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Research Article

Indigeneity and the Anthropocene: Recontextualizing Modern Technology in the Lived World of the T'boli and Obu Manuvu

Christopher Ryan Maboloc, Rogelio Bayod, Anesito Cutillas, Menelito Mansueto, & Ritche Nuevo

Author Information:

[1]**Christopher Ryan Maboloc**
Associate Professor
crbmaboloc@addu.edu.ph
orcid.org/0000-0001-7057-4032

[2]**Rogelio Bayod**
Associate Professor
rogelio.bayod@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0002-8654-7714

[3]**Anesito Cutillas**
Associate Professor
anesito.cutillas@ctu.edu.ph
orcid.org/0000-0003-2698-2412

[4]**Menelito Mansueto**
Assistant Professor
migs_mansueto@yahoo.com
orcid.org/0000-0001-7971-6017

[3]**Ritche Nuevo**
Associate Professor
ritche.nuevo@ctu.edu.ph
orcid.org/0000-0001-8020-318X

[1]Ateneo de Davao University
Davao City, Philippines

[2]North Valley College
Kidapawan City, Philippines

[3]Cebu Technological University—Argao
Argao, Cebu, Philippines

[4]Mindanao State University—Iligan
 Institute of Technology
Iligan City, Philippines

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Abstract

The Anthropocene refers to the dystopic condition of the human world. Environmental destruction and socio-cultural degeneration now characterize humanity's current state of affairs. To preserve indigenous culture, the intrusion of Western values must be resisted to escape the catastrophe brought by this technological onslaught. Employing the interpretive research method, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to investigate the way of life, social environment, and use of modern devices by members of two Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) in South and North Cotabato—the T'boli and Obu Manuvu. We present two schools of thought. On one hand, it is suggested that there has been an erosion of the cultural identity of Indigenous Peoples (IP) due to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). On the other hand, it can be said that the T'bolis and Obu Manuvus have continued to live their unique way of life and traditions despite the presence of modern technology. According to Martin Heidegger, such an unfolding is unstoppable. This means that the essence of technology is part of man's being. Andrew Feenberg explains that while technology has an instrumental role, it is also concerned with its adaptability to societal aspects, which he calls recontextualization, enabling people to benefit from the good made possible by modern devices.

Bantilan, Ingilan, and Asrifan (2024) studied the most recent developments in linguistics regarding the T'bolis of South Cotabato, thereby filling a gap in the literature, noting that studies on the same are mostly outdated. This study follows such an important initiative by investigating the influence of social media and modern technology on indigenous peoples and their communities. Social media and other forms of technology have invaded the lives of millions of people worldwide. There is, however, a need to examine its impact on indigenous communities. The prevailing view is that modern devices and gadgets harm people's lives. By way of definition, "social media refers to Web 2.0 functionalities relating to user-generated content" (Intahchompoo, 2018, p. 88). An important aspect of social media is its capacity to connect people and create networks. Intahchompoo (2018, p. 88) explains that "social networking refers to how people use social media tools to communicate and engage with other users to build online communities." First, there is a need to distinguish the meaning of our lived experiences from that of the digital or virtual world. Our lived experience has to do with our everyday lives, the things we care about and aspire to, and our connectedness to the real world with actual human beings. The digital world refers to a platform that connects people online, enabling them to relate to and share experiences and views through social media, for example. In this study, we chose to consider the lived world of Indigenous Peoples in South and North Cotabato. We also asked them about their use of social media and how it has influenced their lives. We sought to understand the influence of modern tools and devices in the lives of the T'boli and the Obu Manuvu, and how their cultures try to resist or adapt to the onslaught of modernity in their everyday lives, especially the role of their leaders in responding to such influence (Ingilan, 2017). Smailhodzic et al. (2024, p. 2) write:

> The resilience and adaptive strategies of Indigenous communities, as highlighted by their historical context, are crucial for our research, providing a backdrop for understanding how they might similarly navigate and adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by social media.

Smailhodzic et al. (2024, p. 2) explain that "indigeneity is a collection of diverse cultural, spiritual and epistemological elements that vary across different geographical and cultural contexts." Indigenous communities have shown resilience over the years in various ways, including the reality of climate change, the pandemic, and the influence of consumerism on the everyday life of people, which are actually Western in terms of origin and influence. Social media, in particular, today has the power and influence to control human behavior. This is evident in commerce, culture, and politics. Algorithms control consumer behavior, and fake news has a tremendous effect on voters' decision-making, thereby affecting election results. Smailhodzic et al. (2024, p. 2) think that "the historical experiences of colonization and systemic oppression have profoundly shaped Indigenous Peoples' interactions with their environment." The danger when it comes to this is the loss of one's cultural identity, because the young people among Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) in the Philippines need to adapt to a new environment. However, we would like to argue that the T'bolis and the Obu Manuvus have shown strong resilience against the intrusion of Western values and culture, preserving their heritage even against the destructive forces of modernity, as evidenced by the Anthropocene. What is the explanation for this?

First, we discuss the impact of modern technology on human life. The concept of the Anthropocene, for instance, reveals the domination of humanity over nature, resulting in massive environmental destruction. There is no study of the application of the Anthropocene to cultural communities in the South. The Anthropocene, in fact, remains a Western paradox. ICCs like the T'boli and Obu Manuvu, for example, have actually survived the impact of hundreds of years of colonial influence and control. Ingilan (2017) documents the resilience of the Obu Manuvu in the hinterlands of Davao City through their own leadership structure and social hierarchy, which respond to various communal problems and issues, including natural disasters. Indigenous Peoples in the

Philippines, for example, have also survived the most recent pandemic, which has devastated other societies, resulting in economic meltdowns and six million deaths (Maboloc, 2020). The dystopian effects of modern models of progress are apparent in societies that have failed to adapt to the introduction of a consumer culture reliant on Western capital and knowledge. Such models refer to the globalized nature of human interaction and a sheer emphasis on material satisfaction. This has catapulted man to abuse and exploit his environment.

The Anthropocene is manifest in the dominance of human activities worldwide (Hartsell, Krabbe & Pastreich 2020; Rennesland, 2020). Rennesland (2020), for instance, argues that modern progress has been achieved at the expense of the environment. Hartsell et al. (2020) argue that the modern, anthropocentric model of progress has brought humanity into the Anthropocene. How do Indigenous cultures respond to the Westernization of knowledge and their way of life? In the field of modern technology, Weckert and Bayod (2023) introduce a new ethics of technology, anchored on the cultural dynamics of Indigenous Peoples, in which they argue that Indigenous Peoples actually resist change and Western influence. Their study reveals that an alternative way of life exists outside the influence and rupture brought forth by modern models of progress. Despite the risks and challenges posed by consumer culture, Weckert and Bayod (2023) argue that locals have a different philosophy from the Western way of life. They have not lost their sense of identity because of this. One instance of such cultural preservation is the fact that "the T'boli people significantly contributed to the creation of the T'boli dictionary, demonstrating their pride in their heritage and dedication to language preservation" (Bantilan et al., 2024, p. 105).

