

Kahampatan: Ayta's concept of development in the context of Indigenous People's (IP) culture and identity

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This paper describes the Ayta's notions and experiences of development within their own culture and identity which is encapsulated in their term 'kahampatan.' It is evident that long before the introduction of the dominant development paradigms into the Ayta communities in the Province of Zambales, these Ayta groups already had their perspectives about development and well-being. 'Kahampatan' is the Ayta's account of self-determined development that shares commonality with other indigenous notions of living well such as buen vivir, sumac kawsay and laman laka. The study used qualitative research methods with an indigenous research approach and orientation. Data were generated from semi-structured interviews, fieldwork-immersion and participant observation. 'Kahampatan' is depicted as an appropriate attitude and action towards relating positively with others and the realization of the goodness of life for everyone. 'Kahampatan' as a framework for development in the context of identity and culture emphasizes four elements of a good life or living well — a right relationship with Apo Namalyari or the Creator, a right relationship with the self, a right relationship with others and a right relationship with nature.

Keywords: Ayta of Zambales, IP identity and culture, *kahampatan*, self-determined development

Cultural constructs of development

Indigenous development paradigms have started to gain due recognition and positive inclusion into the development practice. These cultural constructs of development of indigenous peoples are expressed and signified in their own language. Cunningham (2010) mentioned examples of these, such as *laman laka* which reflects the development concept of the Miskitu people of Nicaragua, *sumak kawsay* in the Qhichwa language, *sumaqamaria* in Aymara, *sumac nandereco* in Guarani and *Buen Vivir* in Spanish (p.89). According to Cunningham (2010), these worldviews of development mean living well and do not merely refer to per capita income or economic growth.

The descriptions of indigenous development provide a development framework that focuses on harmony and positive relationship among human beings as well as with the social and physical environment. For instance, *buen vivir* presumes both common cultural mores and harmony between human beings and Mother Earth. It is anchored on values that "stand for culture, life, living together, complementarity, not just among people but between us and nature, and protection of the commonweal for the benefit of communities and nations as a whole" (Cunningham, 2010, p.89). Likewise, as Corpus (2010) explained, "*Buen Vivir* strives for the revitalization of all forms of life and living in the community, in which all members look out for all... the most important thing is not only the human, nor is it money. It is life." (p.94-95) Thus, *buen vivir* is a concept of a good life that is beyond growth and development.

A concept similar to *buen vivir* is that of *sumak kawsay*. *Sumak kawsay* is fundamentally different from the Western mindset where humans are seen as separate from nature, where nature is viewed as something to be controlled, as an object of domination and a source of wealth. *Sumak kawsay* involves living in harmony with the cycles of Mother Earth (Dillon, 2010). In the concept of *sumak kawsay*, community and communal living spaces embody the ethical norms and practices of reciprocity, collective property, living in communion with nature, social responsibility and consensus.

The diversity of the concepts and practices of a self-determined development or a development with identity and culture among the indigenous groups in the Philippines has started to be recognized and advanced. For instance, terms like *panagdur-as*, *nasayaat a panagbiag* (Tadeo, 2013), and *naimbag a biag* connote the meaning of development among the Ilocano. The Yakan representation of flourishing, as noted by Will (2015), is called *kaelleuman hap*. It depicts the modern concept of development as incongruent with the Yakan ideals of a good life which, as the study revealed, are

...the ability to have faith in Allah, to love and help one another, to respect one another, to have peace in community, to be educated, to work, to have shelter, to have good health, to take part in governance, and to travel. (Will, 2015:228)

Bennagen & Fernan (1996) illustrated this worldview by quoting the participants in a conference on ancestral domain of the peoples of Northern

Mindanao held in 1995:

Without this ancestral land, we will not exist...without the forest, mountains, rivers, and farms, we cannot continue to practice our culture. We, the indigenous peoples, are the true and rightful owners of our Ancestral Domain which we have inherited from our ancestors; and it will be the inheritance of our generations to come. Thus, it is our responsibility to develop, defend, and struggle for it by any means. (Bennagen & Fernan, 1996:143)

According to Awed (2010), these beliefs have shaped the Tbolis' view and relationship with the land and other resources, and the ways in which they conserve and protect these for their flourishing.

