

Collaborative Production of “Civilizing Spaces” in Spanish Philippines: The Longos-Paete Land Dispute in Laguna in the Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries¹

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Abstract

This paper aims to present the land dispute between Longos and Paete in the province of Laguna de Bay from 1733 to 1734. The objective of the paper is to show how contested lands lying in the border of towns were adjudicated via collaboration among the native elite or *principalía*, the Church authorities and Spanish civil authorities. Such collaborative interactions gave rise to those pueblos as “civilizing spaces” that the colonial government wished to establish in the Philippines. Spanish authorities believed that these towns were the best way to instill civilization in the natives. The towns eventually became sites of encounter among the natives and colonial authorities, both secular and religious. It was through these encounters that such civilizing spaces were produced not just physically but also socially. These encounters did not come merely in the form of resistance but also of collaboration. Thus the natives, represented primarily by the elite class, contributed to the process of town foundation.

Keywords: Spanish Philippines, pueblo formation, colonial spaces, principalia

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The conflict between Paete and Longos in the province of Laguna de Bay² began in 1733 when Longos filed a claim to a territory which they complained Paete had encroached upon. I will discuss the involvement of the residents of the town and the native elite (*principalía*) in forming and configuring the spaces that they inhabited. In both towns the *principalía* took an active role in claiming privileges they believed were theirs. The *principalía* of Longos based their claim on government orders and decrees that the Franciscans, the religious order in charge of Longos, had issued half a century before. To clarify who actually owned the disputed territory, old people who resided and farmed those lands were interviewed. Finally, in 1734, the *principalía* of Longos withdrew their claim and Paete secured jurisdiction over the land. The case shows the complex character of pueblo foundation involving the action of three agents: the missionaries, the Spanish government and the native elite. The interaction of these three stakeholders defined the social and physical contours of these civilizing spaces.³

Several works have been published on Laguna pueblos,⁴ but few of them focus on power relationships within pueblos or among pueblos, and how these relationships or networks shaped the region. By studying the land dispute between Longos and Paete, I hope to make a preliminary contribution towards a growing understanding of how interaction among the natives of different pueblos and colonial authorities paved the way for the rise of pueblos in the Philippines.

²This province is named after the lake of the town of Bay or Bai which the Spaniards called Laguna de Bay. It is the largest lake in the Philippines with an area of 89,076 ha. (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, 1995), accessed March 14, 2016, www.fao.org/docrep/003/w6928e/w6928e0o.htm.

³Henri Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Maiden, Oxford and Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 68-168.

⁴Juan Palazon, *Majayjay (How a Town Came Into Being)* (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1964); Gregorio Zaide, *Pagsanjan in History and Legend* (Manila: Social Studies Publications, Inc., 1975); Luciano P. Santiago, "Casa Ordoveza of Majayjay, Laguna: The Evolution of a Provincial Ilustrado Family (1637-1990)," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture & Society* 19, no. 1 (1991): 11-30; "Ancient Pila: From Pailah in Pinagbayanan to Pagalangan," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture & Society* 38, no. 1 (2010): 1-36; "The Diocesan Shrine of San Antonio de Padua of Pila, Laguna: Historical Origins and Development (1578-2002)," *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas* 83, no. 853 (March-April, 2006): 329-342; "When a Town Has to Move: How Pila (Laguna) Transferred to Its Present Site (1794-1811)," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture & Society* 11 (1983): 93-106; Ernesto L. De Paz, *Nagcarlan in Perspective* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1999); Carlos Quirino and Mauro Garcia, *Narrative of Mr. Juan Masolong, First Christian of Lilio, Laguna and the Founding of the Town in 1572* (Carlos Quirino and Mauro Garcia, 1958); Evelyn A. Miranda, "The Role of Spanish Religious in the Urbanization of Laguna Towns Along the Bai Area," *Historical Bulletin* 44 (2010): 257-268.

The beginnings of Paete and Longos as pueblos

The history of the foundation of the two towns goes back to the beginning of Franciscan missionary activity in Laguna. The Franciscans were the second religious order that arrived in the Philippines.⁵ They immediately sought permission to evangelize areas outside Manila, particularly Bulacan, Camarines and the settlements around Laguna de Bay. Frays Juan de Plasencia and Diego de Oropesa concentrated their efforts in Laguna.⁶ In his account of the state of Franciscan-held parishes in the Philippines, Felix Huerta attributed the foundation of many towns in this region to the two missionaries.⁷ This leads to some confusion because he did not distinguish between the civil establishment of the pueblo and the religious foundation of the parish. The absence of a clear-cut distinction raises the question of whether or not a two-step process of pueblo foundation existed as early as the late sixteenth century. As we look into the foundation of Paete and Longos and the dispute that ensues, we shall see that in the early Spanish period, i.e., late sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, pueblo foundations were not clearly regulated. What is certain is that both Paete and Longos were once part of Lumbang, one of the earliest towns which, according to Huerta, was established in 1578.⁸ Lumbang’s jurisdiction extended to other settlements or barangays. The missionaries did not reside in those settlements but they visited them occasionally. They were thus called *visitas*. The place where the missionary resided was called *cabecera*, though in documents of this period the term *doctrina* was also used to refer to those sites that had a resident priest or *doctrinero*. The *cabecera*, almost invariably, tended to be the capital of the pueblo. Danilo Gerona claims

⁵ Fourteen Franciscans arrived on 2 July 1578. Cayetano Sanchez, “Los Franciscanos y la Evangelización de Filipinas, 1578-1600,” *Archivo Ibero-Americano* 43, nos. 171-172 (1983): 317.