The participation of people themselves is crucial in the preservation of their culture. The tendency is for the West to dictate how indigeneity is supposed to be defined. This elitist attitude is just another manifestation of cultural imperialism. Weckert and Bayod (2023) suggest that Western societies can learn from the Orientals. The answer, of course, is in the affirmative, knowing that traditional wisdom offers fresh insights into how humans relate to nature. The opinion of critical theorists, for instance, is that Indigenous Peoples have to resist Western influence (Ocay, 2010). We must ask, however, if there is an alternative approach to this paradigm. Is it possible for IPs to adapt to the modern ways of living? First, we examined the effects of modern technology on the T'boli ICC in South Cotabato. The Anthropocene, it can be argued, is most felt in urban centers, but not in communal settings where the deeper relationship between man and his natural environment still exists and is respected by local tradition and indigenous practices. To prove this point, we compared the experiences of the T'boli and the Obu Manuvu ICCs in North Cotabato regarding the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and other modern technologies in their everyday lives.

However, Lagman & Plaza (2022, p. 32) contend that ICCs, "are still in the quest for cultural preservation and survival." This is despite the intervention of government agencies and Non-Government Organizations (Lagman & Plaza, 2022). Casinto (2022, p. 282), for example, blames "the advent of information and communication technologies, and the rapid urbanization in the cultural community of the T'boli in Lake Sebu" as the reasons for the same. Casinto (2022, p. 283) says that "rapid socio-cultural change triggered by technology-enabled modern media of mass communication has made this dire situation inevitable." The reality of exclusion is most felt by minority groups, who lack representation in the state and, for that reason, are deprived of the basic things for a decent and dignified human life. Hernani, Hernani, and Dulay (2021, p. 202) believe that "a socio-political divide embeds animosity and apathy breeds ostracism, prejudice and discrimination; it heaves the marginalized and minorities farther away, widening the gap of inequality." This is a reality that Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao are faced with. Such is a result of the exclusion that they have suffered from over the years. The same is rooted in colonial history, which has resulted in discrimination and bias against Muslims and Indigenous Peoples whose culture has been considered inferior to that

of the dominant Christian majority (Maboloc, 2022).

Yet, despite the glaring observation mentioned above, the T'bolis of South Cotabato have preserved their identity. This can be observed in their everyday life. For instance, they have maintained their heritage in terms of their means of livelihood, school of wisdom, and belief system. Hernani et al. (2021, p. 201) say that "amidst the different maelstroms from the outside and from within their own group, they [the T'boli] have been trying to preserve their ancestral territories and their ethnic identities from erosion." To know why, we have to look into the lived world of Indigenous Peoples. Karl Gaspar (2011) is the primary model for this, having lived with the Manobos in Arakan Valley. Gaspar offers a unique way of understanding the way of life of IPs. The Redemptorist brother understands the "lived world" as the perspective out of which Indigenous Peoples found meaning in their everyday experiences. This view defines for them the way they see the world and their immediate environment. He struggles and lives with them. In this way, it can be said that he is someone who lives the truth of the subject of his studies. Indeed, many indigenous communities have continued to thrive despite the emerging threat from the control brought forth by globalization and modern culture. Is the change advanced by modern technology always a bad thing, or does it offer any real benefit when it comes to the preservation of one's cultural identity?

Literature Review

Rennesland (2020) explains that the Anthropocene refers to the present condition of humanity, in which humanity exercises tremendous influence on the environment and advances modern technology. Hartsell et al. (2020) think that the emergence of the idea requires a broader sense of responsibility. In the face of the emergence of the Anthropocene, Weckert and Bayod (2023) argue that the indigenous way of life is oriented towards nature and biocentric equality, communal practices, and respect for the natural environment. Gaspar (2011) also points to the impact of exploitative industries. Land for the Lumad (Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao) is sacred (Gaspar, 2021). Maboloc (2022), meanwhile, explains that the Lumad are victims of cultural imperialism. For the dominant majority, their culture is unjustly labeled as inferior. Hernani et al. (2021) further explain that members of the T'boli ICC value many aspects of their surroundings as spiritual. Bantilan et al. (2024) provide the linguistic dimension of cultural preservation among the T'boli people. Lagman and Plaza (2022), however, argue that modern technology, particularly digital devices, threatens the T'boli's indigenous way of life. We argue otherwise. Drawing on Feenberg (2002), we believe that Indigenous People can adapt to modern technology in ways that are beneficial and do not undermine culture and tradition. This position seems to imply opposition to the dystopian view of Rennesland (2020) and to the sharp criticisms of Weckert and Bayod (2023) of the influence of Western values. The authors argue that IPs can adapt to technological change through recontextualization (Feenberg, 2002).

Intahchomphoo (2018) has published a literature review on the influence of social media on indigenous communities, while Smailhodzic et al. (2023) explain the relationship between social media and indigenous culture. Both studies are critical to this present work. Hernani et al. (2021) provide a perspective of the everyday life of the T'bolis, describing what characterizes their lived world. Lagman and Plaza (2022) present a perspective on the experiences of the Obu Manuvu, including the dangers posed by the influence of modernity. Gaspar (2011) unveils the lifeworld of the Manobo and how they have resisted intrusion and cultural change. Casinto (2017, p. 6) explains the "gradual extinction" of indigenous culture due to the influence and dynamics of modern society. This study seeks to provide an alternative viewpoint, suggesting that indigeneity may remain intact despite the advent of the Anthropocene or even with the ubiquitous influence of social media (Intahchomphoo, 2018). Simeon, Palatteo, and Otano (2017, p. 46) explain that "languages, religions, rituals, traditions and ways of knowing change over time" (Simeon et al., 2017, p. 46). Ingilan (2017) shows the important leadership dimension of the resilience of the Obu Manuvu. This study hopes to argue that ICT allows ICCs to explore ways to advance the messages they seek to bring into the world through social media without necessarily harming their way of life.

Methodology

According to Yaakop (2023, p. 1119), "qualitative research using text rather than numbers helps us understand human experience and meaning within a specific context, interpret experience and meaning to generate understanding, and recognize the researcher's role in creating new understanding." Using the inspiration from the preceding statement, a qualitative research method was employed by the researchers. Three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to investigate the way of life, social environment, and use of modern devices by two IP groups in the Provinces of South and North Cotabato—the T'boli and the Obu Manuvu. The authors employed qualitative analysis of primary data to extract emerging and key themes (Charmaz, 2014). The qualitative methodology used was intended to gather and extract the primary data from the selected participants in the FGDs. The study started with the selection of participants for the FGDs. The researchers coordinated with barangay officials and IP leaders. The FGD participants consisted of students from the elementary to college level, *datu* or chieftains, IP elders, barangay officials, teachers and government workers, farmers, and residents. Each FGD, with 7-10 participants, lasted 2 hours. The FGD results were recorded and transcribed.

