

# **Deep-Rooted Hopes and Green Entanglements**

**Implementing Indigenous Peoples Rights and Nature-Conservation  
in the Philippines and Indonesia**

*Title*

Deep-Rooted Hopes and Green Entanglements. Implementing Indigenous Peoples Rights and Nature-Conservation in the Philippines and Indonesia.

*Titel*

Diep-Gewortelde Hoop en Groene Verstrengeling. De Implementatie van Inheemse Rechten en Natuurbescherming in de Filippijnen en Indonesie

Faculty of Social Sciences, Leiden University.

Cover photos: Padmapani L. Perez. (Front cover, top.) *Bringing sweet potatoes home from the swidden fields (photo by Ferdinand John Balanag) with a backdrop of Kalanguya homes nestled in the Benguet mountains.* (Front cover, bottom) *Taking freshly caught fish from the nets with a Ngaju Dayak fishing shelter in the background, in Danao Jalam Pangen.* (Back cover, left to right) *Men, women, and children in Tawangan, Philippines, and Baun Bango, Indonesia.*

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# **Deep-Rooted Hopes and Green Entanglements**

## **Implementing Indigenous Peoples Rights and Nature-Conservation in the Philippines and Indonesia**

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ADBR   | Ancestral Domain Boundary Resolution                         |
| ADSDPP | Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan |
| AMAN   | Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara                            |
| BKSDA  | Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam                            |
| CADC   | Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim                        |
| CADT   | Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title                        |
| CALC   | Certificate of Ancestral Land Claim                          |
| CALT   | Certificate of Ancestral Land Title                          |
| CARP   | Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program                        |
| CLOA   | Certificate of Land Ownership Award                          |
| DAR    | Department of Agrarian Reform                                |
| DAO    | Departmental Administrative Order                            |
| DENR   | Department of Environment and Natural Resources              |
| IPRA   | Indigenous Peoples Rights Act                                |
| LGU    | Local Government Unit  |
| NCIP   | National Commission on Indigenous Peoples                    |
| NGO    | Non-Government Organization                                  |
| NIPAS  | National Integrated Protected Areas System                   |
| PAMB   | Protected Areas Management Board                             |
| UN     | United Nations   |
| WWF    | World Wildlife Fund  |



## Preface

This study is rooted in the places where daily struggles to make a living in the environment coincide and collide with efforts to save nature and/or the environment through the delineation of protected areas. In this dissertation I explore the intertwining of the causes of environmentalism and indigenous peoples rights. I look into whether this interface lends itself well to both environmentalist causes and indigenous aspirations. It is critical to understand both elements of this dynamic: indigenous peoples, their link with the conservation of biodiversity and their relationship with the implementors/advocates of nature conservation; and the impact of the latter actors and their green vision on indigenous communities and their environments.

This dissertation is composed of two case studies from the Philippines and Indonesia, spread out across a combination of chapters and published papers. Each case study focuses on the implementation of policies and programs on the environment and indigenous peoples. The Philippine case study concerns the Kalanguya of the village of Tawangan, which is located inside the Mt. Pulag National Park, in the Cordillera Administrative Region. The Indonesian case study concerns the Ngaju Dayak of the village of Baun Bango, which shares its borders with the Taman Nasional Sebangau, in the province of Central Kalimantan.

Chapters Two and Four are ethnographic papers on the Philippine and Indonesian case studies respectively, and are centered on social and environmental change at the village-level. These two chapters show in detail how work, or livelihood, and the environment become constantly negotiated uncertainties when conservation goals and local realities meet. Chapters Three and Five expand the ethnography and analysis of each of the case studies, but from different vantage points. Chapter Three is about the roles of indigenous elite in boundary making and maintenance. I look at this in the context of the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) among the Kalanguya in Tawangan and the areas surrounding the Mt. Pulag National Park. The IPRA recognizes indigenous rights to territory while placing the responsibility (and restrictions) of environmental conservation and sustainable development on indigenous peoples.