The Sama-Bajaus' cultural concept of development is *kasungan*. It was described in the study conducted by Milambilin (2018) as:

...achievement of basic human needs such as food, water and shelter essential in achieving wellness or good health, education for children, expression of one's cultures through maintaining different practices. *Kasungan* is an intertwining concept of happiness for Sama-Bajau, amidst challenges in pursuing their *kasungan* they express *kaligayahan* in their everyday life which signifies resiliency. (Milambilin, 2018:119)

Such notions of development with identity and culture are also embedded in the history and experiences of the Ayta groups of Pinatubo. The Magbukun Ayta describe their relationship with the environment, with other people and with each other as integrated oneness with nature and a collective worldview of livelihood, culture, tradition and practices. The protection and conservation of nature are their major concern, as they are directly dependent on the bounty and state of nature (Salonga, et.al., 2010).

The Mag-ansti Ayta in Bamban, Tarlac call their concept of well-being *katsighawan*. *Katsighawan* is described as a peaceful, abundant, healthy and happy life (Meneses, 2003). Alipao (2019) made a similar depiction of *kasighawan* as a social concept of the Aytas' vision of an ancestral domain and communities in which order and abundance are present. This vision includes lasting peace, social justice, healthy peoples and communities, a risk-free environment, and integration of creation. The Zambal Ayta in Sitio Banawan, San Felipe, Zambales articulated their notion of development as

kainomayan. This simply means an abundance of creation where resources are bountiful, thus enabling everyone to live in harmony with nature (Meneses, 2011).

Research Objectives

This study anchored its purpose on Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples or UNDRIP, in which it is stated that indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (Article 3, UNDRIP). The Declaration was also inspired by the questions raised by representatives of indigenous peoples in international forums, such as the International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples: Development with Culture and Identity: Articles 3 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, held on January 12 to 14, 2010 in New York. This meeting was an articulation of indigenous peoples' concept of development that embraces a holistic approach which includes their aspirations, respect and protection of their diversity and uniqueness. It was also a reiteration of indigenous peoples' desire to become agents of their own development and have the foresight to promote a development paradigm that is self-determining.

In response, this study was conducted to explore the Aytas' worldview and experience of development with identity and culture, and to eventually bring these notions to the fore of development discourse. The narratives of *kahampatan* were thematically analyzed to inform the formulation of a *kahampatan* framework for development with identity and culture. This conceptual framework is intended to promote the inclusion of indigenous development paradigms.

Significance of the Study

A study about the notion of development by the Ayta and for the Ayta is significant at a time of re-imagining and re-claiming people's development. The findings from this study aim to contribute to the growing array of literature about indigenous knowledges for learning institutions to utilize for discussion and research purposes. The study may also inform curriculum and instruction in development studies through the inclusion of indigenous articulations of self-determined development.

Aside from contributing to knowledge building, the findings may also provide government agencies with a working framework for setting a development agenda for the Ayta. The conceptual framework may be used as an input to policies that are intended to provide welfare and development services to improve the quality of life of the Ayta population. Among the policies that can be implemented are culturally rooted education, healthcare, social welfare services and the protection through legislation of their ancestral domain and the environment serving as their primary source and resource of livelihood and spirituality. This study seeks attention from the government to recognize the alternative development paradigm of the Ayta in the pursuit of the good life.

The insights that may be drawn from this study could provide new ways to approach development and welfare discourses and responses concerning indigenous peoples in general and Ayta groups in particular. These may offer “entervention” strategies to complement current intervention methods in assisting IP communities to improve their quality of life. The concept of entervention is a more oblique approach to realizing the goals of development among indigenous people that puts emphasis on the continuing capability building, empowerment and self-reliance of the people.

Research Methodology

The selection of methods and approaches in this study was based on the context of indigenous research. According to Porsanger (2010), indigenous research — as it differs from research on, with and about indigenous peoples — means research done by scholars who develop indigenous theorizing, identify and use indigenous concepts, and build their projects on an indigenous research paradigm (Posanger, 2010).

