be presented at the end of the chapter.

The word banua is an Austronesian term which means that it is shared among other aboriginal language speakers such as in Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Hawaii, Samoa, and Fiji (Blust & Trussel 2015). Variations of the term include benua (Malay), vanua (Fijian), fanua (Samoan), and honua (Hawaiian). The Austronesian roots of the term implies that the word is already part of the Agusan Manobo language even before the arrival of Muslim missionaries and Spanish colonizers in the island. Based on the general connotation of the term in the Austronesian Comparative Dictionary, banua is an “inhabited land, territory supporting the life of the community”.

I use “community” to translate the Agusan Manobo banua based on how the majority of the informants in this study preferred to reword it as komunidad, a loan word from Spanish (comunidad) which literally translates as community. Since the interviews were not in the Manobo language, informants often used non-Manobo words such as grupo (group), lugar (place), komunidad (community), barangay (local government unit), and balay (house) to translate banua. This term, banua, emerged as one of the overarching categories that the
Agusan Manobo employed in making sense of *pangajow* based on the coding process of all the key terms used by the informants. These key terms were coded from the transcripts of all semi-structured interviews and field notes from ethnographic observations and participant-observation. (I discussed the details of classifying these key terms in Chapter 3.) In the network visualization diagram below, it is shown how the concept of community is linked with a number of interrelated key words in the study. The dense links established with this key term imply that it is a salient category used by the informants to express their views in relation to the different forms of killings discussed here. The relevance of this concept will be further presented in the next sections where I will discuss how it is used in characterizing slave raiding, prestige killing, and “red pangayaw”.

As shown in the diagram below, a total of 31 key terms relate to *banua*. Collectivity is a feature that commonly ties these key terms. One concept of *banua*, as will be discussed below, is in terms of a form of security by belonging to a collective unit such as house, kin, immediate family, village members, Lumad, and village allies. I will also discuss how this emphasis on collectivity in the discussion of prestige killings and slave raids relate to the need for leadership in a community. I will then show what this link between the concept of *banua* to prestige killing and slave raiding relates to the perspectives of the Agusan Manobo on their present socio-political conditions.
Prestige Killing and Slave Raiding: A Short Historical Background

Slave raiding in the Philippines even before the arrival of the Spanish colonizers in the 16th century was already part of political economies that require intensive agricultural production, animal husbandry, and foreign trade of marine resources (Junker 1999). The
demand for a supply of slaves, therefore, was mainly maintained by lowland chiefdoms with large-scale maritime and agricultural trading. Given that the central political economies in Mindanao were in the lowland but the needed resources were in the uplands, lowland groups had to either build networks with the non-Islamic indigenous groups who were pushed further into the highlands (at least starting upon the arrival of Islam in the 13th century) or engage in battles with them to obtain the necessary material and human resources. In other indigenous communities during pre-Hispanic times in Mindanao, slave raiding was one of the most common sources of inter-tribal hostilities next to wife-stealing or the practice of abducting women from other villages to become wives (Manuel 2000). Colonial accounts in the early 20th century suggest that raiding was not just for economic purposes; raids were also conducted to capture individuals to be offered as human sacrifices during rituals (Cole 1913, Garvan 1931). The arrival of the Spanish missionaries starting around the 17th century was claimed by some historians to have somehow caused a decrease in the number of slave raids due to the conversion of a number of non-Islamic indigenous groups to Christianity (e.g., Paredes 2013, Schreurs 2000). Such claims, however, do not seem to apply in the entire island of Mindanao which was, at the Spanish colonial period, a predominantly Muslim territory. Slave trading and slave raiding were still observed at the start of the American occupation in the country (Hurley 1997).

Cases of slave trading and slave raiding in the entire island was said to have started to wane later on during the American colonial rule which was between 1898-1946. General Leonard Wood declared a decree for the abolishment of slavery in the 1920s which was said
to be acknowledged by many local rulers (Hurley 1997). Although calls for the abolishment of slavery had been initiated prior to this, Wood's established ties with the Islamic indigenous communities who were the most dominant groups in slave raiding and trading was thought to be one factor that made the reinforcement of his order more efficient.

Prestige killings had also been noted in colonial accounts as a means of establishing the status of warrior chiefs who served as the leaders in the communities (Garvan 1931: 204). The prominence of warrior chiefs among indigenous groups is reflected in epic tales and songs which recount how they conquer neighboring territories, supernatural figures, and foreign forces with their physical and magical skills (Scott 1994). Spanish accounts indicated that these songs were often used by raiding parties prior to their departure in order to incite courage, bravery, and boldness among the raiders (Alcina in Junker 1999).

When the demographic composition of Mindanao changed since the 1950s after the establishment of the Philippine state which sponsored mass-migration to Mindanao, the Christian migrants eventually became the majority in the island and churches became almost omnipresent. The conversion of a number of Agusan Manobo to Christianity is often linked by the residents as one factor that caused the demise of prestige killings and the prominence of the warrior chiefs. The bible dictates that killing is a mortal sin and will doom the killer or anyone who patronizes him to eternal damnation.

In a related note, it can be pointed out that the decline of prestige killings is not due to the influence of Christianity per se but to the arrival of migrants from other parts of the country. Conversion to Christianity already started since the Spanish era yet many Agusan
Manobo were known to burn down and abandon Spanish churches and pueblo settlements in refusal to accept the new forms of leadership (Olson 1967). To some extent, it was the penetration of the migrants that effectively facilitated the Christian conversion (Montillo-Burton 1985).

Another factor that the informants pointed to regarding the decline of warrior chiefs and their prestige killings was the introduction of the western educational system by the Americans. Aside from churches, academic schools were also established in many indigenous communities during the American occupation from 1891-1946. According to one informant, “When one becomes educated, one will realize that these [pangajow] acts are signs of ignorance. They did not know how to read or write. All they know is how to hold a weapon.”

As much as Christianity and the western educational system influenced the status of the bagani system, structural reforms imposed on indigenous communities were also crucial in changing the standards of leadership hence affecting the prominence of warrior chiefs. After the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, constitutional initiatives to recognize the rights of indigenous communities were set forth. The state's recognition of indigenous leaders was by means of declaring who the “tribal chieftains” were in their respective areas (in the same manner as having specific officials running respective local government units). With the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, an institution called the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) was established. One of NCIP's tasks is to make sure that one local government unit has only one state-recognized tribal chieftain who will represent his
indigenous constituents in local state affairs. In order to become a state-recognized tribal chieftain, one only needs to prove one's descent from a warrior chief. This process is apparently in high contrast with how the people evaluate potential leaders through skills rather than a mere basis on genealogy.

**Banua as Collective Security in Slave Raids**

Although none of the informants in this study experienced or witnessed a slave raid first-hand, their narratives and characterization of slave raiding still provide a view on how they understand this form of *pangajow* killing. Most of these narratives where recounted freely by the informants. It often emerged in the discussions about their pressing issues (which was the first phase of the semi-structured interviews) where some informants would reckon how the problems they are experiencing today would have compared with the problems that their forefathers faced. I aim to present in this section how the Agusan Manobo used the concept of community in relation to collective security in their descriptions of slave raiding. I separated these narratives on slave raids into two different periods. The first part of this discussion will focus on descriptions of slave raids which occurred before the 1950s. I find it relevant to organize the narratives based on this timeline to point out an emerging pattern in the data that shows how the use of “community” in describing slave raids shifted its emphasis from collective security to more confined, domestic security. I will relate this shift to a socio-political process with the intensified state-initiated migration to Mindanao starting in the 1950s.
Based on the informant narratives on slave raids, the term *banua* is used in the context of slave raiding in relation to a sense of collective security from raiders. It specifically reflects a collective strategizing to protect the children who were said to be the main target of the raids. The word was not applied when referring to the group who conducts the raid. 'Children', 'village', and 'family' are one of the key terms associated with informant narratives on slave raiding. The interconnections between these key terms in the narratives reflected a view on this type of *pangajow* as an attack against a group of families (which make up a village) with the primary intent of abducting their children hence the need for security. In one conversation with a 60-year old farmer who described his current problems by way of comparing it with his great grandfather's, he used *banua* in the following context.

“It was easier before. They [his great grandfather] just have a group [banua] occupying a vast land with only about 3 to 4 families. When threatened, they would all gather in a big house designed with traps and weapons [for attackers]. Threats were usually triggered by a group who would capture their children to be sold as slaves. It might sound terrifying [to you] but it was all fine as long as you are part of a group [banua]... Today, I have a problem. They [neighbors] have a problem. It's the same problem really but mine is mine, his is his.”

The informant used *banua* in the context of slave raiding as one group who shares the same threat (i.e., the presence of raiders) and addresses it collectively (e.g., constructs a structure for the entire group's protection). In this sense, *pangajow* in the form of slave raiding was viewed as an attack against a group of families as a whole rather than as disparate units. The social dynamics within the group assures one of a form of security from slave raiders. The concept of collectivity associated with *banua* in the context of slave raiding also shows how their views on this type of killing is more focused on who receives
the attack rather than the attacker. This may imply that most of the slave raids in these areas were conducted against them instead of them doing it to other groups.

Since slave raids targeted vulnerable upland groups for resource exploitation, it made sense how the Agusan Manobo who were occupying most of the highlands used the collective nature of “community” as a form of security. At least in this context, it was neither primarily focused on the physical territory of the group nor on the socio-political structure of the community but on how belonging and working within a group secures one from imperative threats. This emphasis on security in using the concept of community in relation to slave raiding is also apparent in this statement from another informant.

“You wouldn't think there were hermits in those mountains [pointing to a distant mountain range], would you? There are, but not when there were still raiders during the Spanish time. You have to be part of a community.”

Informants in this study, however, still cited a few slave raids between the 1970s-1980s. These specific decades may have been more distinctly remembered by the informants since this was the period of the dictatorship under Ferdinand Marcos and the imposition of the martial law in the country. I still refer to these attacks as slave raids since the informants described them to be about abducting individuals to be sold as slaves to landlords who needed vast human labor to till their farms. I observed that narratives about these later raids were no longer focused on a wider collectivity but on families as separate units. One informant described a raid in a nearby village in the 1980s by saying, “I heard there was this kid who was captured after they [the raiders] butchered his parents inside their house [banua]”. This was similar to the description of another informant who described another
case around the same decade:

“They [the raiders] defeated and killed the boy’s parents, so he [the boy] was taken to Bukidnon [a neighboring province] as a slave... It was very pitiful for parents that time. They either had to surrender their children to the raiders or get slaughtered protecting them.”