⁶ Fray Juan de Plasencia arrived in Manila in 1578. He was well versed in Tagalog language and culture. He exercised pastoral work in Tayabas, Laguna and Bulacan. He was custodian of the Franciscans from 1583 to 1586. He died in Liliw, Laguna in 1590. Fray Diego de Oropesa also arrived with the first Franciscan mission to the Philippines in 1578. He and Fray Juan de Plasencia evangelized the settlements around Laguna de Bay and Tayabas. He travelled on missionary work to Cochinchina (present-day Vietnam) in 1585. Upon his return to the Philippines, he was assigned to Balayan and later on to Mindoro. He died in 1590 on board a ship bound for Acapulco. Eusebio Gómez Platero, *Catálogo biográfico de los religiosos franciscanos de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno de Filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta del Real Colegio de Sto. Tomás, 1880), 17-19, 25-26.

⁷ Felix Huerta, *Estado geográfico, topográfico, estadístico, histórico-religioso de la Santa y Apostólica Provincia de S. Gregorio Magno* (Manila: Imprenta de los Amigos del País, 1855), PDF e-book, 135-212.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

that the term *parroquia* was used in the latter part of the seventeenth century to refer to the cabecera and its surrounding visitas.⁹ He believes the emergence of this terminology suggests that the area “was already a stable and functioning Christian settlement.”¹⁰

Before its establishment as a pueblo, Paete was a visita of Lumbang. In 1600, it was transferred to the jurisdiction of Pangil. Finally, in 1602, a resident missionary was appointed to take charge of Paete which is located between the eastern coast of Laguna de Bay and the mountain of San Antonio. ¹¹ Huerta observed that Paete had very little farming land which did not yield enough to meet the needs of the residents. Residents, i.e., those who were registered or *empadronados*, numbered about 1,600 in 1649,¹² 1,600 in 1695,¹³ and 2,065 in 1751.¹⁴ The town of Longos¹⁵ also lays between the eastern coast of Laguna de Bay and the mountain of San Antonio.¹⁶ About four miles to the north was the town of Paete, and eight miles to the south, Lumbang.¹⁷ Prior to its official establishment as a town with its own head or *gobernadorcillo*, Longos began as a barangay that depended on the larger town of Paete. Since it was also Paete’s visita, Longos fell under Paete’s jurisdiction in terms of church matters.

On 2 June 1669, the Franciscan order decreed the establishment of a *convento* in Longos which was to be residence of the doctrinero. The doctrina of Longos was placed under the patronage of San Juan Bautista, with San Antonio, Babaye and Cabacab for its visitas. The same decree ordered that Paete would retain Paquil as its visita.¹⁸ The

⁹ Danilo Gerona, “Spanish Program of Urbanization and the Revolution of Bikol Towns: 1570-1800,” *The Journal of History* 37, nos. 1-2 (1992): 70-91.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹¹ Huerta, *Estado geográfico*, 163.

¹² “Early Franciscan Missions (1649)” in *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, ed. Emma Blair and James Alexander Robertson (1903; Manila: Bank of the Philippine Islands, 2000), CD-ROM, 35:280-282.

¹³ “Entrada de la Seráfica Religión de N.P. San Francisco en las Islas Filipinas,” quoted in Bruce Cruikshank, *Spanish Franciscans in the Colonial Philippines, 1578-1898: Catalogs and Analysis for a History of Filipinos in Franciscan Parishes* (Nebraska: Cornhusker Press, 2003), 2:4.

¹⁴ “Estado de las Misiones Franciscanas, 1751,” quoted in Cruikshank, *Spanish Franciscans*, 2:8.

¹⁵ The town of Longos is now Kalayaan, a third class municipality in the province of Laguna.

¹⁶ Huerta, *Estado geográfico*, 189.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 190.

¹⁸ Decree signed by Fr. Miguel de Sta. Maria, Comisario visitador of the Franciscans, 2 June 1669, “Longos. Formación de este pueblo con las visitas de S. Juan Bautista, S. Antonio, S. Juan Evangelista de Babas y S. Pablo de Cabacab, siendo su primer doctrinero Fr. Lucas Sarro,” Archivo Franciscano Ibero Oriental, Madrid (henceforth AFIO), 90/18. Longos. Formación de este pueblo

decree was issued based on the request the Franciscans received from a group of native elite composed of the *maestre de campo*¹⁹ Domingo de Sto. Domingo, Don Pedro Banagbanag, Don Francisco Macalingo, Don Gonzalo Uarling, and Don Luis Pedro, *cabezas* or heads of the barangays of Longos, San Antonio and Babaye, representing all the principalía of those barangays.²⁰ They requested the Franciscans to assign a priest to serve them so that they could easily receive the sacraments. In return, they promised to support the priest with a yearly stipend and a regular supply of rice, among others. They also promised to assist him in his errands.²¹

The establishment of Longos as a doctrina with its own doctrinero and dependent visitas took effect, but there was no evidence of any government decree that gave this establishment a legal backing. Furthermore, the decision did not specify the extent of Longos’ jurisdiction with respect to land since the missionaries were primarily concerned with addressing the spiritual needs of the residents of those localities. It appears that Longos became a pueblo as soon as it was made a doctrina in 1669. I base this claim on the list of native government officials who paid the *media anata* tax that year according to the Real Hacienda 1669 financial report.²² Based on this report, Don Bernardino Baeza and Don Francisco Pagsauahan were gobernadorcillo and *teniente* respectively.²³ The absence of a clear demarcation of Longos’ territory gave rise to the Longos-Paete dispute in the following century.