This research made use of several approaches in conducting indigenous research to ensure the centering of the indigenous peoples' worldviews. The first research approach was fieldwork-immersion,. Yin (2012) noted that working in the field requires establishing and maintaining genuine relationships with other people and being able to converse comfortably with them. The “fieldwork first” approach was done for the purpose of defining the research problems, as the researcher began immersion with the Ayta of Sitio Alibang in 2012. During the fieldwork-immersion, relevant bits of information gathered from informal exchanges with the community members were recorded in the researcher's field notes, sketches and drawings, as well as in a digital voice recorder.

The second approach was qualitative interviews. Qualitative interviews are conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion. The researcher elicits depth and details about the research topic by following up on answers given by the interviewee during the discussion. In the qualitative interview approach, the researcher learns from the people, rather than merely studying them. Thus, the researcher follows the hints provided by Yin (2012) for doing qualitative interviewing, such as: 1) speaking in modest amount, 2) being non-directive, 3) staying neutral, 4) maintaining rapport, 5) using an interview protocol, and 6) analyzing when interviewing (Yin, 2012). In qualitative interviews, each conversation is unique, as the researcher matches the questions to what each interviewee knows and is willing to share (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). All interviews for this study were conducted in the form of *kuwentuhan* during cooking and mealtime, at home over a cup of coffee, or in the interviewees' *gasak* doing agricultural activities. There was no timeframe set for these interviews as each one was treated as a conversation.

The third approach was the Focus Group Discussion. The subject groups were divided into two generations, the older composed of adult *kalalakihan* and *kababaihan*, and the younger composed of *kabataan* or youth. The participants were asked to describe their community profile with the use of mapping techniques. The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tool was used as a more culture-sensitive means to enlist participation among the Ayta. PRA is described as a growing body of methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and the conditions to plan, act, monitor and evaluate (Kumar, 2002). The use of the PRA tools is meant to facilitate guided interaction (Calub, 2004) between the indigenous people and the researcher, requiring a change in attitudes and behaviors between and among the participants. The essence of PRA is change and reversal of role, behavior, relationship and learning. Here, outsiders do not dominate and lecture; they facilitate, sit down, listen and learn (Chambers, 2003). In the study, the participants were asked to draw maps showing the socio-economic situation of their place and these were then analyzed by them in terms of development within Ayta identity and culture.

Indigenous methods such as these enfold the researcher and community members into a layered relationship (mind, body, emotion, and spirit) in a holistic, investigative endeavor. Indigenous research methods aim to surface indigenous voices, build resistance to dominant knowledge, create political spaces, and strengthen people's sense of community (Smith, 2010).

The Data Gathering Process

The first step the researcher undertook was *pakikipanuluyan* which signaled the formal entry into the research locale. It was also considered as a juncture for *pagta-tao po* to request for informed consent and access to the community members' indigenous knowledges . The second step was the *pakikipanirahan* which focused on contact-building through the identification of host families to be tapped during the data collection. This was a crucial opportunity to enter into the loob of the research participants. The third step was *pakikipamuhay*, an activity to change the researcher's image from visitor to "one of us" or from *ibang-tao* to *di-ibang-tao* — since the quality of the data differs when research participants feel that the researcher is *di-ibang-tao*.