The focus of the study was on the influence, issues, concerns, and behaviors of Indigenous People towards the use of modern devices. The investigators were aware that their presence and perspectives could influence the responses of the participants. They come from the vantage point of philosophy, having been exposed to the ideas of Critical Theory. Drawing on Charmaz's (2014) method, theoretical grounding served as a basis for the emerging themes. These themes consist of the concept of adaptability, recontextualization, the good and bad effects of social media, Lumad identity, and threats to indigenous culture. The answers were coded to identify the key deductive insights, leading to emerging themes that will add to our knowledge and understanding of the lived world of indigenous groups and the influence of ICT (Charmaz, 2014). Three FGDs were conducted to extract primary data for this study. An FGD was conducted in Barangay Ilomavis, Kidapawan, on April 5, 2025, and another in Barangay Bolongalon in Magpet, North Cotabato, on April 6, 2025.

A third FGD was conducted in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, on May 5, 2025. The FGD participants are members of the T'boli ICC in South Cotabato. The FGD questions ascertained whether modern technology, particularly digital devices, posed a threat to their way of life, an approach that connects theory and practice on the issue of the relationship between IPs and ICTs. Ingilan (2017) provides a critical framework on the role of leadership among the Obu Manuvu. In our study, the respondents were asked questions about their everyday life, their use of modern devices, their everyday experience in school and the curriculum, their access to the internet and use of social media, and their sentiments, views, and behaviors toward the effects or consequences of modern technology, especially social media, on their cultural identity.

During the FGD, the facilitator allowed free flow of discussion among participants, using prepared and validated guide questions prepared and validated by experts in Indigenous Knowledge and the Ethics of Technology. The participants shared their reflections on their everyday experiences with the investigators. The results of the first two FGDs were correlated with those of the third FGD (the T'bolis) to identify key themes common to the two IP groups. Secondary materials from books, chapters, and articles were analyzed to sort the claims in this paper. The analysis tried to determine the above-mentioned emerging themes from the ground up (Charmaz, 2014) or inductively, notably the influence of modern technology and social media, the good and bad effects of the use of modern technology, and the ways upon which ICCs still intend to preserve their local tradition in the midst of the intrusion of Western culture and capitalist values in their everyday life.

Regarding data validation, the results were checked with participants through member checking. Participants were given copies of the interview transcripts and asked to comment on them and on the analysis. The authors intend not to separate the results from the critical discussion, since the paper is not purely descriptive-qualitative; they also employed discourse analysis. The purpose is to understand, holistically, the everyday experiences and narratives of the participants in the study. This is an effort to reflect on the daily flow of experience of the IPs and to merge it with the rigors of philosophical reflection. The point of using the reflections of Feenberg and Heidegger, sourced from primary readings, is to emphasize the inter-textual nature of this philosophical research.

The investigators are aware of the limitations of the FGD method, primarily that the interpretation of these experiences may be subjective (Hunt, 2009). We also would like to note that this study is limited to the two IP groups mentioned, and further studies may be needed to deepen our reflections. Nevertheless, we considered the value and importance of the personal insights and reflections of the FGD participants as crucial in the qualitative analysis that enabled the authors to arrive at a meaningful conclusion. To support our claims, the Interpretive Method was used in this qualitative analysis. We draw on particular concepts and explanations from books and articles that present an alternative view of indigeneity and its relationship to the realities of modern technology and social media. We used Heidegger (1977) and Feenberg (2002) to explain the concept of recontextualization, which is crucial to our interpretive analysis.

Results and Discussion

In order to ground the study in the lived experiences of indigenous peoples and their way of life, we present the results and findings by anchoring them on important themes related to the advent of modern technology and its influence on local culture and the social identities of the minority groups included in this investigation. The discussions intend to provide substance to the theoretical framework of the study, which is rooted in critical theory and the holistic understanding of the lived experiences of minorities.

The Anthropocene and the Everyday Life of the T'boli

The current situation of humanity is called the Anthropocene. The idea of modern progress has become synonymous with environmental destruction and ecological decay. The problem is that the advances of modern society have also forced ICCs into the same predicament. Modern progress has had tremendous repercussions on the lived world of locals, including environmental damage due to the introduction of extractive industries (Gaspar, 2020). Modernity is linked to the Western paradigm or perspective. Rennesland (2020, p. 106) says that "the Enlightenment meant an intellectual progression that braced the modern world for technological success." We opine that human society must question the meaning of this type of success. The Enlightenment has taught us to become morally individualistic. This is different from the communal nature of the lives of Indigenous Peoples. Hartsell et al. (2020, p. 3) think that "the outcome of this current historic event could be a clearer view of how the global economic system affects the natural environment both ecologically and within the geophysical system."

We can find the alternative to the Anthropocene in the lived world of the T'boli ICC of South Cotabato. Famous for their beautiful, artistic products as weavers, the T'bolis remain grounded in nature and consider their deep relationship with it essential to their way of life (Ramos, 2004). "The T'bolis are a people who live by the lake," according to one FGD participant. To Lumads, water is a source of life. The lake for the T'boli is their dwelling. This is critical insofar as, in contrast to the T'boli way of life, the Western worldview sees the earth as a resource to be exploited. The Western lifestyle is anchored in capitalist, i.e., money-driven, consumption. The T'boli, meanwhile, sees the relationship between the land and human being as inviolable. They do not take from nature more than

what is necessary (Paz, 2010). This can be seen in the lush and thick forest cover of the town of Lake Sebu in South Cotabato, which, while now a prominent tourist spot, has maintained its natural beauty. In fact, this is the exact opposite of the often-decrepit conditions of megacities and urban centers, where, despite the presence of advanced technology, it has become inconvenient and uncomfortable for millions. Weckert and Bayod (2023, p. 6) write:

> We, in capitalistic societies, both Western and non-Western, operate within a materialistic paradigm in which the values just mentioned play a large part in decisions about which technologies are developed and how they are used. The paradigm is capitalist, materialist, consumerist, and technological. Technological artefacts improve efficiency, productivity, and so on; therefore, they are developed and used. Commonly, these are everyday objects such as smartphones and cars.