In these later cases, the informants no longer invoked the concept of community in terms of collective security. The word *banua* was still applied but, this time, as an equivalent of the word “house” or “where someone lives”. Today, “house” is the most common connotation when one says the word *banua*. Since it is common among the Agusan Manobo to have children living with their parents even when they already have children of their own, “family” and “house” may still relate to a small community consists of cooperating members with shared interests. However, the reference to house, a much smaller unit, in describing these later slaves raids reflected a shift on the boundaries that delineate the extent of collectivity from which one may draw security.

During the period of these later raids, the entire Mindanao island witnessed an influx of migrants from other major islands in the country – Luzon and Visayas. This government-initiated migration started in the 1950s, a few years after the Philippines gained independence from the United States. This migration peaked during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos which was from the year 1965 to 1986 (Rodil 1994). This initiative for sending migrants to Mindanao was sometimes thought to be a governmental tactic to neutralize the resistance coming primarily from Muslim groups in the island who strongly demanded for autonomy from the newly formed state. It was also believed to have been originally devised by the United States who, after declaring the Philippine independence, still
had a hegemonic presence in the country especially through the commonwealth government in the 1950s (Silva 2002). This migration drastically changed the demographic composition of Mindanao. In 1918, the island was around 60% Moro (Islamic indigenous groups) and around 25% Lumad (which includes the Manobo); by 1970, the Christian migrants were 62.2% of the total population, Muslims were 27.8%, and the Lumad were down to 6.7% (Silva 2002:6). Aside from these changes in the demographic distribution, the creation of the modern Philippine state also subsumed all indigenous communities to its political power. Their autonomy was not recognized constitutionally until 1997 through the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA).

So, as the Agusan Manobo areas became more heterogeneous and as the Agusan Manobo struggle to keep their autonomy, the need to localize or limit more exclusively the source of security seems understandable. The collective security apparent in their great grandfathers' stories during the slave raids became limited to one's family and house today. As one informant mentioned,

“Since the migrants came to our place, the relationship between neighbors changed. Before, when a wild boar is captured, its meat will be evenly distributed to each of the houses. People will gather around and be grateful to the hunter. But, when they [the migrants] came, they brought with them the [weighing] scale. Now, every meat has to be placed on a scale, and you have to pay for every numbered line. When they have food, they keep it to themselves. Then, they will call us lazy because of this tendency to expect that foods ought to be shared. That's because how our fathers did it and they lived harmoniously. Unlike today. So, now, when one had successfully trapped a boar or a deer, he either sells it to the market for scale or just keep it to his family.”

As the Agusan Manobo continue to adapt to the changing social dynamics in their
areas especially with the abrupt rise of the migrant population, the concept of community as used to describe slave raiding reveals how the informants view their present conditions. The lack of the same sense of collectivity today in the Agusan Manobo areas is made explicit by the contrast of the strong sense of community that they attributed to slave raids before. Later cases of slave raids, then, were viewed as attacks against families as separate units. A child's parents and their house became the primary source of security against raiders.

**Reinforcing Banua through Leadership in Prestige Killing**

While collective security is as relevant in the case of prestige killings as it is in slave raiding, another emphasis here is on how leadership is evaluated through warring skills. Warring skills of a leader signifies his capacity to reinforce the security of his people. As a number of informants mentioned, “Pangajow is leader versus leader”. This statement referred specifically to this form of killing. I use 'prestige killing' to translate this form of pangajow since the informants highlighted the need for a leader to acquire prestige – through skills and 'kills' – in order to maintain a community. Based on the narratives that I gathered in relation to prestige killings, the key words included Tagliyong (proper name), skills, and banua. In this form of killing, “community” is highlighted in terms of how rulers arise and how leadership is maintained. It is through the skills of a leader, which was evaluated through his success in prestige killings, that a community is fortified with security. In turn, it is through this security that the people become emphatic of the value of having to belong to a community.
Slave raiding and prestige killing are highly related practices since both persisted at almost entirely the same historical periods. In literature, these killings were linked in terms of how a warrior earns prestige based on the number of successful raids he led (e.g., Junker 1999, Paredes 2013). Earning a rank from successful raids required that the warrior chief defeated another warrior chief. Unlike slave raiding where raiders aim to capture as many slaves as possible, the success of a prestige killing is judged not just by the number of the kill but on the quality of the individual who was killed. This elite warrior rank is referred to as bagani or warrior chief which can only be attained by an adult male Manobo who has killed a certain number of people especially including other warrior chiefs. According to the informants, an Agusan Manobo warrior chief during the time of their great grandfathers must have killed at least 25 people. Majority of these 25 individuals must be male and must also be famous for their warrior skills. At least until the Japanese period (which was around the Second World War), these warriors were the only males in the Manobo communities who can wear a red head dress. When a bagani retires, he replaces this red head dress with black. Colonial accounts on the political organization in Manobo communities indicated that these warrior chiefs were the political rulers of the districts they occupied.

Almost all of the Agusan Manobo in this study discussed prestige killings by citing a bagani or warrior chief named Tagliyong. Tagliyong who rose to power in the 1950s was known for his power to change his appearance or to become invisible whenever he perceived a threat. He was also believed to be bulletproof and to have survived electrical shocks from military torture. He died in 2006 of old age. His remains in a glass coffin was said to have
not decomposed until today. His son, in one of the interviews I conducted, claimed that he witnessed his father's power as a tagulilong (someone who can physically transform or disappear at will) when a group of military men came looking for him. Recognizing it as a potential threat, his father disguised himself with a different face and voice before coming out of their house. This tagulilong skill earned him the name Tagliyong. The Agusan Manobo used the term abilidad to refer to this capacity. Abilidad, which is another loan Spanish word, literally means 'ability'. For the informants, this ability is both innate and learned. Even when one is born with a special ability, one cannot master it unless he has the experiences that will inspire his character to develop and practice it. In the case of Tagliyong, his being courageous and his persistent exposure to battles reinforced his tagulilong skills. Tagliyong, who seemed to be the prototype of a bagani or warrior chief in the narratives, became the head of a large group of Agusan Manobo occupying vast lands in the mountainous areas. A warrior chief in the 19th century would have between one hundred to three hundred slaves (Junker 1999). In Tagliyong's case, informants estimated the number of his sabande (slaves) to be over a hundred. He earned his prestige through satisfying a number of qualifications. Foremost, one has to be a male and a part of a warrior chief.
lineage. Informants mentioned though that one's lineage may be overlooked especially when one had already defeated a warrior chief. Another is that one has to have a unique skill that relates to invincibility. Aside from Tagliyong's ability to physically transform or disappear and his resistance to bullets and electrical conduction, informants also described him as someone who never showed fear in any circumstance, regardless of who the rival was. He could also squeeze out water from a coin or a nail. Like other warrior chiefs, he was also known to eat the liver of his defeated rival; doing so was said to increase one's invincibility.

The following statement is common in the narratives.

“During Tagliyong's time, the people did not fear any threat since no one would dare trespass their area. Even the Muslims fear Tagliyong. He killed dozens of other warrior chiefs, who wouldn't be intimidated by that? People from different areas would come and beg to be part of his territory [banua]. He was a great bagani.”

At least before the imposition of martial law in the Philippines from 1972 to 1986, Tagliyong's leadership continued to be very influential and his area continued to expand as he further ruled other territories and defeated other warrior chiefs. When a chief is defeated, the victorious rival would earn his territory and his people. Decades later, many Agusan Manobo would still remember this feat as evident in the narratives I collected.

The use of Tagliyong's story to describe prestige killings shows that the Agusan Manobo view this form of pangajow in terms of how the skills of a leader is grounded in his ability to secure a community by emerging victorious against other skillful leaders. The informants characterized prestige killing as a means of identifying which leaders were most equipped to secure a territory. In this sense, this form of pangajow was viewed as a
mechanism for socio-political organization through which male leaders were evaluated.

Informants in this study also cited the battle of Mactan as one of the biggest *pangajow* of a warrior chief in history. In this encounter, Ferdinand Magellan, leader of the Spanish expedition which was set to be the first voyage to circumnavigate the world in the 16th century, was killed by a local warrior chief in Visayas named Lapu-Lapu. Magellan would have been the first explorer to completely circumnavigate the globe had he not been defeated in Mactan (Pigafetta 1969). The killing of Magellan and his crew is often used as a powerful sign of resistance against colonizers among the natives in Philippine history textbooks. For the informants, this battle showed a consequence of trespassing a warrior chief’s territory and his strength to triumph against any powerful rival.

Today, literacy is an implied requirement for an Agusan Manobo to be recognized by the state as a chieftain. This state recognition of leadership is practically important since prior and informed consent from the natives regarding projects in indigenous communities such as mining and logging will only be processed through the state-recognized chieftain. The ability to read and write is therefore implicitly required to conduct such tasks and to efficiently function as part of the local government unit. This emphasis on skills relating to education and diplomacy, however, had long started since the American colonial administration employed educational policies as a tool in asserting its authority and in unifying diverse geopolitical units (Milligan 2005). This was particularly efficient in pacifying the Muslim region in Mindanao – which the Spanish colonizers failed – as Islamic communities started to assimilate with the state through public education (Silva 2002).
Today, the state-recognized tribal chieftains in the Agusan Manobo communities were noticeably getting younger and younger as educational attainment was given more emphasis in the ability to “lead” rather than the wisdom that comes with age such as in the case of the traditional Datu or the physical skills such as that of a warrior chief. Other tribal chieftains, like some of the informants in this study, were not recognized by the NCIP due to their failure to file or complete the necessary paperwork. However, they are still considered the leader by many Agusan Manobo residents for their skills in arbitrating disputes, ability to heal through traditional rituals and medicine, and in-depth knowledge of the Manobo tradition and history.