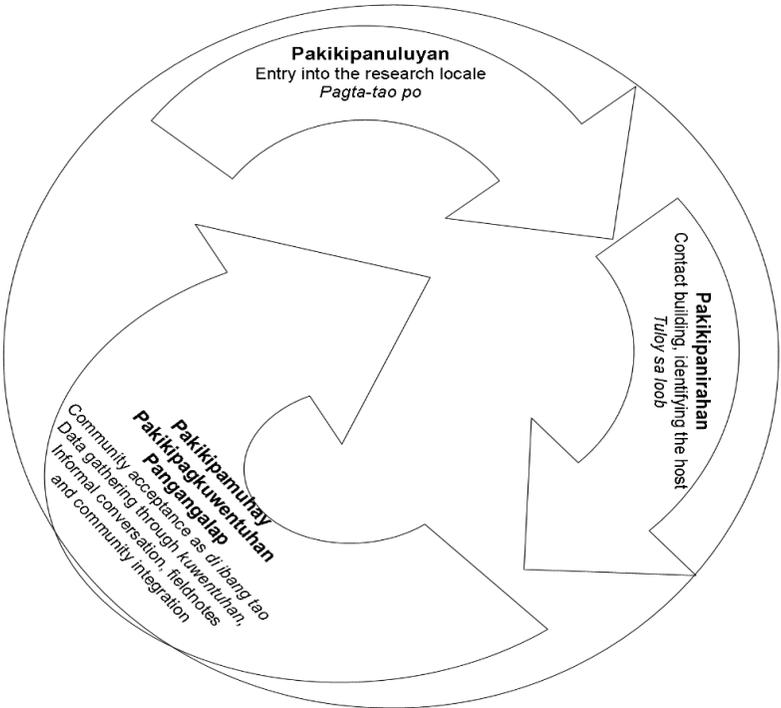


Figure 1. The data gathering process with reference to indigenous research and the community organizing process

The research process is illustrated (see Figure 1) as a spiral movement progressing inward, signifying the importance of the process of entering the participants' *loob*.

Results and Discussion

This study was conducted among two Ayta groups in Zambales to explore the concept of *kahampatan* as an Ayta concept of development with identity and culture. One group was the Ayta in Sitio Alibang, situated in the mountainous part of Barangay Naugsol in the Municipality of Subic. The Ayta in Sitio Alibang belong to the Ambala tribe which practices swidden farming to cultivate food sources especially during seasons when no food can be gathered from the mountains. The Ambala Ayta are also engaged in *pag-uuling* (charcoal-making) as a supplementary source of cash to buy rice, bread, coffee, sugar and salt.

Both the women and men of the Ambala Ayta participate in productive processes from clearing the land to planting and harvesting. However, the women tend to do the household chores while the men perform the more labor-intensive work. Ayta children play together and are allowed to participate in community activities. At an early age, both girls and boys are enculturated to perform adult tasks such as planting, hunting, fishing, gathering banana blossoms, and collecting honey and other forest products.

The second group of research participants was composed of members of *Lubos na Alyansa ng mga Katutubong Ayta sa Sambales* or LAKAS Pamayanan. LAKAS Pamayanan is an alliance of Ayta groups in the province of Zambales located in Sitio Bihawo, Mambog, Botolan. As a self-reliant Ayta organization, the alliance has developed a good leadership and followership system based on indigenous knowledges and skills. During the conduct of the study, LAKAS Pamayanan members told stories about their struggles and successes, their pains and joys as they continue to strive to normalize their lives after the Mt. Pinatubo eruption.

They recounted a time of *kainomayan* (abundance) in their original place in Baytan before the eruption – how their life was so abundant since they grew enough food and were free to hunt wild animals such as *baboy damo* (wild pig), *usa* (deer) and *labuyo* (wild chicken), as well as gather fruits and *pulot* (honey).

When the eruption forced them to leave Baytan, they experienced living in ten evacuation centers. In their search for a new location, they set a condition that the place should be situated within view of Mt. Pinatubo. They still wanted to see the place where they had grown up and which had provided them with the cultural values of generosity and love.

They endured various struggles before they found a place in Bihawo where they bought a 7.5- hectare parcel of land for Php475, 000.00 from their savings in their cooperative. Once settled, the LAKAS Pamayanan continued to strengthen their organization through literacy classes and capacity building with the sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary who committed themselves to the empowerment of the Ayta. They learned how to read and write, mingle with others, balance their personal life between commitment to their community and responsibility to their family as well as their aspiration to learn; and in the process, they continued to preserve their culture while living in the lowland.

Descriptions of *Kahampatan*

The Sambal Ayta in LAKAS Pamayanan use the term *kainomayan* which is translated as abundance, while the Ambala Ayta in Sitio Alibang refer to *kahampatan* or goodness (goodness of life for everyone). However, the two groups of Ayta agree that *kainomayan* is one of the preconditions of *kahampatan*.