The above gives us two critical points. First, the human society driven by the Western paradigm of progress or way of life is rooted in material pleasure, and the generation of such pleasure requires an emphasis on economic value. Second, to achieve the goal of such a capitalist world, the human being is sometimes sacrificed in order to produce those types of goods that give pleasure to people. We asked participants in the FGD about the type of influence modern progress has on the minds of young T'boli. One of the respondents in the FGD says "that she wants to go away from their home and experience city life." In fact, this position is rather drastic and difficult. Asked about the reasons, the same respondent answered, "poverty." As Lagman and Plaza (2022, p. 26) note, "indigenous people settling in the forested area have a hard time finding assistance in times of troubles and needs." Indeed, the social and economic dynamics of human existence affect one's view of the world. But this is not a phenomenon caused purely by the West and its hegemonic attitude. It is also partly due to abusive and exploitative conditions brought about by the failures of the state and its instrumentalities.

While many young T'bolis live near the center of Lake Sebu as working students, they still consider their families, who have been left in the hinterlands to be farmers, the most important reason they seek the good life elsewhere. This means that deep in the T'boli soul lies the value of family. The meaning of being in a family bind everyone in it. "Our parents took care of us despite our poverty," says one of the respondents, who plans to finish college to help her parents. But of course, there are obvious changes in the dynamics of culture in modern society. The presence of commercial establishments in Lake Sebu, for instance, can be seen as a threat to the way of life of the T'boli, according to one participant in the FGD in Lake Sebu, since it "exposes them to modern living and thinking." It can also be said that locals are not really opposed to development and generally welcome tourism in the area because it provides jobs and income opportunities. The hardships and poverty of the people are apparent. It is a reality Lumads often face due to various factors, including state neglect and the lack of community development programs. One participant shared the following in Cebuano during the FGD:

> "Nagpuyo mi sa bukid ug magbaktas kada adlaw para muadto sa eskwelahan (We travel from the mountains downhill in order to reach our school). Wala kwarta among mga ginikanan para mahatag among gikinahanglan (Our parents cannot afford to provide to us all our needs). Pero nagpadayun mi sa pag-eskwela kay gusto mi makatabang sa pamilya pag abot sa panahon (But we continue to do what we must in order to change our lives and help the family when the time comes)."

Many of the issues hounding Indigenous Communities have something to do with exploitation and abuse. Nothing can be more obvious than the presence of powerful corporate interests that threaten the well-being of IPs. Bayod (2018, p. 232) writes that "to be able to entice the indigenous peoples to give up their lands, mining companies in partnership with the government have created their slogan, 'there is life in mining.'" Extractive industries seek nothing but profit and, incidentally,

cause significant environmental damage (Gaspar, 2020). Environmentalists, for instance, have argued that the proposed Tampakan Gold Mine in South Cotabato poses a threat to the biodiversity of the whole region, including its water resources. Indeed, environmental damage can have a severe impact on and the erosion of the way of life of Indigenous Peoples like the T'bolis. The above can be considered as institutional failures that are due to business interests that the state supports instead of preserving the environment. The same is a manifestation of a dystopic view of the human world in modern times. Rennesland (2020) argues that the Anthropocene is linked to our ability to dominate and control nature. The Anthropocene "stems from our rationalization of it. In knowing more of nature, we discovered its malleability; enlightenment, technological success, and scientific discoveries meant the exhaustion of our resources" (Rennesland, 2020, p. 107).

What is the way forward? We shall begin with the problem. The problem and, ergo, real danger lies in the fact that most policy makers and public officials are "still banking on the scientific way of doing it as espoused by the Western development models" (Bayod, 2018, p. 232). Gaspar (2020) believes that there is a connivance between some powerful politicians and big businesses, thereby resulting in massive destruction that impacts the lives of Lumads (a collective term for the Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao). According to Hernani et al. (2021, p. 204), "the T'boli ICC has been suffering from a myriad of issues, including endless debacles, especially from inappropriate government intervention, even during the time of the American regime." The main issue involving IPs concerns their ancestral land (Gaspar, 2011). Members of indigenous communities are facing a real struggle when it comes to their land. According to Hernani et al. (2021, p. 204), "aside from the required cadastral survey and payment, there was a declaration that all unregistered lands were considered public territories. The privileged few, the educated elite, and those who held economic and political leverage, exploited the laws that deprived the IP members who were unaware of the registration procedures." In this regard, there is a need to revisit land policies that discriminate against the Lumad and to listen to the sentiments of IPs to protect their rights and preserve their traditions and heritage. The same is rooted in a constitutional guarantee that each human being is a moral equal.

The issues raised in this paper show the blatant evidence of exploitation and abuses that have driven many ICCs away from mainstream society. And yet, a greater threat, it can be said, exists at present. This refers to the dangers posed by modern information and communication technologies (ICT). The work of Hernani et al. (2021) does not mention the influence of social media and modern devices, although they say that the exposure of the young to Western values may result in a loss of identity. Studies on indigenous peoples in the Philippines, for example, are focused on the reality of economic exploitation and abuse (Bayod, 2018; Gaspar, 2020; Gaspar, 2021). In this sense, it is critical to examine the impact and influence of ICT on indigenous communities. There is concern that exposure to social media will erode cultural identities. However, it can be countered by saying that not all types of technology or information available on social media platforms are negative in terms of influence.

Feenberg (2002) notes, for instance, the transformative power of technology, which prompts people to adapt to its democratizing effects. Recontextualization is about adapting to the social dimension of technology, which means that technology arises as society moves in a dynamic way to respond to the needs of people. We can ask: Is it possible to preserve indigenous traditions despite exposure to Western values and practices? Or should indigenous communities be insulated from the intrusion of ICTs to preserve the local heritage? To explain, Enenche (2019) does not believe that it is possible to insulate indigenous culture from Western influence, explaining that change is inevitable. The inevitability of change is linked to technological advances. Societies modernize, and people adapt to it. Of course, this does not mean that Indigenous Peoples must do the same (Weckert & Bayod, 2023). However, we also must not prohibit people from experiencing and enjoying the fruits of social connectivity and technological progress. This justifies the need to examine how the T'boli and the

Obu Manuvu have responded to technological changes in their societies.

For example, the FGD participants, while holding no gadgets or mobile phones, looked happy. They were asked about their aspirations. They generally wanted to help their families. When asked about personal ambition, one of the participants said that she "would like to be professionals in order to support their families." This meant that in the mind of the young T'boli, there is a sense of filial attachment. They do not suffer from moral individualism, which is characteristic of many young people in Gen Z, a group that has been fully exposed to modern technology and devices. The divide is not only a matter of the social milieu. Weckert and Bayod (2023), for instance, make that distinction between Western and Eastern values. The first is based on autonomy, or the pursuit of independent choice. At the same time, the latter depends on the values of family and the solidarity of their community, rooted in attachment to local tradition, indigenous culture, and their land, which they consider sacred.