Summary

I presented in this chapter how pangajow in the form of prestige killing and slave raiding were characterized in terms of the concept of banua or community. In both these old forms of killings, the sense of collectivity was viewed as a strong source of security in facing the challenges during such periods. Slave raiding was viewed as a practice that made explicit the need for the Agusan Manobo to identify with one another due to the presence of common threats, primarily the raiders. In prestige killings, the skillful leadership of the warrior chiefs in relation to reinforcing collective security is another central element shown in the cultural concept of banua or community. With the effects of the colonial administration and the creation of the modern Philippine state especially in the context of shifting schemes for land ownership and acquisition through state laws and the native-migrant conflict brought about
by the state-initiated migration, “community” becomes more delineated or more localized. It becomes more apparent in the use of banua as “house” where one's immediate family becomes the primary source of security rather than a wider group. The strong sense of collectivity in the old forms of pangajow has become a contrast with what the informants viewed as a lack of a sense of community today. This is amid their present struggle from the interrelated issues stemming from the imposition of land laws in indigenous communities and the arrival of migrants.

It can be inferred from these data that the Agusan Manobo situates himself within a “community”, be it an entire village or a house, in interpreting the prevailing processes to which he, as an individual, is subjected. I believe that while people do have idiosyncratic ways of interpreting the structural processes that they experience, the limit to such idiosyncrasies is the “community” in which he chose to belong. It is in this sense that the rest of the salient cultural concepts and the narratives on pangajow killings will be discussed. The concepts and, in general, the practice of pangajow are constitutive of interpretations by individuals who are social beings.
A week before I arrived at one of my research field sites, one of my informants, Bud, lost his chainsaw to a group of three armed men who he believes were linked to a local militia. In a place like Agusan where logging is rampant, chainsaw is a highly valuable tool which costs around 30,000 pesos (around 700 US dollars). Needless to say, Bud was very upset for having lost one of his main sources of income. He receives cash every time someone rents his chainsaw. The rent fee depends on the value of the tree to be cut. When asked how he felt about the incident, he said,

“When people do things without regard to your feeling, your existence, it's like you're dead. It would make you wonder, 'Maybe I'm dead and they can no longer see me?’ Otherwise, why would someone disrespect you? You must be invisible... to get no respect.”

On the next day after the incident, Bud went all by himself to the village of the armed robbers and took the water buffalo that he first saw. “Whoever owned that carabao, they would understand that it's gone because of what their neighbors [the robbers] did,” he said. At the time of our conversation, that water buffalo was grazing on the green grass a few feet from us.

The case with Bud is one of the instances where I learned about some aspects of the concept of respect among the Agusan Manobo. Based on the coding process involving all the key terms from the transcripts and field notes (see Chapter 3), the category bantug which I relate to respect is one of the overarching categories that the Agusan Manobo employed in
talking about the different forms of pangajow, specially revenge killings and prestige killings. During the actual conversations, the informants used the Spanish word respeto to translate respect. This loan word has been used as part of their everyday language.

In this chapter, I will present how the Agusan Manobo used the concept of respect to talk about the different forms of pangajow killings. This will include an elaboration on the concept through aspects of prestige killing that have been introduced in Chapter 4 and a discussion on how it was applied in revenge killings. I argue that in using this cultural concept bantug (“respect”) to characterize old and new forms of pangajow killings, the Agusan Manobo showed that the concept is linked with what they viewed as the relevant conditions in these different periods. The emphasis on respect during prestige killings was viewed in terms of leadership which was one means of addressing what they viewed was a challenge at that time – the need for a leader to reinforce security against slave raiders. Meanwhile, the emphasis on respect today as applied in revenge killings focused on the need for compensation and resolution to restore an aggrieved party's socio-economic status. Below is a network visualization diagram that shows the links established between the category of bantug or respect and the other key terms in the study.
Bantug as Recognition for Warrior Chiefs

The link made between the concept of bantug as 'respect' and the practice of prestige killing was in terms of the warrior chief. During the colonial period, chieftainship in the Manobo communities falls to the warriors with elite ranks referred to as the bagani or the...
warrior chiefs (Garvan 1931: 36). Prestige killing was a venue for male Agusan Manobo to be evaluated as potential leaders through their warring skills. The practice of prestige killing can be seen to be more about prestige rather than killing, since killing was just a means to get prestige rather than the other way around. When asked to describe this form of *pangajow*, the most common reply was “it is leader versus leader”. Interested in what they would use for the term 'leader' in their own language (since informants actually used the loan word 'leader' in these contexts), a common translation was “it is *bantugan* versus *bantugan*”. Loosely translated, *bantugan* refers to someone with prestige or someone who is respected. This respect or prestige was in the form of the elite warrior rank as a *bagani*. As I mentioned in the discussion on prestige killings in Chapter 4, earning a rank from successful raids required that the warrior chief defeated another warrior chief. The success of a prestige killing is judged not only by the number of the kill but on the quality of the individual who was killed. During these points in history, the *bagani* warriors were the only males in the Manobo communities who can wear a red headdress, usually in a form of a handkerchief wrapped around the head and knotted on the forehead. When a *bagani* retires, he replaces this red head dress with black. The warrior chiefs also led slave raiding in other communities or simply order his armed men to do so for him. These data were based on the knowledge of the informants handed down to them by their elders. These information appear consistent with the colonial accounts (Cole 1913, Garvan 1931).

When asked to explain what *bantug* means, informants would often explain it as a quality of “being known” or “recognized”. Using the rank of a warrior chief to explain what
the word *bantug* means, one informant said, “If you're a *bantugan*, people don't mess with you because they know your worth.” In this sense, worth was referred to the chief's warring skills, his resources, and the extent of his influence in terms of followers, slaves, and territory. Further, it was explained that one does not become a leader unless the people attribute value, worth, or respect to him as a capable leader.

Tagliyong, the warrior chief introduced in Chapter 4, was the most common example of a *bantugan* or respected leader among the informants. He earned the status through his warring skills, supernatural abilities, and the extent of his followers and his territory. He was believed to have the ability to become invisible at will, the speed to dodge or catch bullets, the strength to survive electrical shocks, among others.

> “During Tagliyong's time, the people did not fear any threat since no one would dare trespass their area. Even the Muslims fear Tagliyong. He killed dozens of other warrior chiefs, who wouldn't be intimidated by that? People from different areas would come and beg to be part of his territory [banua]. He was a great *bagani*.”

One aspect in the way that the Agusan Manobo informants viewed prestige killing using *bantug* then is that the skills of a leader is grounded in his ability to secure a community by emerging victorious against other skillful leaders during prestige killings. The informants characterized prestige killing as a means of identifying which leaders were most equipped to secure a territory. This view on prestige killings is related to how the informants viewed the challenges during such times. As one informant said,

> “It was easier before. They [his great grandfather] just have a group [banua] occupying a vast land with only about 3 to 4 families. When threatened, they would all gather in a big house designed with traps and weapons [for attackers]. Threats were usually triggered by a group who would capture
their children to be sold as slaves.

As the informants viewed slave raiders to be one of the threats faced during these times, *bantug* was associated with the warrior chiefs who have the capacity to address the challenges in terms of securing the territory through their warring skills, huge followers, and extraordinary capacities.

Today, leadership was no longer evaluated through warring skills but on one's capacity to become arbitrators who the people consult for wisdom during disputes. This rank was referred to as the *datu*, a role assumed by the elders during the time of the warrior chiefs. The arbitrators or the elders served as the advisors of warrior chiefs when the latter led communities (Garvan 1931: 350). This transition from one form of leadership based on warring skills to another form of leadership based on wisdom is a hypothetical assumption I inferred based on the difference between these two ranks. One reason that informants found it difficult to identify the difference between warrior chiefs and today's leaders referred to as *datu* was probably because some leaders in the past such as Tagliyong assumed both roles as leaders. Today that prestige killings were no longer practiced, the *datu* is considered the “traditional” form of leadership. In the context of revenge killings that are still practiced until today, the *datu* serves as the mediator to prevent potential attacks or as the arbitrator during post-attack scenarios.

This shift from warrior chiefs to arbitrators is relevant here because it shows a difference between how the concept of respect is applied in contemporary *pangajow* killings with the arbitrators and its use in the context of prestige killings with the warrior chiefs. The
difference appears to be related to what the informants viewed as the challenges during these different periods. As I have pointed out previously, the time of prestige killings required warrior chiefs who can reinforce the security of an entire community. In this context, respect was used as a quality of one's leadership which was crucial for collective security against slave raiders. In the next section, I will show that the shift of leadership to arbitrators or tribal chieftain today has provided more emphasis on the need to restore balance and compensation through resolution initiated by the tribal chieftains in revenge killings. I will discuss how this relates to an interest in the restoration of social and economic status amid their socio-economic marginalization.

**Bantug as Compensation and Resolution in Revenge Killings**

In today's revenge killings, respect is highlighted to be something owed to the aggrieved party (the kin of the victim). Elsewhere, I argued that this is related to a concept of offense that is focused on the damage which resulted from an act (Tampos 2014). In this sense, an offense is not necessarily viewed in terms of the presence of a standard or a rule that was transgressed but on the presence of the damage that needs to be addressed. Offenses, of course, have varying degrees. In a domestic context, a child’s failure to perform an assigned task which led to a damage may be viewed as an offense. It could be his or her failure to do his task of driving chickens off the grains being dried under the sun. In this case, the transgression was not so much about the child's shortcoming to observe the grains as to the damage caused to the grains. It would have not mattered if the child failed to observe the
grains and the chickens did not consume it. The emphasis, therefore, is not so much on the failure to follow a rule or an instruction but on the presence of the damage that resulted from such failure.

Offenses that result to retaliatory attacks often reflect social and economic damages. The most common example of a social damage that leads to revenge killings is a man's failure to pursue an arranged marriage or, in recent cases, marry his pregnant partner. For a number of informants, it is considered very embarrassing for the kin of a girl to be refused marriage. As an informant put it, it makes them feel invisible for having been ignored and, at the same time, puts them on a spotlight for being vulnerable to the scrutiny of the neighbors who could imagine many reasons as to what could have caused the rejection.

In a recent case, the refusal of a man to marry his pregnant girlfriend led to rumors that the girl had multiple partners which caused her partner to question whether he was indeed the child's father. The enraged father of the girl was already gathering their kin to wage a retaliatory attack against the man and his family when the tribal chieftain from the man's village stepped in and conducted the customary resolution process or husoy. According to the chieftain who mediated, the heated discussion between both parties lasted for more than 12 hours. The girl's kin demanded for a DNA test and declared to pursue their retaliatory attack if the test is positive. The case was settled after the man's family promised to provide a chainsaw and a carabao to the girl as their way of recognizing that it is their grandchild. Both parties did not push the wedding as the former pair expressed disinterest in getting back together.
In this case, the chainsaw and the carabao were both viewed as economic and social gestures. It will financially support the child given that a chainsaw and a carabao are highly valuable sources of income in these communities. At the same time, it restores the reputation of the girl and her family, since the support is an acknowledgement of the truth of her claim about her child's father.