According to them, *kahampatan* as development with identity and culture should possess the following elements:

Shared Identity. *Kahampatan* is manifested as a caring attitude towards the well-being of community members. All are part of community and deserve to be cared for. For instance, one participant shared how she monitors her neighbors' needs by looking at the smoke coming out of the house. This is an indication of deep concern for the condition of others, as she related,

Kada umaga tinitingnan ko ang bawat bahay at, kapag walang usok, ibig sabihin di nagluluto. At kapag buong araw na walang usok sa bahay, sigurado ako na wala silang pagkain na lulutuin. Kaya ang ginagawa namin ng tatay mo, pinupuntahan namin para bigyan ng bigas at ulam na lulutuin. (Every morning I monitor every house in the neighborhood. If I see no smoke coming out of the house, I am sure the family has no food to cook and to eat. So your father and I go to their house and give them rice and viand to cook.)

Shared Nobility. The experience of *kahampatan*, as shared by another participant, resonates with the Filipino Psychology concept of *kagandahang loob* or shared inner nobility or reciprocity. *Kahampatan* as *kagandahang loob* is manifested through the act of good relationship with others, as the participant said:

Ang kahampatan ay magandang relasyon sa pamilya at sa kapwa tao. Basta ang kabutihan ang laging nasa puso mo. (Kahampatan means good relationship with your family and other people. Goodness should always be in your heart.)

Kahampatan as a quality experience of development underscores the importance of living with one's goodness of the heart. And goodness of the heart necessitates a respectful gesture towards others, as one participant explained:

*Ang mahalaga ay igalang mo sarili mo, igalang mo ang kapwa mo. Wag kang gagawa ng ikasisira ng pagkatao mo, kasi pag sira ang pagkatao mo, di maganda ang buhay mo, walang kahampatan, walang kainomayan. (Respect for the self and others are important. Don't do something that destroys your personhood because, if your reputation is destroyed, there is no more *kahampatan*, no *kainomayan*.)*

The manifestation of *kahampatan* as goodness of the heart can be seen, for instance, in Sitio Alibang. Every house does not have a door and lock signifying the intention to share what the family has with others who do not have.

Ang kahampatan sa amin ay magandang relasyon sa kapwa. Makikita mo iyan halimbawa dito walang bahay ang nakakandado, ang lahat ng bahay laging nakabukas. (Kahampatan in our community is having good relationships with others. You can see that, for example, no house here is locked, all the houses are always open.)

Malaya ang kapitbahay na kumuha ng kailangan tulad ng asin, asukal o apoy mula sa kalan. Kaya iniwang nakabukas ang pintuan. (Our neighbors are free to get whatever they need like salt, sugar or fire from the stove. So our doors are left open.)

Good Food. *Kahampatan* as food reflects the simplicity of the development goals of the Ayta. Any intention to improve their lot is directed towards having enough food every day. It is observed that the work they do, such as *paggasak* (cultivation) and *pagtatanim* (planting), is related to the production of food. They spend most of their human energy in planting rice, root crops, and vegetables as well as in raising animals, catching fish in the river and gathering honey and banana blossoms. The good food that the Ayta refer to as *kahampatan* must be endemic, organic and free from poisonous chemicals. This might be a possible explanation for the alleged

report by development agencies which assisted the Ayta in the evacuation centers during the Mt. Pinatubo eruption that the Ayta did not know how to eat sardines and other food items given to them. One participant articulated the reason:

Ngayon, pag kumakain kami ng pagkain ninyo ay di kami nabubusog. Kapag ube at kamote, busog na kami. (Now, if we eat your food (referring to sardines and other preserved foods), we don't feel contented. When we eat *ube* and *kamote*, we feel satisfied.)