Hernani et al. (2021, p. 201) write that "the T'boli [tribe] has preserved their culture amidst the series of intrusion from their local neighbors and from colonial societies." It is helpful to create an illustration of the everyday life of the T'boli, especially among youth in urban centers. Young people are usually the ones who are exposed to social media. In Lake Sebu, the T'boli children were taught their indigenous language, traditional medicine, and indigenous norms at an IP school, says one of the participants in the FGD. According to a participant who is a local nurse, "the T'boli children also attend regular schools and the IP school put up by the community with the support of private institutions and groups." During the FGD, it was also mentioned that there are many challenges at the school, including a lack of resources. The local folks also have to rely on the support of community leaders, including their Barangay captain, the FGD revealed. Asked about where they live, the children in Lake Sebu lived in their homes in the hinterlands. Their parents are farmers. One FGD participant revealed that "there is no electricity at home and we have to walk several kilometers before getting into town." She is attending college as a social work major. The majority of the participants said that "life is difficult." Asked if they wanted to explore other places, almost all replied in the affirmative.

According to one of the FGD participants, the Sta. Cruz Mission School in the Municipality of Lake Sebu has been instrumental in awakening the consciousness of the people to preserve T'boli culture, as it emphasized bilingual and bicultural education, which allowed T'boli children to learn both the national language and their native tongue, thereby preserving linguistic heritage. Education in this context became a tool not of assimilation but of empowerment and cultural affirmation (Ramos, 2004). Aside from literacy, Sta Cruz Mission School also established a weaving center for T'nalak production, helping revive and economically sustain traditional T'boli weaving practices. According to Paz (2010), T'nalak, the sacred cloth made from abaca and dyed with intricate ikat techniques, is not only an economic asset but also a profound symbol of T'boli cosmology and identity (Hernani et al., 2021). This means that the T'boli continue to live their lives despite a different, albeit difficult, environment.

The Mission School supported grassroots organizations among the T'boli, particularly in land rights advocacy and self-determination. It contributed to the development of indigenous leadership, helping form networks of leaders who could represent their communities in broader political and cultural forums (Gaspar, 2011). This empowerment was essential in allowing the T'boli to assert their identity in a context of marginalization and state-led modernization. The influence of the Sta. Cruz Mission in Lake Sebu represents a model of intercultural solidarity and indigenous cultural preservation. Rather than displacing the T'boli cultural identity, it created institutional and cultural spaces that nurtured it. Through education, arts promotion, theological dialogue, and grassroots advocacy, the Mission School became an ally in the T'boli people's struggle for cultural survival and affirmation (Gaspar, 2011). To explain the value of such institutional endeavor, Simeon et al. (2017, p. 43) say that "the best approach to address preconceived stereotypes and to prevent them from

escalating into feelings of prejudice and bias is to create awareness through education."

Social media and the use of ICT among Indigenous People

All participants in the FGD from the T'boli ICC, aged 16 to 21, have social media accounts. They all have Facebook. They do not have Instagram or X (formerly Twitter). This is consistent with the report that the majority of Filipinos use Facebook. Asked whom they follow or what they do online, all 10 participants said they share their "interests, follow vloggers, and react to viral posts." One of the participants follows a cultural vlogger because she likes the content they share online. One participant mentioned: "*Nag follow ko sa usa ka vlogger kay ganahan ko sa iyang mga posts* (I follow one vlogger because I like his posts)." This means that IP children, like those in the cities, share something in common when it comes to social media. Meanwhile, none of the older people in the FGD held at Lake Sebu had social media accounts. "*Wala man ni anang social media. Busy man mi sa among mga buluhaton* (We do not have that. We are busy with our everyday job)," says one participant who is 50 years old. By implication, this means that the younger generation is already embedded in social media, while the older generation of Indigenous People in the South Cotabato area is not. Upon observation, the youth participants appear to be typical of urban youth. However, they sounded philosophical when they said that "emancipating their families from poverty is their greatest goal in life." Many young people, the FGD notes, "equate happiness with the emancipation from the fetters of poverty."

Around town, when you are in the center of Lake Sebu, life still looks slow and calm. In contrast, life in urban centers like Davao City or Cebu City is fast and chaotic. One often hears problems such as horrendous traffic, flooding, homelessness, and criminality, which are again typical of modern and progressive urban centers. But the obvious problem people might face in far-flung places, such as here in Lake Sebu, is the lack of access to modern hospitals and high-tech mechanized agriculture. Some people still rely on traditional medicine and indigenous practices in treating diseases, although there is a modern health center in the area where one of the FGD participants lives. Modern technology, of course, by definition, also includes the use of modern equipment and tools in everyday life. Farming in the province, hence, remains generally traditional. People are not very conscious of profit. They only want to survive and to take care of their land. For the IPs like the T'boli, they also desire to protect nature.

Nevertheless, Hernani et al. (2021, p. 203) complain about the "ignorance and indifference of the new generation T'boli to the socio-political issues that have been hounding the tribe." They state that the T'boli, "have become enthralled by the outsiders' lifestyles that they already take their tribal identity for granted" (Hernani et al., 2021, p. 203). One of the FGD participants shared this story: "The members of the T'boli live by the lake. They thrive through fishing. Their boat is made from the trunk of the native Lawaan tree, carved to fit a boatman who navigates the 50-square-kilometer waterway, known as Sebu or Lake, from which the name of the town was taken. Today, people earn their living through aquaculture. Each fish cage in the body of water contains 1,000-1,500 tilapia fingerlings that are harvested after six to eight months. Small houses line up along the banks of the lake, all simply made from wood and bamboo, although some have erected concrete structures along the lake, including big resorts. Nevertheless, the way of life of the T'boli is patterned after a sense of simplicity, and a closely knit family set-up." Bantilan et al. 2024 affirm this in saying that the T'boli sees the world in terms of "nature" and "water".

The above is a beautiful and sincere narration of the life story of the T'boli, one that is not yet overly influenced by consumer society and the values of capitalism. It is a life lived in simplicity and calm, rooted in nature and an intimate relationship with the environment, despite the obvious struggle and desire to live well amid the challenges brought by the advent of modernity and the challenges that accompany it. In truth, the T'boli continue to live the kind of life they so desire, although the threat is always there. Yet, there is no active type of control or domination that forces them to change their

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perspectives or worldview. The fact of the matter is that, just as anyone in urban centers, the young T'boli is also trying to explore how social media affects their daily lives. The fact of the matter is that the T'boli youth also understands the limits of social media and its usefulness for discovering knowledge about other people and cultures that are otherwise beyond reach without ICT.