Maintaining one's social status by being recognized as a rightful aggrieved party whose demands should be addressed after having been wronged appears very important among the informants. Failure to recognize the need for resolution by appeasing the aggrieved party is viewed to make explicit their lowly status. The statement below represent a common explanation among informants.

“If someone steps on your feet and just walks passed you without recognizing that they have caused you pain is like saying, 'You are no one.' It will make you think, 'Is this because I'm poor?' You know, people think they can just do anything to you if you're poor... So, the Manobo do not allow their fellow Manobo to treat them as insignificant. That's what the migrants do.”

In this sense, one's ability to pose a threat of a possible retaliatory attack is a way of showing that one matters and is worthy to be given attention especially after having experienced a serious offense. To be ignored renders one invisible and insignificant. To be recognized as someone whose demand as an aggrieved party should be addressed appears as a way of redeeming themselves from the social and economic marginalization they are experiencing. To be deprived of resolution resounds this social and economic marginalization where they don't feel that there is something being done about their poverty and their issue with the migrants. As one tribal chieftain said, “The Manobo desire resolution especially
when we know that we deserve it.”

According to respondents and based on all the cases collected, the most serious offenses that most often lead to revenge killings are as follow: (1) murder; (2) female-related offenses such as wife-stealing, refusal to marry, and rape; (3) land grabbing; (4) and, theft of a highly valuable livestock (i.e., carabao, horse, cow). In the traditional resolution process or husoy led by tribal chieftains, these offenses, in order to be addressed, would require an imposition of indemnity.

There are two types of indemnity. Minggad is required for offenses considered as serious. The compensation in the form of a chainsaw and a carabao in the case described above is a type of a minggad. Minggad involves properties considered of high value that is worth, at least, 20,000 pesos (around 500 dollars). The most common minggad given in these areas were the following: (1) a cash of 20,000 pesos; (2) livestock of high value such as a carabao, horse, or cow; (3) firearms that commonly include carbine and Garand rifles; and, (4) chainsaw. A possible but very rare form of minggad is a special bolo or chicken called sinugbahan. It is the aggrieved party who determines the rightful minggad. The Datu would evaluate the aggrieved party’s minggad and require assurance from the offender and his kin that the demand will be addressed within the agreed time frame. The Datu is in authority to decide if the aggrieved party’s demand is fair or excessive. He basis his evaluation on previous cases. In many cases that the offender and his kin cannot provide for the demand,

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9 A few shamans perform rituals which are believed to make objects powerful. These objects are referred to as sinugbahan. A sinugbahan chicken or bolo will have healing powers and are believed to be effective weapons against malevolent spirits. A sinugbahan bolo will have gibberish markings on it. Fooling others by giving a fake sinugbahan item is believed to cause death from serious sickness.
the tribal chieftains used their own resources instead or collect contributions from members of the village who can afford.

Compensation for offenses considered less serious are referred to as buney. This is usually in a form of a sack of clothing materials, a chicken, or a pig. Common offenses that could result to a buney include insults and inappropriate language. Gestures such as laughing at or explicitly point out someone's physical deformity or distinct physical attributes such as warts or body odor were said to be the most common in the upland communities. Inappropriate language, on the hand, was often attributed to people who returned from the city and brought with them the “city attitude”. In a recent case, Jose returned to his village after having worked for years in a big city. His language had been said to be influenced by the Visayan such as in using the expression 'putang ina mo' (your whore mother) when laughing hard at one's joke. Jose's expression apparently offended one of his neighbors who was with him when he uttered the phrase. The neighbor who found the phrase demeaning and inappropriate expressed his frustration to their tribal chieftain. After an arbitration between the two, Jose ended up providing chickens as a form of buney.

In all cases where a compensation was provided to the aggrieved party, no conflict ensued. All informants claimed that they have not heard of a case when the aggrieved party pursued its retaliatory plan even after receiving a minggad or a buney. This shows that these indemnities are not just for economic but also for social reparation. If the party still waged a revenge killing after having been compensated, they “destroy their reputation”.

Although murder is considered highly likely to lead to threats of a revenge killing
attack from the victim's kin, there were individuals who were deemed to have damaged their own worth and whose death was thereby acceptable. This, for the informants, apply to people whose “quality” or “reputation” had already been corrupted due to his or her previous offenses against others. These are people who do not have *bantug*. An example case where the primary victim's quality did not entail a retaliation from his immediate family was the murder of Mayon who was said to have killed more than 10 people in the past due to his bad temper every time he was drunk. In 2003, he murdered his own cousin during a drinking session. Mayon was sterile and decided to have his wife impregnated by another man so they may have a child. Upon learning about this, Mayon’s cousin made the couple’s decision a laughing stock and kept making jokes about it. One night, his cousin's incessant jokes ended Mayon’s patience. Using a sharp L-shaped knife meant for slicing tobacco, Mayon stabbed his cousin in the abdomen severing his kidney. The cousin was sent to the nearest hospital but was declared dead on arrival. Weeks later, Mayon's two nephews, one of which is the son of his slain cousin, decided to make a retaliatory attack against their uncle. Upon having successfully stolen Mayon’s father’s rifle, they killed Mayon on his way to the farm. Mayon’s immediate family, who are also the attackers’ relatives, did not make any retaliation. They said, Mayon's death was a relief. “He had been such a headache for the family for his bad attitude. His death was a quits [the informant did use the word quits],” said one of his cousins. His passing was believed to have provided peace of mind or 'smooth breathing' for the family who no longer fear of any retaliatory acts whenever Mayon would kill someone.

A compensation for Mayon's death, however, is still necessary but is only purely in
terms of economic restoration for his wife and child. In the case of Mayon's killing by his nephews, compensation is already provided by the clan since they were expected to provide for Mayon's wife and child. Years before Mayon's widow found another husband, she and her child were financially supported by Mayon's parents, cousins, and other relatives including the nephews who made the killing.

Based on Mayon's case, retaliation by the kin of a murdered person will also depend on the perceived worth of the primary victim or what he did prior to being killed. Also, death of a kin due to an accident was generally considered an act that does not call for vengeance. Individuals, of course, differ; some informants still expressed an intent to retaliate in the case of a loved one's death due to an accident. An example case that involved death by accident was in 2006 when Pando was gathering fire woods and was mistaken for a deer by his neighbors who were hunting. He was shot and died right away. In a deliberation led by their tribal chieftain with the parties involved and other neighbors, it was discussed in detail whether the hunters might have had any hidden motive or grudge against Pando which might motivate a deliberate shooting. It was decided by all parties that the hunters did make a mistake without intent of killing Pando who had been their friendly neighbor for a while and with whom they never had any feud in past. The aggrieved party received a compensation in a form of a hen and 1,000 pesos (around 20 dollars).

In both cases cited, Mayon's and Pando's, the need to compensate the aggrieved party was consistently cited regardless if the act was done without malice or was considered acceptable. Informants explained that the purpose of compensating the aggrieved party
especially in the case of a murder was a form of respect by way of recognizing the situation of the individuals who would be directly affected by the absence of the murdered person. With the death of Mayon and Pando, where their deaths were considered as acceptable and accidental, respectively, the threat for retaliation invoked. However, their immediate families were still viewed to deserve a compensation as a recognition of their loss. “If his [Pando's] wife will wake up the next day, she will no longer have a partner to help feed their children, so at least they were given something,” explained an informant when asked about the compensation given which was in a form of a hen and 1,000 pesos. The cash was considered sufficient to provide food for Pando's kids for a week.

This process of compensating the aggrieved party may also be viewed as a means of maintaining the equilibrium or balance. The compensation to the aggrieved party is to give back the “quality” or respect that they lost. This theme of “giving back” had been cited by a number of informants, one of whom had waged a revenge killing, “That's the same pain he gave us. We just gave it back.” Some people who experienced loss would demand for compensation; some people who unwillingly received an action will give it back.

In order to appease the aggrieved party by addressing the “damage” they experienced in a form of compensation, the emphasis is not so much on the value of the compensation but on the effort invested to collect it. In the previous chapter, I already mentioned the process named dinatu where the aggrieved party would be provided with only a small portion of the cash they demanded. On the day of providing for the demand, the compensating party (either the offender or a leader from the offender's village) will place the cash on the table stating the
demanded amount. The aggrieved party will accept it without exactly counting the bills although, just by a quick glance at pile, one would easily determine that it is not the exact amount that was demanded. According to the informants, the act of collecting cash and showing up with it was effort enough, since it means that certain individuals had to sell their valuables such as livestock or farm produce in order to obtain the cash. The most important aspect of providing compensation for the aggrieved party then was not strictly based on material gains but on the act of recognizing the need to appease them. It is basically about respecting them as the hingtundan or “the ones who are owed”.

Summary

I presented in this chapter how the concept of respect was applied in talking about old and contemporary forms of pangajow killings. In the context of prestige killings, the Agusan Manobo applied the concept of respect with an emphasis on the quality of leadership of warrior chiefs which was viewed as an important means of addressing what they viewed was a challenge at that time: the need for a leader to reinforce security of an entire community especially against slave raiders. In the context of revenge killings, meanwhile, the emphasis on respect was applied in terms of the need for resolution to appease the aggrieved party who would potentially wage a retaliatory attack after experiencing an offense. One aspect of resolution was based on how the aggrieved party has the rightful demand for economic restoration through material gains (that is through buney or minggad as indemnity). Commitment to resolution is also viewed to mean that the aggrieved party is not “invisible”
and is worthy of being recognized as “the ones who are owed”.

