

Wayway, C. D. (1996). *The indigenous structure of power in Sunnyside, Tadian, Mountain Province*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Baguio City: Baguio Colleges Foundation.

Physical location: University of the Cordilleras Library, Baguio City

ABSTRACT

An indigenous structure involves practices and processes long observed by certain people and easily identified by the elders in the community as guardians of such traditional ways and customs. Thus, the indigenous structure of power as the focus of the study is built through a network of relationship obtaining between protagonists in their capacity of playing the roles relative to one another. Based on these premises, the research describes and evaluates the power structure in six (6) small barangays in Sunnyside, Tadian in Mountain Province. The influence of the Amam-a or council of elders is discussed in relation to decision-making over a variety of community-wide issues and projects initiated.

The case study was the method adopted which involved descriptive and explanatory approach in explaining the power structure in the political development of the community with the view of likewise development of the community-wide activities and projects initiated by the council of elders or Amam-a.

The locale of the study is the Sunnyside barangays in Tadian, Mountain Province consisting of Bana-ao, Cadad-anan, Cagubatan, Dacudac, Pandayan and Lenga. The respondents were the elders who wield traditional powers and prominent members of the community who shed light to the indigenous practices and community projects accomplished. Questionnaires and interview guides were used together the data. Research was conducted in 1995.

The community projects accomplished through the influence of the Amam-a were road construction, electric power line installation, establishment of the

barangay high school, and communal activities such as maintenance of peace and order, beautification and cleanliness drive, and financial assistance to victims of calamities.

The indigenous power structure of the council of elders continues to exert influence due to the base of support that is compatible with the role it performs as outcome of reputational and decisional factors.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are deduced from the findings:

1. Sunnyside is a composite of six (6) barangays geographically apart from the rest of the surrounding communities in Tadian, Mountain Province. Each of these barangays is unique, revealing potentialities and physical characteristics for appreciation as well as utilization. On the other hand, they also demand attention that pressing socio-economic and educational problems should address. The legal structure of governance is common among the barangays but the tradition of indigenous leadership persists and prevails.

2. In spite of the incursion of modern civilization which is relatively welcomed by the communities, the barangays of Sunnyside have preserved their tradition and culture especially those practices considered still relevant and usable. On account of this, the Sunnyside barangays are typical of indigenous communities with the council of elders playing active and key roles for the common good.

3. The community development projects which were accomplished or completed through the initiation of the council of elders and with the active involvement of the barangay residents were the road network, electrification, setting up a secondary school, maintenance of peace and order, beautification and cleanliness, and traditional community-wide activities such as the semana, garatis, Oo, and kuloslosa.

4. The indigenous structure of leadership in the Sunnyside barangays still persists with the council of elders. The amam-a remains the traditional power in relation to socio-political affairs and economics undertakings that directly affect the interest and well-being of the barangays. Thus, the complementation of power between the duly constituted political governance (the municipal and barangay councils) and the indigenous structure of power (the council of elders) still subsists within a culture that refuses to expire as long as there are elders whom the barangay residents look up to.

5. The indigenous power structure of the council of elders continues to exert influence due to the base of support that can be employed in a condition that is compatible with the role the amam-a still performs. The reputational and decisional factors which sustain the councils of elders are still intact at Sunnyside.

Recommendations

The researcher proposes the following recommendations:

1. The community barangays of Sunnyside communities should continue with the tradition of recognizing the roles of the amam-a on social, political, educational and economic issues involving the common welfare of the residents. As years go by, there are persons who grow in wisdom brought about by experience and who are familiar with past events; such a usable past may blend with current events. They who remain in Sunnyside will be aware of the needs and problems of the community barangays. They would comprise the council of elders who will preserve the relevant culture and sustain the traditional practices that still serve their purposes for the benefit of the residents. However, the roles of leaders in a community should evolve, and not just assigned by family tradition since this becomes discriminatory and may turn elitist.

2. Let the amam-a decide what Sunnyside really needs in terms of community development projects through aided self-help activities. In this way,

the improvements will have higher significance to the people, and continuity based on sustainable development would take into account the preservation of their resources and the utilization of these bounties of nature by them and for them. The technology and modernization they ask for will be tempered by a culture that blends with nature.

3. It is upright and culturally responsive that the council of elders continue to hold on to the indigenous structure of power to complement or counter-balance the formal leadership of the legally mandated barangay council. This will prevent elective officials from abusing power, engaging in graft and corrupt practices, and seeking only self-serving ends. This being so, the informal and formal power structures can exist side by side for checks and balances.

The amam-a is pro-active inspite of its ritual hold to power. The leadership of the amam-a is not intermittent or sporadic due to elections unlike the elected barangay officials. Thus, the amam-a should continue to perform its roles as fiscalizer, neutralizer and adviser in community-wide issues and projects since its influence and decisions are for the good of the community.

4. Although this research, in a way, has documented considerable aspects of Sunnyside, there is a need to record further in detail the activities of the amam-a and a complete documentation of the historical, socio-economic, geopolitical and cultural characteristics of Sunnyside. It is not only for the sake of posterity, but more so for experiential learning in the fields of sociology, political science and local history.

5. Government and private agencies, in planning and in implementing policies in the barangays must always rely on advice and support from the amam-a. Hence before any program of activities can be finalized, the attention and consent of the amam-a will have to be sought first, taking into considerable detail their collective will. The success of community wide considerations and activities is anchored on the wisdom of the reliable amam-a. This will, in a way, heighten, reinforce or enhance the roles of the amam-a.

6. The study can be replicated in other communities by making use of Sunnyside as a model of community participation wherein the residents take on active roles in development.

One recommendation is for the communities of Sunnyside barangays to continue with the tradition of recognizing the roles of the Amam-a on social, political, educational and economic issues involving the common welfare of the residents. Any community development project has to be carried out through aided self-help efforts.