However, as in many parts of the developing world, there is a digital divide due to limited resources among people on low incomes. The digital divide refers to the uneven access to ICT resources between affluent and poor countries. For instance, Intahchompoo (2018, p. 92) mentions the digital divide "facing Indigenous peoples and geography, socioeconomic status, and the availability of hardware and software." While the world is teetering on the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in everyday life, places such as Lake Sebu appear not to be affected by it. Although there is the threat of losing one's job around the world with the rise of AI, indigenous folks seem not to be bothered by the effects of AI and how it is taking over the world. The digital divide between urban dwellers and those in far-flung places may be seen as helpful in insulating the IPs from the dystopic influence of modern technology. Life in Lake Sebu is simple and without much fanfare. It is not really concerned with the glitter of consumer society, defined by material satisfaction and temporal pleasures. But for Weckert and Bayod (2023), the digital divide is a good thing because it insulates indigenous cultures from the consumer-driven, capitalist way of life usually found in Western cultures, in contrast to the biocentric equality that characterizes the traditional wisdom that defines indigenous culture.

Issues surrounding ICT include privacy invasions, patent rights, and the influence of fake news in politics and culture. One participant, however, reacted to the use of her picture in promotional materials for a local festival. This manifests, for instance, a sense of awareness of individual rights and the need to protect them. The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA Law) of 1997, in particular, does not mention information technology or the internet. Bayod (2018), for example, has expressed the difficulty in terms of implementing the IPRA Law in Lumad communities. While the concept of the environment for the Lumad by law includes areas beyond the merely physical or social, it is doubtful that lawmakers also intended that social media is to be covered by the same law. The fact of the matter is that because of the lack of resources on the part of the government to connect far-flung barangays to the power grid, the digital divide may have actually insulated Indigenous Peoples from the problems brought about by online exposure, including identity thief, online gambling, and the abuses often associated with criminal elements who use the internet for human and sex trafficking.

In many Philippine cities, one usually observes the penetration of social media in the way of life of the people. This can be seen in the sheer number of pictures, reels, memes, and other posts in newsfeeds on various social media platforms. The same has had a tremendous effect on the social and political lives of Filipinos, with phenomena such as "budots" actually blamed for the loss of the re-election bid of one senator. However, unlike in highly urbanized cities in the Philippines, the use or penetration of information technology is lower in places such as Lake Sebu. People still depend on the land and the lake for their livelihood. Internet access in the area is poor. The Lumads are more connected to the natural environment than to the virtual one. The FGD participants were also asked about the negative influence of social media. The youth participants during the FGD said that they limit their time on social media because they need to "spend more time on their studies." This, in fact, can be interpreted as a good thing. One can observe, for instance, the type of changes in the behavior of young people now in their 20s. The youth generation today values individualism more than communal solidarity, a reality often found in urban centers. But one participant also expressed a positive aspect of social media: "Sa social media mi makabasa ug balita ug makakuha ug impormasyon about current events (We read the news on social media and get the information on current events)."

Modern Technology and the Lived World of the Obu Manuvu

It might help to describe the experience of another ICC in the South and North Cotabato

corridor. They are the Obu Manuvu. Like most Lumads in Mindanao, they too have been victims of displacement due to the approach of the Commonwealth regime early in the 20th century. They suffered from the imperialistic approach of the dominant Christian majority. This type of imperialism refers to the insubordination of one culture, which is viewed as inferior compared to another that considers itself superior (Maboloc, 2022). The same is apparent in the virtual world, where there exists a type of discrimination against others who are seen as belonging to a lower class in society. The Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao have been deprived of the economic resources that are needed for them to be able to live decent lives. They are discriminated against by the systemic and structural injustices brought forth by the country's colonial history. For instance, the Great Migration during the Commonwealth regime reduced Mindanao into a land resource (Abinales, 2010). The said act by the government of President Manuel Quezon forced the Lumads out of their farmlands (Gaspar, 2021). The Obu Manuvu, according to Gaspar (2011), lacked adequate access to education, hospital care, and modern medicine. They are behind in terms of socioeconomic development.

Ingilan (2017) studied the Obu Manuvu in Davao City extensively regarding their response to climate change. His investigation is important because the reality of changing weather patterns often results in cataclysmic events, even in the developed world. Ingilan (2017) found out that the Obu Manuvu have a practical understanding of the problem. They observe and understand the results of environmental activities such as logging and other extractive industries. Their response to the problem is communal. This means they decide the matter based on their IP elders' advice (Ingilan, 2022). This is important because, as Rennesland (2020) observed, a collective approach in confronting issues such as the most recent pandemic was critical. Responsibility is assumed by the IP leaders, who are assigned specific tasks. He writes, for instance, that "a *buyyahon*, equivalent to the Muslim title datu, should be a leader with integrity and an impressive track record since he gives pieces of advice and imposes discipline whenever necessary to the members of the tribe" (Ingilan, 2017, p. 105).

The Obu Manuvu in North Cotabato, like the T'bolis of South Cotabato, are primarily an agricultural and aquacultural community. The worldview of the Obu Manuvu is shaped by their everyday interactions with their immediate environment. But the Obu Manuvu is also threatened by modern progress. The danger comes from the highly detrimental practice in which the idea of "internationalization" and "standardization" are used against the Indigenous Peoples, where Western values are enforced on local communities as a form of a criterion. Such standardization is not really suitable for local cultures. This is why the notion of "glocalization" was introduced as an antidote to "globalization." In glocalization, local traditions, customs, and practices are given market value by turning local products into competitive offerings in the global market, thereby lowering market prices as market competition increases, thereby avoiding the monopoly of the global market economy (Robertson, 1995).

An FGD was conducted in Barangay Bolongalon, Magpet, North Cotabato, on April 5, 2025. It was attended by young students, teachers, the Barangay Captain, and local chieftains or IP leaders. The main purpose of these indigenous schools, one FGD participant said, is "to preserve their forgotten traditions, cultural practices, traditional medicine, and their mother tongue or native language." One agenda in their indigenous curriculum is to teach, especially the younger generation, to relearn the native language. With the help of cultural masters who served as teachers for younger children, they can preserve and relearn their old cultural practices, beginning with their native language. The use of social media among their children is also regulated. The encounter between the ICCs and modern technology unfolds within a tension between autonomy and assimilation, preservation and disruption.

Gaspar (2011), in his work on the Manobo ICC in Arakan Valley, North Cotabato, provides a picture of the lifeworld and the shared meanings, traditions, and values of the community. For the

them, the lifeworld is constituted by oral traditions, communal rituals, and the continuity of ancestral knowledge (Lagman & Plaza, 2022). However, digital technologies, while offering tools for cultural documentation, often carry the risk of communicative distortion because they are mediated by dominant forces and rationalities such as the state, market, and media systems. For instance, among the Obu Manuvu in Magpet, cellular phones enable the Indigenous youth to record dances or traditional chants. Yet, these cultural artifacts are reframed through the logic of commodification and external recognition. While in most cases they use Messenger for their school assignments, one participant said, "TikTok and Facebook also enable them to see and listen to stories of indigenous struggles and aspirations for self-determination and freedom from poverty." The same can be said of strengthening their resolve to preserve their cultural practices and traditions. In this sense, through their social media accounts, they can immerse themselves in indigenous narratives, although some of these stories are not presented within their own indigenous frame of reference.