Therefore, *bantug*, as shown in these findings, is a lens that is used to evaluate social order. It was shown that this sense of order is continuously being reinterpreted by the Agusan Manobo in relation to the large-scale processes that they experience. Social equilibrium during the presence of slave raiders and conquering chiefs required a respected leader whose prowess is to take from other villages what other villages might take from them. Today, balance is restored by way of recognizing the demands of the aggrieved party for compensation. These compensatory systems as discussed in this chapter appear to be means of restoring the aggrieved party’s economic status. This signifies the imbalance in these communities today. The demands for cash and material things that were addressed in the traditional resolution processes may appear as importunate requirements from an outsider’s perspective. But, what made this resolution mechanism effective in these communities is not merely its materiality but its capacity to bring back balance wherein lies the social order. The material compensations are best viewed, therefore, as symbols that made concrete the restoration of balance that was lost when disrespect was committed.
CHAPTER 6

Ginhawa or “Breath”

Early in the morning, a woman came rushing to Datu Ona’s house while sobbing hysterically. It was the third day since Datu Ona, a tribal chieftain, had hosted me to conduct my ethnographic research in their area. I was in the front yard at that time but, since most parts of the house do not have walls as a result of last year’s typhoon, I was still able to see them in the kitchen. Datu Ona was sitting quietly on the farm table, looking very calm, while his wife was rubbing the woman's back. I found out that she is actually their daughter and that her husband was in a critical condition at the hospital after being hacked with a machete. The police had yet to make an arrest. She worried that the suspect might have already fled. Datu Ona worried about the hospital bill. Several minutes later, the daughter washed her muddy feet with well water in the front yard where I was at. She started sharing details about the incident before I could even introduce myself. It appeared that the suspect was her husband's co-worker who recently got fired. Throughout the short conversation, she repeatedly said that her “breathing aches”

Statements referring to 'painful breathing' were very common in the everyday conversations as well as in the narratives of my research informants during interviews. At first, I thought this simply meant that one has difficulty inhaling and exhaling when overwhelmed by emotion. However, as the inquiry progressed, it appeared to be beyond literal. As presented in the methods section of this paper, the category ginhawa or 'breath' is
one of the salient cultural concepts through which the Agusan Manobo discuss revenge killings and armed revolt, both of which are forms of pangajow that most recently observed in the areas. In this chapter, I argue that the use of the cultural concept of ginhawa (“breath”) to talk about these contemporary forms of pangajow reveals how the Agusan Manobo linked the concept to structural processes, specifically economic poverty, in terms of a sense of desperation and vulnerability which fuel pain and rage in pangajow killings. They used the concept to reflect both 'feeling' and 'thinking' in the narratives on revenge killings and armed revolt specifically under the themes of kasakit (pain) and kayangot (rage). Using the narratives of the Agusan Manobo informants, these contemporary forms of killings are best discussed in light of the link between the cultural concept of ginhawa or “breath” and the structural processes, especially economic poverty, that the communities are experiencing. To elaborate on this claim, I will first discuss the concepts of pain and rage as forms of a disrupted 'breathing', then I will present how the informants applied these to pangajow killings. I will then show what this link made between this concept of emotion and killings reveals about how the informants view their present conditions.

The concept of breathing in a field referred to as the “Filipino psychology” has been viewed in the opposite side of the same continuum with 'soul' (Salazar 1977). Breathing is linked to non-intentional, involuntary aspects of 'feeling' while the soul is associated to awareness and consciousness (Salazar 1977: 88). Among the Agusan Manobo, however, the concept of breathing suggests that one's feeling is caused by what one thinks. In fact, when translating the word 'breath' in my vernacular, they used the word 'mind' or 'thinking'. Among
other Lumad groups in Mindanao, this cultural concept of breathing has been associated to 'see/think/mind' and 'feel/heart/love', among others (Paluga 2012b). Myfel Paluga (2012b) suggests that this category of ginhawa or 'breathing' is a highly relevant concept in studying Lumad groups since, along with the concept of community, it provides an understanding that intersects multiple domains - philosophical, psychological, ecological, and political.

During my ethnographic research, one of the helpful discussions regarding this concept was when I joined in the conversation of a number of male adults who gathered in a hut right next to a store. The scorching midday sun made it impractical for them to work at their respective farms, so they engaged in conversations with neighbors as a pastime. One of them, Datu Igo, informed me that gunmen were hired to hunt him down after a heated dispute over a land with a migrant. He said,

“If Leo [one of my field guides] were not a close ally, I would have never agreed to let you do a research here. I would have never talked to you. But, we [he and Datu Leo] have been through very tough times together since the time of Enrile [a senator in the 1980s]. So, my “breathing” allowed me to accept you. If I didn't see him [Leo] with my own eyes introducing you, I would have really suspected you as that migrant's spy, especially with that thing [voice recorder] of yours.”

Datu Igo’s remarks made perfect sense to me except for the part that he mentioned about how his breathing allowed him to accept me. Spoken in my vernacular, the phrase sounded awkward since the Visayan language would have not associated an agentive feature (e.g., allow) to 'breath' or 'breathing'. Later in the conversation, I asked what they mean whenever they used 'breath' or 'breathing' such as in stating that one's breathing 'allows' or that one's breathing 'aches'. 
Datu Igo: It's when your mind [huna-huna] aches.
ST: Like a headache?
Informant 2: No, not the head. The mind aches. You can't think of other things anymore.
ST: So, what does it mean when he [Datu Igo] said that his breathing allowed him to accept me as a visitor?
Datu Igo: My mind is at peace. It does not have to keep thinking about one thing over and over like... Who is this visitor? What is her intention? Is she a spy? It is serene [hepa]. Otherwise, these questions will stay on my mind.
ST: When do you usually say that your breathing aches?
Informant 2: When there is something inappropriate like with words. If I curse right now while I talk to you, your breathing would hurt. Or, when I do something inappropriate to his (pointing at his neighbor) wife.
Informant 4: When someone harms your loved one... steals your carabao (water buffalo commonly used in farming)... your wife or your land... or when one did not keep his promise. A lot of things can hurt your breathing.
ST: Is it the same with pride (garbo), like someone's ego is hurt?
(Silence)
Datu Igo: But, when my breathing aches, it is because something was done to me. It's like...
Informant 3: Like, 'why would you do that to me when I wouldn't have done it to you?'

Since the above conversation was with men, I also asked a few female Agusan Manobo about the same topic to determine what they considered as sources of painful breathing. Common responses often pointed out that it hurts their breathing when their son or daughter talks back, when they have difficulty paying debts (which are usually incurred for the expensive fertilizers during planting seasons), or when people are inconsiderate such as when “young ones turn up the volume of those loud music that their old folks hate”.

It appears that one's 'breathing' aches because one processes (inhales or takes in) an experience rather than merely displaying an instinctive reaction to it. It emerges from interpersonal situations where certain social boundaries, ethics, expectations, and forethought are
involved. The pain is, therefore, socially constructed. Rage, meanwhile, appears to be a form of drawing out or exhaling, although it does not necessarily follow that expression of rage is inevitable. I will further discuss pain and rage as aspects of the concept of breathing in the next sections as I present how the informants used these themes in the context of revenge killings and armed revolt. In linking this cultural concept to the domain of emotion in the context of *pangajow* killings, I clearly do not view emotion as an innate and uncontrolled state\(^\text{10}\). Instead, as Catherine Lutz (1998) suggests about the Micronesian Ifaluk, emotion is both a way of understanding the world and a means of engaging in it. Lutz takes into consideration the inter-relatedness of indigenous ideas about the self, morality, social orders, and collective goals in understanding how concepts of emotion are used and reproduced in a social group. The concept about the self, which is about how people think and talk about persons and behavior, is seen to be intertwined with how people think and talk about the world in terms of moral values, hierarchy, and social goals under given material conditions. As Lutz argues, concepts of emotion are therefore best understood within the everyday discourse since it is within the everyday social interactions that these local conceptualizations about the self, morality, social orders, and social goals become concrete.

Based on the coding process I presented in Chapter 3, the category *ginhawa* is one of the overarching categories that the Agusan Manobo employed in articulating their understanding and views on *pangajow*. I coded the key terms from the transcripts of all semi-

\(^{10}\) I do not wish to claim either that all forms of emotion are socially constructed. Facial expressions such as a smile among congenitally blind individuals, for instance, cannot be taught (see Galati et al. 1997). However, I intend to talk about emotion in these killings not through physiological means such as facial expressions but in terms of how it is used by the Manobo to express their views and understanding on the practice.
structured interviews and field notes from ethnographic observations and participant-observation. The substantial links established between this category and numerous other codes imply that it is a discernible theme among many informants as they expressed their views and understanding on contemporary pangajow killings. I refer to the category ginhawa or 'breath' as a domain of 'emotion' due to its relations with nodes such as pain, sympathy, peace of mind or serenity, rage, and anger. As indicated in the diagram, the key terms pain and rage are almost as dense as the category ginhawa. The following sections will be elaborate on ginhawa based on these two themes and how these two were used in the narratives.

“One learns about pain when one starts to farm”

In an interview with a 55-year old informant who had previously waged a revenge killing decades ago, I asked how young can someone participate in a pangajow attack. He replied, “As soon as he learns how to farm, which is around 12.”

“Why?” I followed up.

“One learns about pain when one starts to farm. All pangajow have [underlying] pains. When one starts to farm, one will realize the value of things – the land, one's family, the water buffalo [farming animal]...” He elaborated. It has to be noted here that he was referring to contemporary forms of pangajow, specifically revenge killings.

Girls also start to farm at around the same age. However, they don't participate in pangajow activities which, according to a number of informants, is due to physiological
constraints. When one feels pain, it disrupts one's 'breathing' or the ability to 'think of something else'. It is beyond physical hurt. As an Agusan Manobo mother pointed out, children should not be physically punished because “they will feel the pain but they will not understand it”. When one's 'breathing' aches, one does not only feel the pain but also understands why the pain exists.

Pain is viewed to be highly related to the feeling of rage. In fact, informants pointed out that whenever one is enraged, it is because one is in pain. As two informants stated in an informal focus group discussion,

**Informant 1:** You cannot feel rage if you're not hurt. Will my dog get mad at me if I did not step on him? No one gets mad for no reason, unless you're insane.

**Informant 2:** Oi, even the crazy ones have pain. That's what led them to insanity. This does not mean, however, that pain elevating to rage immediately leads to actions such as killing. Until around the 1980s, a practice among the Agusan Manobo was said to have still been observed which involved ways of containing pain and rage before initiating confrontations. For instance, they engraved horizontal lines called *guhot* on a wooden post using a bolo or a knife. An individual who was offended maintains an ascending series of *guhot* in one post. The post is located outside one's house, visible to the neighbors. During such times, acts considered as offensive were said to commonly include one’s neglect (perceived as deliberate) to respond to a greeting or by kissing one’s daughter, whether forceful or consensual, who is already arranged to marry someone else. Once the series of lines, which starts at ankle-level, reached the same length as the individual’s full height, retaliation is highly likely. Therefore, as the informants humorously concluded, one should be
very careful with the short neighbors.