The foundation of Paete and Longos as pueblos follows a similar pattern. They started out as visitas, with no resident priest, and later on became full-fledged parishes with a convento or a house where the priest (doctrinero) resided. They became pueblos soon after their status changed from visita to doctrina, though based on Huerta’s account and

con las visitas de S. Juan Bautista, S. Antonio, S. Juan Evangelista de Babas y S. Pablo de Cabacab, siendo su primer doctrinero Fr. Lucas Sarro.

¹⁹ *Maestre de campo* was a military post equivalent to colonel.

²⁰ Undated letter in Tagalog to the commissary of the Franciscan order, Longos. Formación de este pueblo, AFIO 90/18.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² A tax paid by civil and military officials. It was also paid for honorific titles and privileges received from the Spanish government.

²³ Cargo de media anata, Caja de Filipinas, Cuentas, 1665/1671, Archivo General de Indias (henceforth AGI), Contaduría, 1237, Microfilm C-4856.

the case illustrated in this paper, the civil foundation of the doctrina as a pueblo was taken as implied. This was the case of Longos in 1669.

The subdivision of a large doctrina that had a number of *visitas* dispersed over a wide area into smaller ones favored the idea of civilization which the Spaniards wished to propagate in their Pacific colony. It is well known that the aim of the process of pueblo foundation was the Christianization of the natives. The Laws of the Indies had a number of provisions regarding the resettlement of natives in the Hispanic American colonies. These were the same principles that governed the *reducción* or resettlement of the natives in the Philippines. The laws mandated the *reducción* of the natives in compact villages. For instance, the first law of Book VI, Title III declares the following:

Let the Indians be congregated in villages, and not live divided and separated by the *Sierras*, and *Montes*, forgoing any profit spiritual and temporal, without relief of our ministers, and that which human needs require, which men should give each other.²⁴

Another provision refers specifically to the use of the *reducción* for the natives to assimilate Christianity. The following passage is from the Law 19 in Title I, Book VI:

Let the Indians be placed in a well-ordered settlement without being forced. So that they may benefit from Christianity and law and order, it should be mandated that they be congregated and live together, since in this way their Prelates will know them, and their needs and doctrine will be attended to. And because this is convenient, we command the Viceroy, and Governors to achieve this by all possible means, without coercing them, and explaining to them how useful and

²⁴ “Que los indios fuesen reducidos á Pueblos, y no viviesen divididos, y separados por las Sierras, y Montes, privándose de todo beneficio espiritual, y temporal, sin socorro de nuestros ministros, y del que obligan las necesidades humanas, que deben dar unos hombres á otros.” Royal decree of Charles I, 21 March 1551, reiterated in subsequent royal decrees of 19 February 1560, 13 September 1565, and 10 November 1568. *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de las Indias*, vol. II, (1681; Madrid: Boix, 1841), 228. Citations refer to the Boix edition.

beneficial this mandate is for their progress and good governance.²⁵

For the missionaries and for the whole Spanish colonial ideal, the *reducción* was a tool of Christianization. However, this was not its only purpose. The overarching aim of resettling the natives in more compact villages was to teach them to become “more human.” Historian Pedro Borges cites Fr. Bartolome Hernández’s 1572 letter from Lima, Peru to the President of the Council of the Indies in which he spoke about the need to reduce the Indians of the Americas: “As Your Lordship knows—first, it is necessary that they become men who live in a civic way, in order to make them Christians.”²⁶

Helping the natives become more “human” was the most pressing of all concerns. Only after they had learned humanity could they assimilate the teachings of Christianity. This was an idea that stemmed from the Renaissance. The missionaries of the sixteenth century thought of Christianity as a religion that would elevate the human being who, in his pre-Christian state, was still in the natural and, therefore, imperfect mode. Baptism and Christianity perfected the human being and inserted him in a supernatural and therefore more perfect mode of existence. However, the natives had to be prepared to receive the message of Christianity because they still lacked something essential in a Christian. They did not have what was then popularly termed “*policía*” or civic order. They needed to learn to be “men” or “human” and live as human beings. The way to do that was by settling in a *pueblo*, close to authority and close to other people of the community. Hence, what the missionaries wanted was to shape the natives so that they might live in

²⁵ “Que los Indios sean puestos en *policía* sin ser oprimidos. Para que los Indios aprovechen mas en *Christiandad*, y *policía*, se deve ordenar, que vivan juntos, y concertadamente, pues de esta forma los conocerán sus Prelados, y atenderán mejor á su bien, y doctrina. Y porque así conviene, sin hazerles oppression, y dandoles á entender quan util, y provechoso sera para su aumento, y buen gobierno, como está ordenado.” Royal decree of 23 August 1558, *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de las Indias*, 1841, 220.

²⁶ “Como V.S. sabe—primero es necesario que sean hombres que vivan políticamente, para hacerlos cristianos.” Quoted in Pedro Borges, *Métodos misionales en la cristianización de América, siglo XVI* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1960), 204.

a way that the missionaries thought was more human and thus more civilized.