This re-encoding of tradition in a globalized digital vernacular threatens to detach practice from meaning (Fricker, 2007). This insubordination makes manifest the oppression of cultures by global standards that are rooted in the idea of man as a productive human being who is no more than an instrument for capitalist profit-making. Like the Anthropocene, cultural imperialism results in the subjection of nature to human control (Maboloc, 2022). This self-centered attitude makes environmental preservation secondary to economic growth. While Indigenous Peoples traditionally regard the environment as a sacred extension of kinship and spiritual life, modern man views the same as trivial. "People see us as ignorant when it comes to the use of modern devices, which is not true," according to one FGD participant. They use modern ways in terms of farming, aside from the traditional ones. Modern technological interventions, particularly those introduced by extractive industries and infrastructure projects, operate through a utilitarian calculus that reduces forests, rivers, and mountains to mere economic resources. Indigenous Peoples continue to perform their rituals and other customary practices.

It is important to assess the use of modern equipment vis-à-vis traditional agriculture. In places such as North Cotabato, people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The Obu Manuvu are not averse to modern farming, but they still rely on traditional methods because, in their view, they are more sustainable. Modern technology can be both beneficial and harmful to agriculture. This is the contention of FGD participants from the Obu Manuvu ICC in Barangay Ilomavis, Kidapawan City. An FGD was conducted on April 6, 2025. The participants consisted mostly of IP leaders and barangay officials. According to one IP leader, who is also a farmer, the use of mechanized tools and fertilizers can enhance productivity and resilience. Yet, they also recognize that such gains often come at the cost of ecological sustainability. Thus, they have worked to protect their land from the harmful use of commercial pesticides. In fact, the market-driven mentality introduced by modern agriculture transforms the relationship of the farmer to the land from one of stewardship to that of ensuring its productivity. This alters not only practice but subjectivity, aligning the indigenous farmer more closely with capitalist values than ancestral cosmologies. It is understandable, in this way, to think of modern technology as bad because of its association with capitalist values, rooted in profit, and resulting in massive environmental destruction, as the environment has become secondary to the vested interests of business. However, we also need to determine whether modern technology has anything to offer indigenous peoples. It is in this sense that we introduce the concept of recontextualization to examine the other face of modern technology in its relationship to culture and society.

Modern Technology, Recontextualization, and Adaptability
Can technology be stopped in terms of its unfolding? It is in this regard that we present the ideas of the German thinker, Martin Heidegger, who introduced Enframing. Heidegger (1977) says that man has been "enframed" by technology. This means there is no way to escape its influence. This type of relationship between man and technology characterizes man's being-in-the-world. Heidegger

begins his exposition by explaining the concept he calls "Gestell." It pertains to the mode in which the human being relates to himself and to his surroundings, with modern technology, for example, and vice versa in the process of uncovering worldly possibilities (Heidegger, 1977). The term is derived from "ge" [prefix, "gathering" or "collection"] and "stellen" [verb, "to place" or "to put"]. Translators in English used the words "enframing" and "revealing" for Gestell in its twofold sense. "Enframing," which suggests how Dasein is thrown into the world, suggests that the truth reveals and conceals itself (Heidegger, 1996). This refers to how the world/nature allows itself to be conceived or understood by Dasein (Heidegger, 1996).

In technology, Gestell means "techné", which implies gathering the earth's resources to make sense of the world's usefulness to man (Heidegger, 1977). This implies that humans do not own the earth. The earth simply stood "there" as a "standing reserve" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 19). Dasein, the term used by Heidegger from the German da [there] + sein [to be], literally means "there-being" or "being there" (Heidegger, 1996). Heidegger (1996) meant to show, in contrast to Descartes, that the essence of human reality is in the world—a "being-in-the-world." Indeed, technology encroaches on some aspects of the indigenous lifeworld or their being-in-the-world. Techne, however, has two meanings for the Greeks. The first concerns skill or function. Its essence, however, is not limited to the use of things. It has something to do with technology as physis, or the being of man, or one's belongingness to the world. Hence, technology is part of being human or the way we do things. The challenge here, of course, is how to link the Greeks with Indigenous Knowledge.

When it comes to Western values, there is a focus on autonomy, individualism, and even human rights. But how does the Obu Manuvu show their resilience in view of the persistent attacks against their dignity and identity as a people? Indeed, one cannot fully separate the Western and liberal approach to society and culture from indigeneity. In this way, one needs to relate to and understand how indigenous cultures adapt to the modern way of life, not to change their culture, but to engage new contexts of human reality. Lagman and Plaza (2022) fear that Western values may erode indigeneity. However, our analysis says that the Obu Manuvu understands the implications and the importance of modern technologies. However, they are also aware of the negative impacts of using such technologies. The Obu Manuvu children know that social media is not in itself bad. The motive of those who use social media is the problem. But social media can be a force for good, helping to share and expand the reach of indigenous culture and knowledge, for instance, by sharing online songs, poems, and artistic works of IPs.

In the School of Indigenous Knowledge, modern technology is an important tool for educating the younger generation. The main purpose of founding the indigenous school is to preserve their forgotten traditions, cultural practices, traditional medicine, and their mother tongue or native language. Beyond this, these schools have an important role to play. Simeon et al. (2017, p. 44) say that they are meant to "cultivate a productive atmosphere of trust" and "responsibility." It is also important to sustain native-language learning among young people to preserve local culture. One agenda in their indigenous curriculum is to teach, especially the younger generation, to relearn the native language they fear may be lost in the future. To prevent this, the indigenous school was established with the overarching goal of cultural preservation. It is important to note, however, that while the school uses indigenous materials for its learning environment and interior decorations, the building itself is made of concrete. We asked one of the participants in the FGD why, and he said, "Concrete is strong and can withstand an earthquake." This is a sign that the Obu Manuvu recognize the importance of resilience in the face of disasters. They know that there is a science behind the use of strong building materials. But the problem is that the government often falls short in meeting the needs of IPs across various aspects of their everyday lives. In the area of linguistics, the Department of Education (DepEd) does not have any materials on indigenous languages, such as that of the T'bolis (Bantilan et al., 2024).

