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Territories: Philippine Cordilleran Governance and its Arendtian Parallels

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Abstract:

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resisting state governance or any governance coming from without for that matter? The answer may lie in the observation that conflicting opinions have presented themselves, and instead of negotiating these differences as equals, the state is asserting dominance against indigenous peoples. Can the indigenous really be blamed for protecting the land?

The disparity between *the code* and *the land* can be

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council system is a legitimate form of governance.
John Sitton comments:

Her purpose is simply to sketch a political structure to illustrate the possibility of realizing alternative political principles: direct democracy, the experience of public freedom and public happiness in the modern world, an arena for proper opinion formation and a polity not based on the notion of sovereignty (Sitton, 1994, 308).

Not seeing the likelihood of her suggestions as operative and viable in real practice, critics brand and dismiss her view of council democracy as 'utopian', 'unrealistic' or 'historically rare' (cf. Bortolini, 2003, 2-3). But what Arendt offers is *governance aside from* (not *instead of*) the vertical and hierarchical structure offered by the state. Her council system is one which she gleans in part from the ideal of the Greek *polis* (Bokiniec, 2009, 78), from Thomas Jefferson's remark for increased citizen participation⁹, as well as from the council movements of the 20th century. Bortolini explains that myopic or closed-off perspectives may have been in place when some critics judged

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becoming administrators of governments rather than as participators in the same. They were eager to wrest state power only to

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acknowledge their membership in the Filipino nation, and as its citizens, they are aware of the need to participate in its affairs. In the least, what is called for is the recognition of the distinct way of life that guides the Cordilleran mindset. Again, this is one based strongly on the land. In truth many present local agencies of the Philippine state acknowledge indigenous governance systems and take them into consideration, but a wider acknowledgement (on the national level) should be argued for. Should state governance recognize this, then conflicts would have lesser and lesser legitimacy. *The indigenous Cordillerans know this naturally, and the state needs to incept it in its code.*

References

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