The founding of pueblos was an attempt of the missionaries and the Spanish government to establish the idea of *policía* in the Philippine setting, and thus reconfigure the lives of the natives in a way that would be more receptive of Christianity. However, the idea of the pueblo, the congregation of several barangays in a compact area, under one governing body, was essentially contrary to the polity of the barangay itself, whose government was highly independent.²⁷ This could be one of the reasons why barangays that depended on a distant cabecera for both civil and spiritual needs sought to have their own resident *doctrinero*. In Laguna province, Longos and other towns that began as *visitas* sought to be independent from their *cabeceras*, as was the case of Pagsanjan in 1697 and San Antonio in 1735.²⁸

This scenario shows that the pueblos were not only physical spaces with fixed limits which the Spaniards set up but also social spaces which were configured through the interaction between the natives and the Spanish religious and civil authorities. Space, in this case, is “both the geographical site for action and the social possibility for engaging in action.”²⁹ Henri Lefebvre’s idea of space as a product of various agents and interests applies here.³⁰ In the case discussed in this paper, the pueblo was the space that became the stage for the action of different stakeholders who worked at upholding their respective agendas. These agendas might be compatible or incompatible with one another. I argue that it was in the meeting and adjustments of these interests that the pueblos as civilizing spaces were configured and reconfigured, hence the idea of collaborative production as characteristic of pueblo building.

²⁷ William Henry Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994), 6.

²⁸ Gregorio F. Zaide, *Pagsanjan in History and Legend* (Manila: Social Studies Publications, Inc., 1975); Expediente promovido a solicitud de los naturales de la visita de San Antonio y San Pablo sobre su erección en pueblo (original in National Archives of the Philippines. Erección de Pueblos, leg. 106), Microfilm num. 2181, rollo 33, Archivo del Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid (henceforth ACCHS-CSIC).

²⁹ Mark Gottdiener, *The Social Production of Urban Space* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 123.

³⁰ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 68-74.

The Longos-Paete land dispute: 1733-1734³¹

In 1733, Captain Lucas de Luna, then *alcalde mayor* of Laguna, reported that the pueblo of Longos, represented by Don Juan de San Buenaventura and Don Juan Corpus Christi, requested him to grant them the right to cultivate arable lands that were located in the visitas of San Antonio and San Pablo Cabacab. These lands were called Tovo, Timphong, Amboboyog, Dapdap and Potol. The last was at the boundary of Paete and Longos.³² San Buenaventura and Corpus Christi attached a 1687 order issued by Don Antonio de Ortega, then *alcalde mayor* of Laguna. By virtue of this order, Longos claimed they had the right to the lands mentioned. They also reported that they were unhappy with what the Franciscan priests in charge of Paete and Longos had arranged. Although they did not specify what the friars had decided on, it can be inferred from the document that it was connected to the lands that Longos was claiming. The problem was that the visita of San Antonio, once a visita of Longos, had been a visita of Paete since 1690 at the latest.³³ On 27 October 1733, *alcalde mayor* Luna ordered the pueblo of Paete and the friars in charge of Paete not to disturb the people of Longos and respect their right to the land they claimed to possess from times past.

The principalía of Paete headed by *governadorcillo* Don Antonio Velázquez contested the *alcalde mayor*'s order alleging that the latter had transferred the ownership of the lands to Longos without prior hearing. The Paete elite said they would obey only in the interim. They likewise presented their counterarguments to undermine Longos' claim to the territories.³⁴ First, San Antonio used to be a visita of Paete, but it was transferred to Longos to give it enough number of tributes so that it could have its own minister.³⁵

³¹ Litigio entre Longos y Paete sobre tierras del pueblo de San Antonio, AFIO, 90/21.

³² I have not managed to locate the other places named in the dispute.

³³ Cargo de media anata, Caja de Filipinas, Cuentas, 1690/1691, AGI, Contaduría, 1247, Microfilm C-4864.

³⁴ Litigio entre Longos y Paete, fols. 2-4, AFIO, 90/21.

³⁵ One tribute was paid by every family and by unmarried adults individually. Single men who lived alone paid it when they turned sixteen, or when they turned twenty if they lived with their parents. Single women who lived alone paid it when they turned twenty, or at the age of twenty-five if they still lived with their parents. One tribute was worth eight reales and an additional two reales for the



Map of Laguna de Bay region and close-up of the towns of Longos, Paete and San Antonio from Jose de Algue, S.J. *Atlas de Filipinas* (1899)

situado de guerra. See Nicholas P. Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines: From Conquest to Revolution* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1971), 110-111.

Meeting the standard number of tributes required seemed to be Longos’ perennial problem. Five hundred tributes was the standard requirement for a pueblo.³⁶ However, in the late sixteenth century, Fray Juan de Plasencia had pegged the number at 250 or about 1000 people.³⁷ Throughout the eighteenth century, Longos hardly met this requirement with only 202 tributes in 1735,³⁸ 233.5 in 1751,³⁹ 177 in 1765,⁴⁰ 211 in 1768,⁴¹ and 200 in 1776.⁴² Paete’s tribute counts were larger: 448 in 1695,⁴³ 425 in 1751,⁴⁴ 484.5 in 1765,⁴⁵ and 503 in 1768.⁴⁶

Moreover, the Paete principalía claimed that in 1687 the superior government had issued an order to restore the visita of San Antonio to Paete upon San Antonio’s request.⁴⁷ But in that same year, as mentioned earlier, the alcalde mayor of Laguna had issued an order which, as Longos claimed, gave their pueblo the right to the lands which were supposed to be San Antonio’s. Records of the dispute did not mention the dates of those government orders, which adds to the confusion. But the records of the Real Hacienda help clarify matters. The 1686 and 1687 financial reports submitted by the Real Hacienda to the Consejo de Indias listed three tenientes⁴⁸ for the visitas of San Anton or San Antonio, San Juan (Babaye) and San Pablo (Cabacab) under the pueblo of Longos.⁴⁹ However, by 1690, the teniente de visita of San Antonio

³⁶O.D. Corpuz, “Land and Agriculture in the Philippines: An Economic History Perspective,” *Philippine Review of Economics* 29, no. 2(1992): 138, <http://pre.econ.upd.edu.php/pre/article/view/153/699>.