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Nevertheless, it is important to be able to examine the role technology plays in the lives of people. In Japan, for instance, progress is associated with the advent of modern technology and the ubiquitous use of high-tech gadgets across almost all facets of human life. But we also need to contextualize this. According to Feenberg (2002), technology has a dual role. The first concerns its instrumental function. Seen this way, Western values and the use of technology will be considered harmful, as they intrude on the Lumad's lifeworld and undermine their everyday way of life, making them subservient to capital and materialism that modern technology is often associated with. However, technology also has a democratic, societal function. This has something to do with the context of society in which technology seeks to adapt to culture and societal values, not in order to impose the values brought forth by modernity, but to make the use of modern devices and tools adaptable to the situation of the people. For instance, a tablet or computer is not necessarily a bad thing when used by the Lumad in school, because when used properly, it can expand the learner's knowledge and ability to share his talents or develop his potential. If the young Lumad is deprived of the good things that technology can offer, then the same can be considered a form of injustice and discrimination against IPs.

For instance, with the help of Cultural Masters who served as the children's teachers, one of the FGD participants in Magpet said, "They are somehow able to preserve and relearn their cultural practices." The use of social media among their children is allowed but regulated. The pupils know the pros and cons of social media. As such, they explain that they know which content creators to follow and which posts to share. This is consistent with the concept of recontextualization of modern technology that was introduced by Feenberg. The Obu Manuvu youth are aware of the ethical limits of online content. They understand that the exposure of the female body on social media is not a good thing. Access to gadgets, electricity, and an internet connection in this way is also helpful. This counters the claim that the digital divide helps in preserving indigenous culture. Following Heidegger (1977), the unfolding of technology, which he called Enframing, is happening even in cultural experiences. We, by being-in-the-world, are always already in a technological world, and Indigenous Peoples are not exempt from this unfolding. Seen in a positive light, there is a way of adapting to the modern way of life. Feenberg (2002) argues that modern devices can work for the good of the people in a truly democratic manner without sacrificing their freedom or sense of identity. For example, modern computers can expand the horizons of young indigenous students, helping them gain a holistic perspective on reality.

Nevertheless, the Obu Manuvu continues to embrace their biocentric view of reality. Ingilan (2017, p. 86) says that "the indigenous knowledge of the Obu Manuvu has been maintained and passed down over generations." Obu Manuvu traditionally regards the environment as a sacred extension of kinship and spirit life. Yet modern technological interventions and mechanisms, particularly those introduced by extractive industries and infrastructure projects, operate through a utilitarian calculus that reduces forests, rivers, and mountains to resources and mining sites. However, the Obu Manuvu continue to perform their rituals and other customary practices to care for the environment. In our interviews with them, they have shared their traditional ways of caring for their lands, forests, and rivers. Regarding health care practices, they also recognize that the arrival of modern medicine brings measurable benefits, such as reduced disease and maternal mortality, as well as increased access to vaccines. However, they continue to practice their traditional healing through rituals and herbal medicines. "In the Philippines," according to Ingilan (2017, p. 89), "some indigenous peoples, like the Obu Manuvu, have the same practice of reading signs in nature."

While the participants in the FGD embrace modern medicine, they are careful not to be totally subjected to the imposition of biomedical paradigms that often delegitimize traditional Ovu-Manobo healing practices. There are instances when a disease is seen as a curse from God (Ingilan, 2017). While bereft of any scientific value, what is crucial here is an understanding of the approach of indigenous peoples to diseases. Medicine cannot be limited to the Western understanding of healing.

Traditional healing practices have been around for a thousand years. There is, in this regard, wisdom in the use of herbal medicine, for instance, because it has helped ICCs survive. It is due to the bias for Western medicine or synthetic drugs that one discriminates against traditional healing practices. According to Gaspar (2021), the arrival of our colonial masters has undermined the traditional cultural and spiritual practices of the Lumads. Yet the advent of modern medicine should not be seen as opposed to traditional medicine. Indigenous people also recognize the value of modern medicine and, in fact, benefit from health care centers and synthetic medicines in the treatment of diseases. The use of modern medicine should not necessarily mean the abandonment of one's belief system or one's cultural identity. It is one way of adapting to the advances brought about by modern technology, which is meant to promote human well-being and improve human life. Indigenous culture is not necessarily the enemy of progress when it comes to holistic health care. Modern medicine saves lives, and IPs also have the right to benefit from it as human beings.

Conclusion

In this paper, we argued that recontextualization is a phenomenon that is not alien to the everyday life of the Lumads. Despite the distance of modern cities, the T'bolis and the Obu Manuvu are a part of the advances of modern technology and how the same influences human life and the way people see themselves in terms of their identity and culture. Progress is critical to the good life. While modernity has its dystopic dimension, this should not mean IPs will be prohibited from enjoying the fruits of technological development. The paper provides a contrast between two views. On one hand, there is the contention that ICT and other types of modern technology cause the erosion of cultural identity, and for this reason, the same should be considered as harmful to the lifeworld of Indigenous Peoples. The threat from this is made manifest in the type of control and influence that modern technology, including social media, has on the youth. The study sought to determine, by means of primary data, how ICT has impacted the lives of the T'boli in urban centers. This is one that the authors relate to the Anthropocene, which reveals the destruction that happens to the environment because of man's control and dominance over nature. On the other hand, it is argued by the authors that there is a way forward upon which IPs may be able to adapt to the challenges of modern technology and ICT.

The paper also presented the conflict between the value proposition of the West and the indigenous way of life. The West is defined by capitalism. In fact, the advent of social media and consumerism promotes a way of life that can be considered as destructive to the values of local people. The same can influence how people see themselves and their unique identity as a people. It can be said that the negative effects of the West are manifest in our colonial roots and in the hegemonic power of the global socio-political order, both of which impact people's lives. Additionally, it can be said that the problems that IP communities are also due to the abuses and exploitation committed by the instrumentalities of the state. For instance, some exploitative industries like mining have destroyed the land of Lumads, marginalizing them as a result. To negate this, it is critical for the government to adopt policies that are inclusive and protective of the heritage, traditions, and local cultures of indigenous peoples. This should include how modern technology can help Lumads adapt in a positive way so that modern advances can enhance their lives. While there is a struggle over ideone's, this should not mean that the positive aspects of Western technology are to be judged as harmful to humans.

The advent of modern technology is unstoppable, says Heidegger, meaning indigeneity cannot be insulated from the influence of modern devices and tools. In the FGDs, it was revealed that the youth use social media as platforms to share and narrate parts of their identities as members of IP communities. The T'boli are aware of the importance and value of ICT and are aware of the dangers of social media. Meanwhile, the Obu Manuvu also use modern agricultural methods in cultivating

their ancestral lands, although they still prefer traditional farming methods to preserve the environment. We contend, based on the foregoing, that modern technology is not necessarily bad, given its role in shaping society. The way forward is to recontextualize the use of modern devices and ICT, which implies democratic and inclusive practices that improve rather than destroy human beings. Adaptability involves cultivating societal culture without undermining local customs and values. Recontextualization means that Indigenous Peoples can learn from and benefit from modern technology, and that they should use it for their good and the improvement of their lives.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

We declare no conflict of interest.

AI Disclosure

The study did not use any AI tools.

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