During such times, it was also highly customary to consult a traditional leader after one was offended. Datu Olan, who is around 80 years of age, spent 40 years of his life as a Datu or tribal chieftain\(^\text{11}\). He pointed out how traditional leaders in the old times often addressed situations whenever one expressed pain that can potentially lead to a retaliatory attack. One of the oldest events he recollected was in the 1960s which was the case of Sumi against Tilha. Sumi eloped with Tilha’s daughter. Tilha and his kin, who disapproved of Sumi, expressed their desire for waging an attack in Sumi’s village (which was Datu Olan’s territory). The disapproval was said to be rooted in Sumi’s utter disrespect of the custom where the parents’ opinion in the choice of a rightful son-in-law should be considered as well as their demand for a bride price. The attack was prevented after Datu Olan negotiated with the aggrieved party who demanded for a rifle and a horse. After meeting the demands, Sumi was able to keep Tilha’s daughter (but was said to have never been accepted as a son-in-law).

Another means of avoiding or restraining pain and rage was through sending an individual called a *dagpon* to proactively negotiate with the aggrieved party. This individual is not related to any of the parties involved. He or she will inquire about the aggrieved party’s desired compensation (which will be based on the degree of the offense committed) and to negotiate the time frame that will be followed by the other party in complying with the demands. In the old times, traditional leaders commonly assume such role. Prior to contact with the aggrieved party, a *dagpon* should have already assessed the offender’s capacity to

\(^{11}\) During this time, at least since the American occupation, a leader in the form of a Datu no longer has to engage in prestige killings. The emphasis has shifted from warring skills of a warrior chief to the ability in arbitrating disputes.
provide for compensation. After the negotiation, this individual leaves any material object from his body (e.g., a button from his shirt, a necklace, or a handkerchief) which serves as a symbol of his plea to the aggrieved party not to avenge unless the agreed deadline for the compensation is not met.

The informants claimed that these customs relating to the repression of pain and rage may still be observed by 'the people from ilaya (the uplands)'

12 Although the informants also live in 'the uplands', they referred to other groups of Agusan Manobo in the more outskirt regions as taga-ilaya or people from the uplands. They characterized these groups as “the Manobo who still wear G-strings and don't use salt on their food.” Another criterion used for such classification was the absence of public schools in such areas.

12, although they have no means to ascertain it. When asked why it is no longer feasible among them to conduct such means to contain one's pain or rage prior to taking an action, an informant replied, “If you hurt a poor man, you can't stop him. He has nothing to lose.” In narratives of recent revenge killing, poverty seemed to be used as one reason in explaining why a killing was committed. This, of course, does not mean that poverty in their areas did not exist before nor were they trying to justify the killing. Rather, the theme of poverty appeared to make sense of why the pain is expressed in specific ways such as killing. In the three narratives below, I present how this theme was made relevant in the way the informants viewed revenge killings which they witnessed themselves – either as an actor, a victim, or a witness.

Case 1: Witnessing an Attack

Marie and Nilo are from the same village. Marie is in her mid-40s and is the scribe of their local government unit. Nilo is in his mid-50s and is a Seventh-Day Adventist pastor. They were both born and raised in Agusan. Last 2012, their Visayan neighbor was killed in a
retaliatory attack. The revenge killing was due to the death of an elderly man who was killed in their village. The elder was just visiting for their village fiesta, an annual celebration for their patron saint, when a riot broke out between intoxicated teenagers. When the elderly man tried to pacify the young men, one of them started smashing him in the head with a chair. The blows caused the elder's immediate death which triggered a retaliatory attack from his relatives who live in a neighboring village. The next day, threats for a revenge attack spread. A week later, Marie was approached by a guy who she recognized to be from the elder man’s village. She was told that “they [the attackers or magahat] are coming.” Their village immediately became a ghost town as around 87 families evacuated to other neighboring villages in order to avoid the crossfire. Marie's and Nilo's families were one of the few groups who stayed behind. They said they could not afford to leave their house and their livestock. Neither of them were related to the suspect of the elderly man's death. Four days later since the warning, Marie and Nilo both attempted to stop a Visayan farmer and his son who were on their way to the farm early in the morning. The migrant insisted that he and his son would not be attacked since they have nothing to do with the elder's death. They went on and, minutes later, a number of gunshots were fired. The attackers missed the son who ended up dragging his dead father’s body out of their farm.

**Nilo:** If only he [the deceased farmer] had listened to us, he would have still been alive. [...] These magahat [a term for individuals who wage a pangajow killing] have no mercy. Who would let their fellow starve for days in anticipation of an attack? I haven't gone to the farm since the warning was relayed. My family and I had nothing to eat for days. We just had to drink a lot of water. [...] It was humiliating to be so distressed about the gentle rustling of the leaves thinking a magahat is approaching, then you found out that it was actually caused by two tiny birds. [...] We're all very poor, I know how desperate they [the attackers] are, but they could have used other
means to address their pain. If only they accept Jesus...

Marie, who is also a devout Christian, agreed with Nilo's remark that if only the attackers have converted to Christianity, they would have thought twice about initiating such attacks. She also pointed out the same thing on being poor. She elaborated,

“We are all poor here. They [the attackers] also worry about providing food for their family on a daily basis. But, they are making their lives worse by following Satan's will. [...] They should have just filed a case at the police [station]. But, instead, they did this which affected my family, my neighbors who evacuated to other places and left their farms unattended. Even they [the attackers] left their farms unattended, too, just to execute the attack. That just made all of us poorer! [...] The poorer we get, the more people will end up killing each other... even for the smallest reasons.”

Case 2: Waging an Attack

Muri is a 55-year old farmer who was part of a revenge killing in the 1990s. A group of men from village X attacked his village around 3:00 am and killed a family of 5, 2 of whom were female and 1 child. Muri explained that such attack was triggered by someone from their village who raped a woman from village X. The rapist already fled to another province, so the attack was aimed at other members of their village instead. All of the 5 slain victims were Muri’s relatives. He would not clarify whether the rapist (who was the original target of the attack) was also their relative. Muri and his cousin avenged the death of their relatives a month later when “everything was in place” which means that the remains were already given burial rites and that they already finished harvesting their produce. He explained that it is necessary for an attacker to harvest his produce before initiating an attack, since it will take days before they can return from the mission – or they might not be able to return at all. Until they return, their family should have something to eat. He explained that there were only two of them in the mission since most of their physically fit male relatives
had jobs in the city. Further, he said, “It is actually best if there are only two of you in a mission. More means you have more people to worry about.” It is also customary to have an even number of attackers (unless, of course, if one attacks all by himself which was rarely the case). Muri said that an odd number is bad luck, and it would also mean that one member will not have a partner to cover his back. On the day of the attack, they left their village around midnight on foot armed with Garand rifles. They arrived at village X around 5:00 am. They waited outside of the hut of their target who was one of the attackers who killed their 5 relatives. Around 5:45 am, the target came down from his stilt hut and started preparing his farm tools.

**Muri:** I was behind him and I was staring at his nape. I felt sorry at that point.

**ST:** What did you feel sorry for?

**Muri:** There are some people who you intend to kill but you'll feel bad when you stare at them, even when you don't see their face, just their nape. But, not all people, just some of them.

(Paused for a minute, looking away)

**Muri:** But, we had to do it. I aimed at him and closed my eyes after I pulled the trigger... Just, bang! Then my partner and I fired all our remaining bullets at his hut. We did not check the hut after. We just left right away. Others said that his wife and his kid were in that hut.

**ST:** Why did you say you have to do it?

**Muri:** You have to let the pain and rage out. Otherwise, you'll end up hanging yourself [a common method of suicide in these areas].

Muri was said to have waged revenge killings other than this but did not confirm it. He said that the number of times that their family was wronged is the same number of revenge killings they had waged in the past. When asked why they had to kill other people who did not commit an offense against them such as their target's wife and kid, he explained, “That's the same pain he gave us. We just gave it back. He killed 5 of our people who were
innocent.” It seems, in this sense, that the equilibrium was restored. When X did something against Y that Y would have not done to X, Y will react by “giving back” the same action to X. A number of informants used the English term to refer ‘quits’ to this status.

When asked about the possibility of waging another in the future, Muri replied, “Well, that's how it will always be.” Then he elaborated,

“People from the lowland have said many wrong things about people like us who wage pangajow. It made us poorer since we no longer get livelihood projects from the government who is afraid to set foot in our place. They [lowland neighbors] said things like we have red eyes or that we eat liver. Well, warrior chiefs did eat liver but those were in the old times. About the red eyes, maybe they saw a vampire. [Laughs] But, maybe some magahat [attacker] today eat liver because they're hungry. There's a lot of things a man could do if he's hungry.”

At this point of the interview, other people started joining us as Muri shared the snacks I prepared for him with three other farmers, one of whom is his brother. Muri’s brother, who overheard Muri’s last remark, expounded on the topic.

“If you're poor, you only have very little to live for. If anyone messed with the very few things you have left, that's it. If they [the government] can provide us with good livelihood, that's when these killings will stop. You won't bother yourself preparing to attack someone if you have a kid in college or a productive farm, would you? You will think twice before you do something, otherwise it will affect your kid who is in college or your successful farm. But, what do we have here? None of our kids go to school. They marry at such an early age and became maids in the city. The typhoons always damaged our farms. We have nothing.”

Another farmer joined and added to the previous comment saying, “That's why you have natives in the far side of the mountains planting marijuana. Plant rice or corn and your cost to transport it to the market would be higher than the price they would pay for your produce. With marijuana, it's very light, you can just carry a sack of it on your back and
transport it on foot, then get thousands in return. So, you see.. the things you do if you're a poor man.”