Iyong bigas na binibigay ng taga-labas sa amin na galing sa NFA ay may halong gamot. Akala naman nila di kami marunong kumain ng magagandang klaseng bigas. Nagtatanim nga kami ng black rice na magandang klaseng bigas. (The NFA rice that outsiders give to us is mixed with chemicals. Maybe they think that we don't know how to eat good varieties of rice. In fact, we are planting black rice which is good quality rice.)

Good health. *Kahampatan* as health refers not only to the absence of disease but also includes the presence of “ease” of the body (*pangangatawan*). For the Ayta, a healthy body is the main capital to achieve quality of life. One participant connects being physically healthy to *kahampatan* in terms of having the strength to work. The work they do in the land necessitates a healthy physical condition.

Ang kahampatan ay wala kang nararamdamang sakit. Malusog ang pangangatawan. Siyempre kung may sakit ka, hindi ka makakapaghanapbuhay. Di ka mapalagay dahil iniisip mo ang pamilya. Kung walang hanapbuhay, walang kahampatan. (*Kahampatan* means no illness and you are healthy physically. Of course, if you are ill, you cannot work. You are not at ease because you are thinking about your family. If you have no work, then there is no *kahampatan*.)

Good Education. Education is seen as the key to living life in *kahampatan*. The school system or the mainstream educational system has been acculturated into the Ayta culture and assimilated its elements in terms of Ayta cultural practices. Education has brought positive changes in many ways, from becoming confident to interact with people from all walks of life to gaining critical knowledge, attitudes and skills in asserting their rights in the midst of fast-paced technological progress that tends to undermine their identity and culture.

Formal education is accepted as a positive conduit of development among the Ayta in both Sitio Alibang and in LAKAS Pamayanan. Thus, the leadership of LAKAS Pamayanan is focused on improving their life through education. They articulate it every time support groups and institutions come to offer development assistance for them:

May mga nagpunta dito, mga pastor daw sila. Sabi nila magtatayo daw silang kapilya. Sabi ko, papayag kami kung sa halip na simbahan ay paaralan ang itayo nila. (Some men visited us here, they identified themselves as pastors. They told us that they want to put up a chapel. I suggested that, instead of a church, they should build us a school.)

Kung pera po ang ibibigay ninyo sa amin, di po magtatagal. Maganda po ang karununganang ibigay ninyo sa amin at nakakasiguro po kami habang kami nabubuhay buhay pa rin po ang inyong tulong sa amin. (If you give us money, it won't last. It is good if you give us knowledge and we are sure that, as long as we are living, your help lives on.)

For one participant, *kahampatan* is an aspiration of the good life through education. She elaborated:

Sa amin mga Ayta, maganda na ang buhay kung may pinag-aralan. Iyong hindi na naloloko at naipaglalaban na ang karapatan sa aming lupang ninuno. (For us Ayta, we have a good life if we have education. Not being swindled anymore and able to fight for our rights in our ancestral domain.)

Sharing the Blessings of Apo Namalyari. Sharing what one has is something that is common practice among the Ayta communities. Sharing allows everyone to experience *kahampatan* because it is directed to the realization of the goodness of life for everyone.

One research participant illustrated this *kahampatan* experience when we went to gather banana blossoms in the mountains. In a half day, he had gathered two sacks of banana blossoms. But I noticed that there were many more banana blossoms and insisted on gathering all so more could be brought and be sold in the market. But he said: *Tama na 'to, para sa iba naman iyan. (This is enough, those are for others also.)* He was referring to the lowlanders as "others" who come and gather banana blossoms in their place. (My journal, November 2, 2014)

Another participant shares the blessings of Apo Namalyari by distributing the harvest to all families in Sitio Alibang.

Tulad niyang mga mais na iyan, inani naming kahapon, at lahat ng pamilya dito binigyan ko ng mais. Kaya kahit saang bahay ka mag punta may roon silang mais na ipapakain sa iyo. (Just like those corns, we harvested yesterday, and all the families have a share of corns. So every house you go to visit, they have corn to offer to you).

Respect for the land. For the Ayta, land is the source of all life. So it should not be monetized and converted into a commodity. All the participants strongly agreed that land is life and everything that comes from the land is for the goodness of life. As they put it: “*Lahat na galing sa lupa ay kahampatan.*” (Everything that comes from the land is *kahampatan*.)