³⁷Carta del franciscano Juan de Plasencia sobre varios asuntos, 18 junio 1585. AGI, Filipinas, 84, N.46.

³⁸Tributos de Longos, 1737, AFIO, 90/23.

³⁹“Estado de las Misiones Franciscanas” (1751), quoted in Cruikshank, *Spanish Franciscans*, 2:8.

⁴⁰Overview of parishes Franciscan provincial, 26 June 1765, quoted in Cruikshank, *Spanish Franciscans*, 2:10.

⁴¹“Certificación hecha por los oficiales reales de los tributos que en dicho año administraba esta provincia.” AFIO 70/15, quoted in Cruikshank, *Spanish Franciscans*, 2:14.

⁴²Pacaen o limosna de Longos a su doctrinero, 1776, AFIO, 90/24.

⁴³“Entrada de la Seraphica Religión de N.P. S Francisco en las Islas Filipinas,” quoted in Cruikshank, *Spanish Franciscans*, 2:4.

⁴⁴“Estado de las Misiones Franciscanas” (1751), cited in Cruikshank, *Spanish Franciscans*, 2:8.

⁴⁵Overview of parishes Franciscan provincial, 26 June 1765, cited in Cruikshank, *Spanish Franciscans*, 2:10.

⁴⁶“Certificación hecha por los oficiales reales de los tributos que en dicho año administraba esta provincia,” quoted in Cruikshank, *Spanish Franciscans*, 2:14.

⁴⁷Litigio entre Longos y Paete, fol. 3, AFIO, 90/21.

⁴⁸Deputy gobernadorcillo.

⁴⁹Cargo de media anata, Caja de Filipinas, Cuentas, 1683/1687, AGI, Contaduría, 1244, Microfilm C-4862; Cargo de media anata, Caja de Filipinas, Cuentas, 1687/1688, AGI, Contaduría, 1245, Microfilm C-4863..

was already registered under Paete, while the tenientes for the visitas of San Juan and San Pablo were listed under Longos.⁵⁰ This means that the visita of San Antonio was transferred to Paete between 1687 and 1690.⁵¹ It appears that the superior decree had overruled the order of the alcalde mayor, both issued in 1687.

The *principalía* of Paete further alleged that Longos could not possibly have owned the lands in San Antonio on the grounds that Governor General Fausto Cruzat y Gongora had exempted Longos from paying tribute in the form of rice in 1698. Paete argued that, if Longos had the right to the lands they were claiming, then they would have had enough harvest to pay the tribute and, therefore, did not need to seek any exemption. The Paete *principalía* added that upon the transfer of the visita of San Antonio to Paete in 1687, Longos had lost the right to the yield of the land.

Paete also said that parts of the land had been leased to other people. These people might have been from Paete, at least according to what could be gathered from the response of the Longos *principalía*. The Paete *principales* did not specify names of lessees. In the course of the dispute, the Paete *principalía* did not present any document to prove that they had indeed leased the lands. However, it is interesting to note that they had presented this as a fact to strengthen their claim. In Nicholas Cushner's study of lands in Tondo in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he mentioned that there were several records of sale of lands by Tagalogs and Chinese. The *principalía* divided and sold pueblo lands.⁵² Perhaps the Paete *principalía* were also engaged in a similar activity although instead of selling, they leased the land.

After hearing Paete's arguments, the alcalde mayor ordered Longos to present proof of their right to the lands they were claiming. However, the Longos *principalía* responded that they would only submit evidence if Paete presented relevant documents that proved they had leased the

⁵⁰ Cargode media anata, Caja de Filipinas, Cuentas, 1690/1691, AGI, Contaduría, 1247, Microfilm C-4864.

⁵¹ I did not find any recorded payments of media anata for either Paete or Longos in 1688 and 1689.

⁵² Nicholas P. Cushner, *Landed Estates in the Colonial Philippines*, Monograph Series no. 20 (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1976), 68.

lands.⁵³ They also argued that the lands they were claiming were *realengas*, i.e., crown lands. Theoretically, crown lands were unoccupied tracts. According to O. D. Corpuz, the king assigned lands to pueblos from these crown lands. The boundaries of pueblo lands were not well-defined then and there were no land titles to prove ownership.⁵⁴ Although there was legislation on the limits of each pueblo and the arable lands and water sources it should possess, the case of the land dispute between Longos and Paete indicates that the legislation on pueblo formation in the early Spanish period was not clearly articulated. It was only in the nineteenth century that boundaries of pueblos were defined.⁵⁵

Interestingly, while this dispute was going on, the Spanish monarch had ordered Governor General Fernando Valdés y Tamón to map the Philippines indicating the towns, provinces, and military provisions of the colony in 1733. Valdés y Tamón assigned the Jesuit priest Fr. Murillo Velarde to draw a detailed map of the Philippines.⁵⁶ A year later, Murillo Velarde’s *Carta hydrographica y chorographica de las Islas Filipinas dedicada al Rey nuestro Señor* was published. Although the cartographer wished to represent all existing Philippine towns on the map, the town of Longos was left out, despite the fact that the town had been recognized as a full-fledged pueblo since 1669. This shows that mapping and the reckoning and production of spaces were all works in progress.

When the turn of Longos to present their evidence came, they began accusing the Paete *principalía* of driving them away from the fields after they had already plowed it and prepared it for sowing.⁵⁷ They even named the members of the *principalía* involved: Don Miguel Geronimo, *teniente* of Paete, Captain Don Juan Panganiban, Don Juan Tinauin, Don Domingo Villegas, Don Juan Miraña, the present notary of Paete, Don Joseph Enrrique, Santiago dela Vega, and Don Francisco

⁵³ Litigio entre Longos y Paete, fol. 6, AFIO, 90/21.

