

Reg(u)arding Indigenous Environmental Discourses in Philippine (F)laws

Abstract

The cultural angle is noticeably absent in RA 10174, an amendment to the local Climate Change Action Plan. Coupled with interviews with SAGIBIN-LN (an organization of indigenous council of leaders of the Agta-Dumagats) and surveys on human-nature relations, the ineffectual recognition of the CADT (Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title) is perceived by its intended recipients as mere lip service. If they are regarded as minorities in situ, the Local Government Units would be hard-pressed to consider the legitimizing indigenous voice on climate change. Because of the complex issues present in the material-symbolic discourse on nature-culture relations, this research did not simply identify dualities; rather, it sought indigenous consci(enti)ousness that fell outside the imposed binaries on the disempowered minorities. In pursuing environmental sovereignty, the narratives of the Agta-Dumagat indigenous peoples are characterized by a sense of desperation as they share stories replete with oppressive themes. Their disenfranchisement fuels their environmental conscientiousness-cultural consciousness struggles against the oppressive laws ironically enacted to protect them.