Land is central to the Ayta fulfilment of the goodness of life and the experience of the quality of life. *Kahampatan* comes with the productivity of the land. Out of respect for the land, the Ayta do not plant for cash. They plant for food. All the participants agreed that land is the most valuable source of their food, health, livelihood, culture and power so it should not be sold. They had this to say:

“Iyong pera pag nagastos mo na. wala na. Ang lupa habang buhay iyan nagbibigay ng ikabubuhay.” (When money is spent, it is gone. The land will forever provide us with livelihood.)

Symbiotic relationship with other beings. For the Ayta, humans are not seen as separate from the environment. Nature is not viewed as something to be controlled, dominated or domesticated, nor viewed as a source of wealth. The Ayta see other creatures in a symbiotic relationship, as interdependent providing each one a part of life and thereby promoting *kahampatan* in the Ayta community. Thus, *kahampatan* is inclusive in promoting a quality experience of development not only among fellow humans but also with non-human species such as birds and other animals.

Ang mga ibon tulad ng kawkaw at kulasisi ang nagtatanim ng mga saging. Kinakain nila iyong bunga at itinatae nila 'yong buto, at iyon tumutubo. Kaya maraming saging sa bundok na pinagkukukunan namin ng puso. Ang mga ibon ay nagbibigay ng kahampatan! (Birds like the kawkaw and kulasisi plant bananas. They eat the fruits and eliminate the seeds, which then grow. That is why there are many bananas in the mountains where we gather banana blossoms. The birds are giving us *kahampatan*!)

Kainomayan or Abundance. According to one participant, *kahampatan* is an attitude (*pag-uugali*) while *kainomayan* is abundance (*kasaganahan*). *Kasaganahan* that is not defined by *kahampatan* cannot provide the quality of experience of development. Thus, the realization of *kainomayan* which means the bountiful life for all must also be the fulfillment of *kahampatan* — the good of everyone. For the Ayta, *kainomayan* is a vision of re-creating the past, since their past was so full of abundance. The bounty was sufficient to provide for their needs, especially before the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. Thus, the Ayta continue to long for this “past” in their present and in their future life, because their past situation is what they cherish as *kainomayan*. As one participant described it:

Noon, kung may kailangan ka, punta ka lang sa taniman, magpitaa ka lang, may gulay na pang-ulam ka na. (In the past, if you needed something to eat, you could just go to the garden, pick vegetables, and there you already had your viand.)

Kahampatan as Conceptual Framework of Development with Identity and Culture

As re-imagined development with identity and culture among the Ayta, *kahampatan* is, in essence, an appropriate attitude and act that entails nurturing, positive and right relationships. The experience of *kahampatan* can be ensured through having the right relationship with Apo Namalyari or the Creator, with the self, with others and with nature.

The right relationship with the Creator will lead to ecological and social justice because of due respect given to every form of life in all of creation. Everything is sacred because all creatures share the holiness of the Creator. If ecological and social justice are well in place, then goodness of life for everyone can be fulfilled.

The right relationship with the self and with others will result to positive treatment and dealings with others, both humans and non-humans. Relationships with others are not defined in terms of socially constructed statuses such as gender, age, disability, economic class, education, position, etc. The cultivation of equality and freedom is seen as necessary for the realization of a collective experience of well-being.

The right relationship with nature or with the environment and the land makes life viable and sustainable. Nature is the source of life. Thus, land is life. This essential connection to the land has compelled the Ayta

to live a simple life -- taking just enough as needed from the environment which in turn is a means to protect and preserve it. Its conservation will bring about peace, harmony and integrity of creation that will eventually sustain ecological well-being.

Figure 2 summarizes the relationship among these diverse concepts.