Case 3: Preventing an Attack

Jo, 47 years old, is an official of a local government unit and also has the title Datu on his name as a traditional leader. In 2011, one of the residents from Jo's village killed someone from another village using a sharpened bamboo stick. It was said to be due to a fight over a piece of land. The aggrieved party sent a handwritten notice stating that they intend to wage a pangajow attack in Jo's village because of the offense committed by one of their residents. According to Jo, he and other local government officials met with the tribal chieftain and local government officials of the aggrieved party's village in order to conduct a negotiation. The kin of the murdered man were invited to the meeting in which they were asked about the means that could appease them thereby preventing their planned attack. The party demanded 50,000 pesos (around 1,000 US dollars) to be given after a month after the meeting. The officials promised to gather the resources. Days before the deadline, Jo received another handwritten notice. It stated that the aggrieved party will temporarily get a water buffalo from their village and will return it when once they receive their demand. Jo described the buffalo to have been 'kidnapped for ransom'. The demand was “met”, no attack happened, and the water buffalo was returned to its owner who is a resident at Jo's village and is unrelated to the offender.

By saying that the demand was met, Jo explained that it only meant that the compensation was provided but not necessarily the exact amount that was demanded. The
aggrieved party, in this case, who demanded for 50,000 pesos actually just received 11,000. This is a customary resolution process called dinatu which applies to cases when the aggrieved party demanded for cash. On the day of providing for the demand, the compensating party (either the offender or a leader from the offender's village) will place the cash on the table stating the demanded amount. The aggrieved party will accept it without exactly counting the bills, aware that it is probably lower than what they demanded for. What is considered most important during such transactions was the gesture of providing something to the aggrieved party, not the amount that was provided. “What if the compensating party only provided, say, 20 pesos?” I asked.

“Well, in that case, it won't be acceptable. You obviously did not make an effort to attempt to provide for the demand. In the case of the 11,000 that we provided, they [the aggrieved party who made the demand] were aware that we did try. They knew how hard it is to gather such an amount. They named such a high amount because they had pain and rage in them, so they wanted our village to work more.

The theme of poverty and how it affects emotion was implied in the narratives. The phrase “dili mawili” which I translated as 'nothing or having very little to live for' was commonly used among respondents who had previously waged revenge killings. It is a feeling that one does not have anything to care about, hence one is not concerned about death – for himself or for others. Even non-actors also expressed the same view on how poverty relates to such killings. Their experience of economic poverty aggravates the feeling of a 'disrupted breathing' which appears to influence a diminished inhibition to express pain and rage through killing in the same way that rituals that call upon the blood-thirsty spirits do.
The lack of food and social services such as education in the Agusan province is one of the worst in the country. Between 2003 and 2009, Agusan del Sur was on the top 5 list of provinces with the highest percentage of poverty incidence (NSCB FIES 2009). This poverty incidence refers to “the proportion of population whose annual per capita income falls below the per annual per capita poverty threshold to the total number of population” (NSCB 2015). Between 1985-2000, the entire Northern Mindanao region in which Agusan del Sur is a part was consistently named classified as one of the poorest regions in the Philippines (NSO in Reyes & Valencia 2005:2).

Poverty, however, was not referred to as the direct root cause of the retaliatory attacks. As reflected in the narratives, attacks were triggered by offenses made against an aggrieved party. Rather, the socio-economic conditions were linked to the motivation to “let go” of the pain and rage which were incurred from experiencing such offenses. At some point, this is somewhat similar to calling upon the tegbusow spirit during pre-raiding rituals of the warrior chiefs. The tegbusow are believed to be blood-thirsty spirits, hence their possession over humans will entail an exacting desire to kill without inhibitions. Raiders will smear the blood, either from a red chicken or a boar, on the tip of their weapons and on their forehead. This tegbusow possession appears to create the same effect of extreme economic poverty in terms of ridding constraint and inhibition in killing.

Meanwhile, the concept of pain in the context of armed revolt relates to an idea of a disrespected land and their lost autonomy by becoming “puppets in one's own territory”. Here, pain roots in a disrespect as they lost their control over their ancestral domains. This
theme often appeared in narratives about an armed revolt against a large-scale logging company in the 1980s. During such time, a number of Agusan Manobo expressed disapproval of the project. One cited reason was that the company offered to hire the natives but only for menial work with the lowest possible salary due to their minimal educational background. When the project persisted after gaining the necessary government permit, a group of Agusan Manobo attacked the office targeting the company officials. This pangajow, according to the informants, successfully expelled the company.

This pain in relation to their struggle with autonomy persisted especially with the arrival of the migrants in Mindanao along with the privatization of lands. The influence of these processes is reflected in this statement that pointed out arguments commonly expressed among a number of the informants. He considered this issue as one of the major sources of his disrupted breathing.

“Before, when the migrants started arriving here, we let them occupy unused lands. They would then ask us to buy 1 hectare of land in exchange for a box of cigar, or a radio, or a few canned goods. So, the Manobo, unfamiliar with the goods, enthusiastically agreed. But the migrants are educated; they know things about papers. Unknown to the Manobo later on, the migrant had registered the land and claimed 10 hectares13! This is what happened to my farm. In the 80s, this Visayan guy who was just visiting from another province begged to work temporarily on a piece of our farm. And, I said, 'Why not?' I told him to just return it to me by the time he goes back to his province. Years later, I didn't know that he had actually initiated a process to claim a registration title for my land. For 10 hectares! Ten hectares of my rubber, falcatta, palms, and rice field. I spent my whole life working on that farm and then he will simply put his name on a paper to claim it? So, I

13 The law on land ownership and acquisition in the Philippines indicates that an individual can only register up to 1 hectare of land. It is common among many informants though to use 10 hectares. It must be understood that many of them are unfamiliar with actual measurements of lands and never had their lands geodetically assessed. The exaggeration, therefore, might be taken to mean that by ‘10 hectares’, they meant 'a large parcel of land'.
thought, 'Okay, dare trespass my land to have it assessed by the Land Registry. I will wait with my bolo.'

Rage and the Inhibition to Kill

While pain appears to result from a process of inhaling or taking in an experience with both 'feeling and 'thinking', rage may be viewed as a buildup of pain that has to be let out or exhaled. This, however, does not necessarily lead to acts such as killing especially without inhibition. As case 2 in the previous section showed, the attacker felt sorry and closed his eyes while pulling the trigger but, at the same time, claimed to have felt the need to do it in order to let go of the rage. This was not an uncommon comment among other informants. Rage, based on characterizations like this, is not a spur-of-the-moment and uncontrollable state. This implies that rage is affected by “conscious” thoughts as the following statement will show.

“If you feel the blade going through another person's skin, you will cringe. You will feel sympathy [keag]. That's why you need the tegbusow [a spirit] to possess you, so you won't feel that [inhibition].”

This is a statement from a 60-year old informant who attempted to wage a pangajow around the 1980s. His retaliatory attack right after witnessing the murder of his neighbor (to whom he was not biologically related but he considered as his brother) failed. He stalked the killer and planned on attacking him with a machete as soon as he would get a chance. But when he did, he said he only made a light blow to the man's arm. He just couldn't do it, he said. It's because he didn't have the tegbusow in him. In order to be possessed by this spirit, one has to perform a ritual.
The ritual that calls upon the blood-thirsty *tegbusow* spirits is referred to as *pangumpaja* ('to appease') or *panawag-tawag* ('to call upon') which, as I previously mentioned, is typically a pre-raiding ritual. The presence of the *tegbusow* in the body of the attacker is believed to turn him into an invulnerable killer without conscience and mercy. The blood of a brown pig or a red chicken is believed to appease this class of spirit. The blood of the sacrificial pig or chicken would have to be smeared on the sharpened edges of the weapons. It is also used to paint the attacker's face red or to place red marks on his cheeks and forehead. According to one informant, the blood on the face will help make the attacker feel the presence of the *tegbusow*. One, however, cannot call the *tegbusow* if one does not feel pain or rage. “If it possessed you, it's because your mind is open to it. The *tegbusow* can't take over you if you're, say, happy,” said one informant. A tonic wine, candle, coins, water, and betelnut are other materials commonly used during the ritual as these are believed to further appease the spirits.

Figure 8: Common ritual materials
The ritual that calls upon a blood-thirsty spirit in order to get rid of inhibition implies that pain and rage do not necessarily enable one to kill, at least not without the feeling of being held back. Emotion, in this sense, therefore, is not something that takes one over and makes one oblivious of his environment. There are processes that influenced how one can express one's 'painful breathing, specifically in terms of pain and rage, into a concrete action such as killing. References to economic poverty and the need to be possessed by the blood-thirsty spirit were about processes that are influential to curtailing or weakening the part of the emotion that involves 'thinking'.

One's possession by a blood-thirsty spirit or one's economic condition may be seen to contribute to abating the inhibition, but, still, these processes do not make an attack irrepressible. For instance, the informants, both actors and non-actors, expressed a belief in an omen through a local species of dove called *alimukon*. The Agusan Manobo observe the singing of this bird to signify a premonition regarding their plan. On one's way to a mission, it is a bad omen when to hear the bird sing from behind; it is a good omen if it is heard singing in the front. When two *alimukon* sing at the same time, it is considered a *yabak* which means a very bad omen, so one has to go back to his house and cancel the attack. As one informant said, once you get a bad sign from the *alimukon*, “You just have to back off”
regardless of how much pain, how much rage you have.” The consequences of pursuing an attack regardless of a bad sign from the bird include having one of the members of the attacking group killed or captured by the rival party or having one of your family members back at home killed while you were away.

**Summary**

The Agusan Manobo model of breath expresses an idea of ‘inhaling’ or ‘taking in’ the experiences of structural issues as pain and ‘exhaling’ it as rage which manifests in the practice of *pangajow*. As presented in this chapter, this concept shows how emotion in the context of these killings is not only an embodied experience of an individual but is also a social impetus for maintaining balance within the larger group in which one situates himself. In order to maintain social order, one has to be aware of his fellows whose peaceful breathing (*hepa*) is maintained and restored by a display of respect in terms of recognizing their worth – which is basically their mere existence. It is in this sense that the concept of *ginhawa* (breath) is linked with the concepts of *banua* (community) and *bantug* (respect). The compensatory resolution mechanisms that are involved in resolving the aftermath or the prevention of revenge killings make explicit the links between these cultural concepts. The value of the material compensations which address the loss of balance that resulted from a disrespectful offense is not only about economic gain but a sign of one’s recognition of the community which he would like to maintain as a member.