⁵⁴ Corpuz, “Land and Agriculture,” 138.

⁵⁵ For a detailed discussion, see Rosario Mendoza Cortes, “The Political Process Involved in the Founding of Towns in the Nineteenth Century,” *Philippine Social Sciences Review* 48, nos. 1-4 (Jan-Dec 1984): 121-128.

⁵⁶ Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, *El mapa de Filipinas del P. Murillo Velarde* (Manila: Chofre y Compañía, 1894), 3.

⁵⁷ Litigio entre Longos y Paete, fol.11, AFIO, 90/21.

de León. The alcalde mayor summoned all of them to present their statement in Pagsanjan, then provincial capital. They duly complied and issued their individual statements on 13 February 1734. Their accounts were similar: each of them went to the disputed territory on different days to tell the people of Longos and those who were residents of Paete but had fields there to refrain from working on those contested lands while they were under litigation. After receiving the statement of the Paete principales involved, on 27 February 1734 the alcalde mayor issued an order to Paete to allow the people of Longos to carry on their farming activity in the territory without any disturbance. On 3 April 1734, the gobernadorcillo of Paete, Don Manuel Dimacolangan, who had succeeded Don Antonio Velázquez, wrote a letter to the alcalde mayor to complain about the order. At the same time, he brought the case to the governor general, who ordered the alcalde mayor to send a report on the case. The alcalde mayor reported what had transpired so far and informed the Governor General that the case was pending because neither party had presented the documents required. Paete had not submitted proof of the lease of the disputed lands while Longos had not shown evidence of ownership of the land. On 22 May 1734, the alcalde mayor summoned the gobernadorcillo of Paete, Dimacolangan, and the leaders of Longos, San Buenaventura and Corpus Christi, to appear before him in Pagsanjan. The leaders of Longos did not go and, as the report claimed, they were nowhere to be found. The notary of the provincial government communicated instead with the *común de naturales* of Longos.⁵⁸ They asked to be excused from appearing in Pagsanjan. At this point, they add another information which complicated the case further. They explained that their claim against Paete began when the principalía of the visita of San Pablo (Cabacab), which was then under Longos, asked Longos to help them lodge a case about some plots of land that they claimed belonged to them. San Pablo offered to shoulder the cost of the case. The principales of Longos agreed on the condition that they also have a share in the lands for them to farm to be able to

⁵⁸ The term *común* was used in the eighteenth century to refer to any pueblo, province, city, or villa. Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de Autoridades*, 1726 (Madrid: Gredos, 1990). In this case the “común de naturales” of Longos referred to the native residents of Longos acting as a body that represented the pueblo. It refers to the other native officials of the pueblo, i.e., the constable, the fiscal, the inspectors of palm trees and fields, and the cabezas de barangay, and perhaps, the past officials.

pay part of their tribute in kind. After seeing how the case had developed and realizing that they would cease to enjoy the exemption from the rice tribute, the representatives of San Pablo gave up their claim.⁵⁹

The account of the investigation done by the Franciscan parish priests comes at this point in the report. When Longos filed their complaint in 1733, the *alcalde mayor* had requested the parish priests of Paete and Longos to clarify matters. He had also requested them for advice on the most convenient way of ending the dispute to cut down on costs. Requesting the Franciscan friars to intervene was reasonable since the foundation of both Paete and Longos as *doctrinas* was attributed to them. The priests reported that the contested land measured $\frac{3}{4}$ by $\frac{1}{4}$ league (about 4.17 by 1.39 square kilometers). The *visitas* of San Antonio (under Paete) and San Pablo (under Longos) were located within this territory on the mountain slope. A small river ran from east to west offering a natural boundary between San Antonio and San Pablo. However, San Antonio had most of the land. The priests confirmed that Longos did not have any document to prove that the land was theirs. Their only proof was that in 1669 the *visita* of San Antonio was transferred to Longos when Longos was founded as a *pueblo*. However, the *principales* of Longos were not sure which authority granted them the *visitas* and the fields. This part of the report is quite striking. It seems the Franciscan friars did not think of checking the records of their religious order’s decrees. In 1669, as mentioned above, the Franciscans convened in their capitular meeting approved the establishment of a *convento* in Longos with San Antonio, San Juan (Babaye) and San Pablo (Cabacab) as its *visitas*. The religious authorities were therefore responsible for the allocation of *visitas* to Longos.

According to the priests’ report, when Don Juan de Ozaeta, judge of the Royal Audiencia, was in Laguna in 1698, the *principalía* of Longos submitted to him their request to be exempted from paying the rice tribute because they did not have land to plant rice since the lake had overrun a portion of their farming land. The superior government then ordered the *alcalde mayor* of Laguna to visit the place. The *alcalde* afterwards verified that Longos hardly harvested enough for their needs.

⁵⁹ Litigio entre Longos y Paete, fol. 25, AFIO, 90/21.

Further, the priests asked if there were old people who could remember how the visita of San Pablo was founded. Four elderly people who claimed to be in their late nineties and early hundreds were interviewed, two men and two women. They were asked about how they arrived in that place and who resided there, who allowed them to settle and till the land. The interview took place in the presence of four Franciscan priests, the principales of Longos, Paete, and the interviewees or witnesses from the visitas involved.