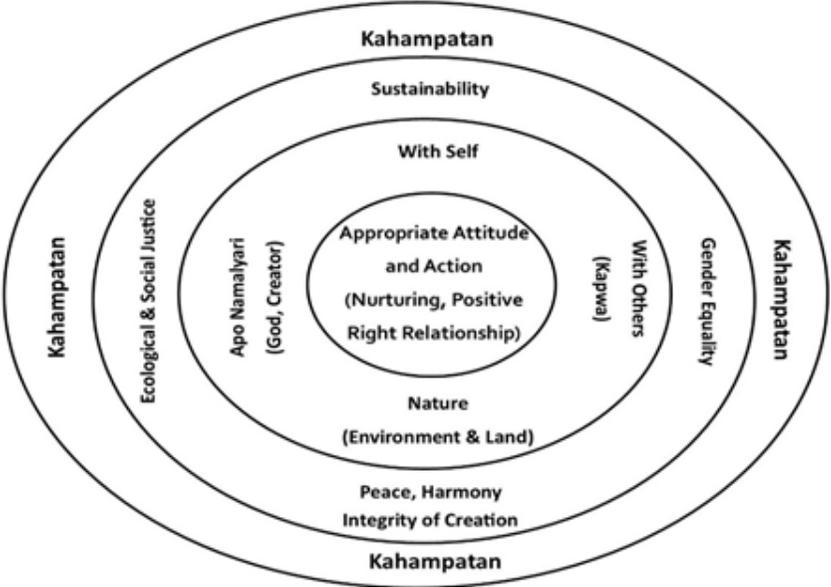


Figure 2. The framework of kahampatan development with identity and culture

Kahampatan as a practice of wellbeing

Like any other cultural notions of development among indigenous communities, *kahampatan* emphasizes a positive and right relationship and interdependence with human and non-human entities within the systems. This means that all forms of life are perceived to have inherent worth and dignity and can contribute to the upholding of the symbiotic relationship among them all. Symbiosis or a close association among different creatures is a common worldview among indigenous people and it is considered an important element of development with identity and culture. If this relational association is sustained, then it results in the satisfaction of the biological or physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of well-being. A well nurtured ecology, in turn, ensures the well-being of individuals and communities as it will serve as the social and natural source and resource for living a good life. Thus, *kahampatan* as an indigenous meaning of development and well-being means that every element relates

to, causes and affects all the other elements. The dysfunctioning of one element affects the rest, just as the proper functioning of all elements brings the fulfilment of the goodness of life for everyone.

In essence, *kahampatan* is a relational development. Its emphasis on relationship provides an effective guarantee of the well-being of all. That is, the survival of any one individual essentially depends on the support of each one for all the others. This relational development cultivates a positive and right relationship with the Creator, with nature (including the environment and land), with others and with the self. The rightness of these relationships ensures simplicity, peace, justice, equity, equality and integrity of creation.

At its very foundation, *kahampatan* is tied to the ancestral domain. Lands and territories have material, cultural, economic and spiritual dimensions for the Ayta. These are required for their subsistence and economic sustainability, and are intrinsically linked to their identity and existence as an Ayta nation. *Kahampatan* as a practice of well-being for all conserves the environmental and ecological resources that are vital and integral components to the attainment of well-being. The Ayta are highly dependent on their lands and natural resources, thus any change to the ecosystem is likely to have an impact on their way of life and survival. Environmental degradation, for instance, contributes to continued poverty among the Ayta due to their strong reliance on the environment for their livelihoods.

Kahampatan can enliven the discourse of social development in a number of ways. First, *kahampatan* can contribute to biodiversity conservation and environmental protection and conservation. The Ayta have not resorted to destructive resource practices despite the alluring influence of the cash economy. *Kahampatan* as a model of indigenous development promotes ecologically sound resource management that nourishes the land as the source of survival and existence. In this sense, *kahampatan* can serve as an ethic of sustainable development, as its emphasis on positive and right relationship is congruent with the principles of sustainable development. Second, *kahampatan* is a comprehensive concept of development that addresses the fulfilment of the needs within the bio-psycho-social-spiritual-ecological dimensions of well-being. *Kahampatan* can be experienced through the realization of the components of well-fullness that include welfare or provisions for basic needs, being well or the state of being healthy, activities for capacity building and empowerment, and well-being as the state of having the goodness of life.

Note:

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