Therefore, letting out of pain through rage in the contemporary *pangajow*, especially
revenge killings, is a self-compensating act that expresses both ‘feeling’ and ‘thinking’. It involves an individual’s desire to cease from ‘painful breathing’ and, at the same time, a social act to regain the respect to which he is entitled as member of the community. Today’s economic poverty in these communities, their problematic migrant relations, and the land ownership conflicts appear to be among the prevailing processes that contribute to this pain and facilitate the desire to expel it through rage.
CHAPTER 7
Conclusion: What the Pangajow Killings Reveal

One morning, during a casual conversation with two farmers who were taking their mid-day rest from working their farms, I shared a few packed biscuits I had in my bag. Both immediately called in their children and shared it with them. After all packs were consumed instantly, one of the farmers said,

“The everyday struggle of the people here is to find rice to feed to their families. Logging will be useless someday when all the trees are exhausted. Good livelihood is what can stop the pangajow killings here. If people can feed their children well, they will feel bad about the idea of killing or being killed.”

The statement above supports one of the main contentions of this thesis: structural processes, particularly those conditions that relate to a dysfunctional state such as economic poverty, perpetuate violence among marginalized groups. Further, as the three preceding chapters showed, these structural processes are being reinterpreted using cultural concepts which the Agusan Manobo employed to characterize the practice. The general argument of this paper, therefore, is that acts of violence in indigenous and marginalized groups such as pangajow killings are being reproduced in terms of how oppressive conditions through structural processes are reinterpreted by the people using their cultural concepts. As I will further discuss in this chapter, this claim is supported by the interrelations of the salient cultural concepts in the narratives and the Agusan Manobo’s views on their varying structural conditions.
In this concluding chapter, I will first present a summary of the findings that addressed the key questions in this research. How do the Agusan Manobo articulate their understanding on the practice in terms of their local or cultural concepts? How do these cultural concepts relate to their views on their social, political, and economic conditions? I will then weave these findings into a larger interpretation of the narratives using the Agusan Manobo cultural concept of *ginhawa* or ‘breath’ and show how it can be employed as a model of the Agusan Manobo’s understanding of *pangajow* killings in terms of the links between cultural concepts (i.e., ‘community’ and ‘respect’) and their views on their current structural conditions.

By coding the data from the ethnographic research in two Agusan Manobo communities, three cultural concepts emerged as overarching or salient in the narratives of the informants. The first concept is *banua* or “community”. It reflects an idea of a collective means of addressing prevailing challenges or issues that people face as a group. This was particularly associated with old forms of *pangajow* killings, namely prestige killing and slave raiding. The use of this cultural concept in the narratives also showed how the Agusan Manobo viewed their current structural conditions. In characterizing the concept during periods when prestige killing and slave raiding were still observed, informants employed *banua* as a form of collective security to address the issues that arise with the presence of threats in the form of slave raiders and rival warrior chiefs. This sense of collectivity was viewed as something that was lost today as they face the issues that arise from the arrival of migrants in their communities. As they characterize their land conflicts with the migrants
today, the informants used of the concept of *banua* by limiting it to “house” where one’s family or domestic sphere is the primary source of security.

Another salient cultural concept in the narratives is *bantug* or “respect”. In the context of prestige killings, respect is viewed as crucial in establishing leadership of the warrior chiefs who were the central figure in providing for the security of an entire community against threats such as raiders. In the context of modern *pangajow*, specifically revenge killing, respect is focused on the need to appease the aggrieved party by restoring their social and economic status. Failure in doing so reproduces the feeling of social and economic marginalization that they are experiencing through poverty and conflicts with the migrants.

Lastly, the cultural concept of *ginhawa* or ‘breath’ presents a concept of ‘inhaling’ structural issues as pain and ‘exhaling’ it as rage which manifests in the practice of *pangajow*. Specifically, these structural issues include economic poverty which is viewed to create a sense of desperation and vulnerability that fuel pain and rage. The concept of *banua* or ‘community’ relates to this process of ‘breathing’ since the structural processes (e.g., economic poverty) are experienced by an individual who situates himself as part of a larger social unit, be it a house or a community. As part of this community, *bantug* or ‘respect’ is used as a lens for equilibrium or balance that maintains the social order.
One way to look at this model is to see what Victor Turner (1967) refers to as a ‘polarization of meanings’ of a cultural symbol which, in this case, is in the form of a cultural concept. In one end is what he calls the ‘sensory pole’ which relates to physical attributes such as the case of unruffled physiological breathing that the informants described as desirable and calming \(\text{hepa}\). At the other end is the ‘ideological pole’ which relates to the norms and values that maintain the social order. In this case, the concept of respect which is required to prevent ‘painful breathing’ serves as a guide for equilibrium among members within a group. The concept of \text{ginhawa}\, in this sense, relates to both embodied experiences of the Agusan Manobo as well as their moral and social order. The salience of this concept in the narratives regarding \text{pangajow}\, killings suggests that these killings are viewed both at the individual and social level. The role of the concept of \text{banua}\, or ‘community’ in this breathing process is to show that the Agusan Manobo interpret their experiences of structural processes
both as an individual and a member who situates himself within a larger group or community.

The Agusan Manobo model of ‘breath’ also shows how ‘culture’ and ‘structure’ are not a dichotomy but are interrelated domains. Structural processes such economic poverty and the issues arising from their migrant relations including land ownership conflicts are very crucial but are not the only factors to be taken into account. Rather, cultural concepts are equally relevant aspects to be taken into account, since these large-scale processes that the people experience are ‘inhaled’ or taken in through their collective understanding in the form of cultural concepts. It is, therefore, unproductive to examine whether these forms of violence in these indigenous and marginalized groups are a product of their ‘culture’ as a group or their ‘structure’ for being part of a larger structure, the state. Rather, it is in light of the dynamics between these two domains that the Agusan Manobo express their understanding on the practice.

One implication of these findings is that studies on violence among indigenous and marginalized groups can be used to reflect the prevailing structural conditions that concern the people the most and how they internalize it (both as an individual and as a social being) using their local frames of thoughts or cultural concepts. This understanding is a highly relevant foundation in the effort to address these forms of violence, for it presents what has happened in the communities and what can be done. What has happened in the Agusan Manobo communities that was reflected in the contemporary pangajow killings is the emergence of what Daniel Goldstein (2005) refers to as ‘flexible justice’ in his discussion on mob lynching in Bolivia as a self-help response to crimes in regions where the state does not
assume its functions. This type of justice is a self-help mechanism which operates when socio-economic and security aid from the state is absent or lacking, thereby people are left to implement their own form of justice by taking individual responsibility in addressing offenses that concern their safety and socio-economic welfare. Among the Agusan Manobo, this flexible justice became apparent in contemporary revenge killings where self-governance among the residents emerged from the paradox of multiple governing figures in a community – traditional leaders, communists, non-government organizations, and state officials. The paradox of this presence of multiple leaders in these communities is that the people ended up becoming their own leaders for themselves. This is apparent in contemporary pangajow, namely revenge killings and armed revolt, where the restoration of balance to regain breathing becomes the responsibility of disparate units rather than one governing body.

I believe that the emergence of flexible justice in the Agusan Manobo communities is, in part, brought about by the shift from the established leadership and governance of the bagani or warrior chiefs to the paradoxical loss of leadership amidst the multiplicity of leaders today. Of the four forms of pangajow, prestige killings appeared to have been practiced the longest, dating back to the pre-colonial period (e.g., Lapu-Lapu’s killing of Ferdinand Magellan in 1521 was cited by the Agusan Manobo as a historical form of prestige killing). Prestige killing was a venue in these communities to evaluate good and effective leadership in terms of physical transactions such as raiding, providing security against raiders, and killing of prominent rival figures. The Agusan Manobo, of course, are well aware that their struggle today especially in terms of land ownership and economic poverty requires them to engage in non-physical transactions such as education. However, physical
forms of resolution such as armed revolt (e.g., against mining groups that trespass their autonomy and ancestral domains) and revenge killings will remain as flexible forms of justice as the people continue to become their own modern-day warrior chiefs given the lack of a strongly recognized leadership in these communities. This adaptive practice of flexible justice, however, will only benefit kinship groups or other groups who have more access to resources such as guns and gunmen. The least powerful groups will have very little chance in addressing offenses made against them. This, in part, explains the need for these disparate acts of flexible justice to cease.

Aside from the apparent need of addressing economic poverty in these communities, the most crucial step to alleviate the ‘disrupted breathing’ is to establish a respected form of leadership that will make pointless the need for flexible justice. One thing that can be learned from how the Agusan Manobo viewed warrior chiefs (bagani) and the traditional leaders that serve as arbitrators (datu) is that a good leader is someone who does not only address the prevailing issues in the communities but experiences the consequences with his people. People feel reassured that the leader will address the problem to the best of his abilities because the same problem will affect him in the same way that it will affect the rest of the community. Another lesson from the traditional forms of leadership is that leaders emerge after achieving what the community considers as an accomplishment (e.g., successful raids for a bagani or successful cases of arbitration for a datu). Future research that will examine issues on leadership and the complexity of the socio-political structures today in indigenous and marginalized communities will be very helpful in understanding further these forms of violence among such groups.
With this complex dynamics between cultural concepts and structural processes in the context of pangajow killings that are made explicit in the cultural concept of ginhawa among the Agusan Manobo, this study shows that this practice is not simply an act but a process. It involves the painful ‘breathing in’ of experiences of structural processes to which one is subjected both as an individual and as a social being and the ‘breathing out’ of this uncontained pain as rage which manifests in the killings. In this sense, violence among marginalized and indigenous groups is a reciprocal action that involves the use of cultural concepts that reflect both the embodied and social experiences of the people as they continue to endure the issues brought about by the different structural processes.

Aside from the conspicuous need to address the economic poverty and the native-migrant conflicts in land ownership in these communities, it is also very important to take into account the crucial need for a strong leadership that the people recognized as respected (bantugan). It is very important to carefully investigate, therefore, the people’s local standards for good leadership and examine how the constitutional right of these indigenous communities to self-governance (as stipulated in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997) can be used to incorporate such standards in their local political structures. It would also be very helpful, in this regard, to explore how the native-migrant dynamics manifest in the political domain as more migrants appear to hold majority of the positions as state officials. These kind of steps imply that autonomy is one of the core issues from which all of the other problems emanate. This is to be expected in the Agusan Manobo communities which have been autonomous for the most part of their history. This struggle for autonomy has to be
taken very seriously or more modern-day warrior chiefs are likely to emerge in a foreseeable future.
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