They said they had come from a hamlet called Cabacab together with their parents and relatives.⁶⁰ The only people they found there were residents of the visita of San Antonio, which then belonged to Paete. This was prior to the 1669 foundation of Longos as a pueblo. They then asked the people of Paete to allow them to settle there and to lend them lands to cultivate. The original reads: “y la gente de Paete, que a estos lo havitaban, suplicaron, les permitiese en dicho sitio, y les pidieron les prestassen tierras para sembrar.”⁶¹ The original manuscript uses the term “prestar,” which could mean lend or lease. The old people of San Pablo (Cabacab) seemed to understand that the land they were farming was not theirs. They were given the south bank of the river, where the visita of San Pablo was presently located. They claimed it had been administered by Paete, until the “fathers ordered that it be administered from Longos.”⁶² They likewise remembered that the Franciscans were the ones responsible for transferring their visita to Longos.

After the inquiry, the parish priests suggested to the colonial government that the disputed lands be divided between Longos and Paete based on the number of tributes required of each. It would benefit Longos because they would have enough arable land to pay their yearly tribute in kind. The priests insisted that the government should order this by a superior decree. This confirms that there was no superior decree that established the boundaries of each pueblo.

One last evidence was presented in favor of Paete: the book of baptismal records. Fr. Francisco de la Fuente, then parish priest of

⁶⁰ *Sitio* is the term used in the manuscript.

⁶¹ Litigio entre Longos y Paete, fol. 30, AFIO, 90/21.

⁶² *Ibid.*

Paete, certified that in the baptismal records of the church from 1587-1658, there was a list of baptisms from the visitas of San Antonio and Santa Ana with the heading “Baptizados del pueblo de San Antonio y Santa Ana del año de mil quinientos noventa y seis.”⁶³ There were twenty-five people on the list, of varying ages and status. They were baptized between 24 November 1596 and the start of 1597. The document was signed by then parish priest Fr. Juan dela Cruz. Fr. De la Fuente certified that the list of baptisms in San Antonio for the succeeding years up to the present were still in the records of Paete. Despite the alcalde mayor’s 1687 order that granted Longos the right to till the lands that lay in San Antonio’s territory and the fact that from 1669 up to 1687 San Antonio had been a visita of Longos, Paete appeared to have exercised jurisdiction over San Antonio over this period, at least as regards ecclesiastical matters. This document, together with all the other proofs mentioned above, thus revealed that San Antonio was under Paete’s jurisdiction in both ecclesiastical and civil terms.

Meanwhile, the two leaders of Longos, San Buenaventura and Corpus Christi, who had filed the complaint against Paete in 1733 did not reappear to issue their sworn statement. On 1 August 1734, the notary of the province of Laguna obtained a sworn statement from the común de naturales of Longos. They said they were giving up their claim to the lands because they acknowledged that it was not just and that they did not want to lose the exemption from paying the rice tribute.⁶⁴ The case concluded with a decree of the alcalde mayor that the disputed lands are Paete’s and that he imposed on the people of Longos “perpetuo silencio.”

The focus of the litigation between Longos and Paete was an arable plot found at the border between the two towns. What comes to the fore here are varying systems of land ownership and concept of territorial boundaries: the Tagalog pre-Hispanic system, the Spanish legislation on pueblo lands, and the Church system of visitas and

⁶³ Baptized from the pueblo of San Antonio and Santa Ana from 1596, Litigio entre Longos y Paete, fol. 31, AFIO, 90/21.

⁶⁴ Litigio entre Longos y Paete, fol. 34, AFIO, 90/21.

convento. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, the land occupied by a settlement or a barangay was “divided among the whole barangay, especially the irrigated portion, and thus each one knew his own.”⁶⁵ Furthermore, the lands in the mountains were not divided but were considered communal property. If people from any barangay began clearing a plot, they had a right to till it, and no one could drive them away. But the people had the right only to the usufruct of the land.⁶⁶ This might have been what the old people of San Pablo understood by land tenancy when they claimed their forefathers had asked Paete to lend them land. Although the concept of communal ownership might not be true across all regions as Glenn May argues,⁶⁷ Fray Juan de Plasencia’s observation on Tagalog customs supports the view that many barangays in the Tagalog-speaking region of Laguna might have owned land in common. When the missionaries began establishing conventos in the doctrinas their main concern was that there should be at least 1000 people or 250 tributes, a place for a church and a residence for the priest. The missionaries did not specify the availability of arable lands and water sources. Neither did they set the physical boundaries of the doctrinas. The Longos elite attempted to take advantage of this gap to claim some right to arable lands based on their status as a doctrina and a pueblo. However, the Spanish government opted to draw, albeit not completely, on the indigenous concept of the right to land which put priority on ancestry. Since the people of San Antonio had been there even before Longos became a pueblo, they had the rightful claim to the land. However, since San Antonio was a visita of Paete, jurisdiction over the land was Paete’s. The following year, in 1735, the principales of San Antonio and San Pablo (Cabacab) lodged a request to the provincial government for their barangays to be established as one pueblo with the church in San Antonio.⁶⁸ There is hardly any information on the visita of San Pablo in other secondary works. What we know from the dispute

⁶⁵Fr. Juan de Plasencia, “Customs of the Tagalogs” in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 7:174.

⁶⁶Ibid., 175 and Scott, *Barangay*, 221-222.

⁶⁷Glenn Anthony May, “The Making of a Myth: John Leddy Phelan and the ‘Hispanization’ of Land Tenure in the Philippines,” *Philippine Studies* 52, no. 3 (2004): 275-307.

⁶⁸Expediente promovido a solicitud de los naturales de la visita de San Antonio y San Pablo sobre su erección en pueblo (original in National Archives of the Philippines. Ereccion de Pueblos, leg. 106), Microfilm no. 2181, rollo 33, ACCHS-CSIC.

is that it had little arable land, which was the reason it tried to claim part of San Antonio’s. According to Huerta’s account of the foundation of San Antonio, this pueblo was established when the visitas of San Antonio and San Pablo were joined together in 1736.⁶⁹ He lamented, though, that even with a sizeable and fertile territory, the pueblo of San Antonio scarcely harvested enough rice for the community’s needs.⁷⁰ It will take further research to probe the reasons for this.

Flexibility and authority were two outstanding characteristics of Spain’s colonial bureaucracy as John Leddy Phelan had observed.⁷¹ Every part of the bureaucratic machinery, with the monarch at the helm, worked to preserve the empire. Although the Laws of the Indies established the rules for governing the colonies, the governor-general and the *alcaldes mayores* in the Philippines applied these laws depending on local circumstances, hence the contingent character of the administration of the colony. The governance of Spain’s vast empire was thus both centralized and decentralized. Oftentimes, the superior and provincial governments had to reconcile conflicting interests and legislation. Jurisdictional issues between civil and ecclesiastical authorities likewise frequently gave rise to conflicts as the land dispute between Paete and Longos illustrates. Sometimes officials had to hold the execution of the law in abeyance for the benefit of their subjects. The Longos tribute case is a good example. The law stipulated that all subjects should pay tribute both in the form of cash and rice. Within the colonial structure, there was room for Longos to obtain some relief from this burden. So from 1698 up to the years of the dispute, the pueblo enjoyed exemption from the rice tribute. This privilege was extended even further after they decided to dismiss their claim to San Antonio’s lands. It was in the middle of these conflicting interests advanced by different levels and realms of governance that the natives found avenues for protecting their own interests.

⁶⁹ Huerta, *Estado geográfico*, 202.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁷¹ John Leddy Phelan, “Authority and Flexibility in the Spanish Imperial Bureaucracy,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (Special Issue on Comparative Public Administration, June 1960): 47-65.

Conclusion

The land dispute between Longos and Paete shows how a group of people, the native elite from peripheral areas, negotiated the colonial system and collaborated in producing the pueblos which the Spaniards understood to be civilizing spaces because they offered proximity to colonial authorities and opportunities for civic engagement. The Longos elite indeed collaborated by applying for the status of their community as a *doctrina* with a resident *doctrinero* and a *pueblo*. Both Longos and Paete elite proved themselves to be quick at engaging with colonial authorities. In the spiritual realm, the Longos *principalía* and the elite of the other *visitas* showed themselves willing to embrace Christianity when they requested the Franciscan order for a resident priest and promised to fulfill the responsibilities this entailed. In the civil realm, they also seemed open to this idea of civilization as they engaged colonial authorities and neighboring communities to pursue their case against Paete. Their decision to retain their exemption from tribute payment in kind could indicate their reluctance to be totally subjected to the colonial government. However, there are grounds for inferring that it was more an indication of their poverty. Huerta observed that Longos' territory was too small that, though well irrigated, it did not yield enough rice for its residents. They also harvested corn, coconut and by mid-1800s the population of Longos was 1,658.⁷²

The dispute between Longos and Paete, together with the people of San Antonio and San Pablo, illustrated ways by which natives tried to claim rights based partly on indigenous laws, while drawing on the legal framework of colonial institutions. That the people of San Antonio requested the governor general so that they could remain with Paete after they had been assigned by the Franciscans to Longos as a *visita* is quite telling because it points to the fact that the natives had room to maneuver within colonial institutions and obtain privileges from the colonial government. Through the action of the native elite, the status of San Antonio, San Pablo (Cabacab) and the arable lands at the border of Longos and Paete became clearer not only to them but also to the

⁷² Huerta, *Estado geográfico*, 190.

colonial authorities. San Antonio and San Pablo would eventually merge to become an autonomous pueblo in 1736.⁷³

The discussion centered primarily on the land dispute, but it brings into focus a larger question that lies at the core of pueblo foundations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: that of the distinction between the ecclesiastical foundation of the doctrina and the civil foundation of the pueblo. The jurisdictional issue arising from the involvement of both religious and civil authorities in the pueblos of Longos and Paete has shown that there was no clear-cut distinction between the ecclesiastical and civil foundations articulated in the law during the early Spanish period. Whilst Church and civil authorities were both implicated in the process, the action of the friars, i.e., their establishment of doctrinas, was taken to be a reference point for the establishment of pueblos and subsequent government legislation on issues related to borders, allocation of number of tributes, tribute exemptions, etc. Although the process was ambivalent and ambiguous, it left significant room for both Spanish authorities and the natives modify the contours of the pueblo and thus collaboratively produce that “civilizing space.”

The compromise that colonial authorities and the natives reached brought about the production of these pueblos in this peripheral region of the Spanish empire. The colonial actors involved had ways of collaborating while maintaining their spheres of authority. This brings to mind what Burbank and Cooper had observed: “What successful empires produced, usually, was neither consistent loyalty nor constant resistance: they produced contingent accommodation.”⁷⁴ I would say that not only the colonial subjects but also the colonial government employed contingent accommodation.

⁷³ Expediente promovido a solicitud de los naturales de la visita de San Antonio y San Pablo sobre su erección en pueblo (original in National Archives of the Philippines. Ereccion de Pueblos, leg. 106), Microfilm num. 2181, rollo 33, ACCHS-CSIC; Huerta, *Estado geográfico*, 202-204.

⁷⁴ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 14.

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