In Chapter Five I link different actors' imagined futures for the environment in general, and the Taman Nasional Sebangau in particular, with the lived realities and aspirations of the Ngaju of Baun Bango, creating an initial exercise in studying the future in the field. Although the chapters that deal exclusively with each case study do not have a one-to-one correspondence, there are several parallels between the Philippine and Indonesian cases that are covered throughout the dissertation. The role of indigenous elite is also discussed for the Ngaju Dayak case, only not in an entire chapter, since my findings on the visibility and positionalities of the elite there were not as extensive as in the Philippine case. The imagined futures of the Kalanguya are also dealt with in other chapters but images of the future are discussed at greater length for the Ngaju Dayak because of a shared interest in both the field site and the future with Dr. Gerard Persoon, with whom a published version of Chapter Five was originally written.

Chapters Six and Seven bring the Philippines and Indonesia together in comparisons of the interface of agents of environmentalism and indigenous peoples. Chapter Six

describes and analyzes what comes to pass between key actors before, during, and after participation in interactions organized around the Mt. Pulag National Park in the Philippines, and the Taman Nasional Sebangau in Indonesia – two, locally-contested sites for nature-conservation. Chapter Seven focuses on the flow of resource management styles and indigenous peoples’ rights discourses – ideas on the move – between the Philippines and Indonesia. Here I offer up an analysis of how an indigenous rights law such as that of the Philippines might be implemented at the local level in Indonesia. Finally, Chapter Eight concludes the dissertation by bringing together the theoretical arguments and common ethnographic threads that run throughout the chapters.

Four of the chapters of this dissertation are revised versions of papers that were written for publication.<sup>1</sup> The bulk of the revisions were made to eliminate repetition, except where unavoidable. Some details and arguments have also been added in order to make explicit the common threads that run through the chapters that were originally written as stand-alone papers. In some instances, I had to make adjustments in the light of newly learned facts and subsequent comments on published papers.

The work for this dissertation was supported by the joint Junior Expert Programme of the Department of Environment and Development at the Institute of Environmental Sciences (CML), Leiden University and the Directoraat General voor Samenwerking (DGIS) from 2002 to 2006. In Indonesia, I was greatly aided by the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (LIPI) and the Palangkaraya team of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). In the Philippines, I benefitted from being a research affiliate of the Cordillera Studies Center (CSC) at the University of the Philippines.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter Three: Perez, P. (2009) ‘Governing Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous persons in government implementing the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act,’ in *The Cordillera Review* vol. 1, no. 2.

Chapter Five: Persoon, G. and P. Perez (2008) *The Relevant Context: Environmental consequences of images of the future,* in Walters, B. et al. (eds.) *Against the Grain: The Vayda tradition in human ecology and ecological anthropology*, pp. 287-306. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Chapter Six: Perez, P. (2008) *An Etiquette of Environmentalism: interactions for natural resource management in the Philippines and Indonesia,* in Persoon, G. and Osseweijer, M. (eds) *Reflections on the Heart of Borneo (Tropenbos Series, 24: 197-230)*. Wageningen: Tropenbos International.

Chapter Seven: Perez, P. (2007) *Making and Breaking Boundaries: indigenous peoples and natural resource management in the Philippines and Indonesia*’ in Persoon, G. & M. Hsiao (eds) *Transboundary Environmental Issues in Insular Southeast Asia (Asia Pacific Forum, 36: 171-205)*. Taipei: CAPAS, Academia Sinica.





Photo 1.1: A portion of the village of Baun Bango, taken from the Katingan River.



Photo 1.2: A portion of the village of Tawangan.



## CHAPTER ONE

What takes place between various key actors in the processes of implementing environmental policies, laws, or programs? In this dissertation I am interested in the times and spaces that people of different environmentalist persuasions and from different walks of life interact. Through the patterns of their interaction they create a dynamic of environmentalist action. Within this dynamic I inspect the intertwining of the two internationally recognized discourses of indigenous peoples' rights and nature-conservation.

Collectively, the papers assembled here have a tri-fold purpose. They provide: 1) a comparative, multi-site ethnography of the on-the-ground dynamic of environmentalist action; 2) a description and analysis of common implementation practices of nature-conservation projects that work in cooperation with, or through co-optation of, indigenous peoples; and 3) a description and analysis of the practical, on-the-ground implications of indigenous peoples' rights as an emergent form of social-environmental justice that takes identity and tradition as its basis. To accomplish this on an empirical base, I draw on case studies and insights that have been built up through fieldwork among the Kalanguya of Tawangan in the Philippine province of Benguet, and the Ngaju Dayak of Baun Bango in the province of Central Kalimantan, in Indonesian Borneo.

### Research Problem

In the past the interface between the discourses of indigenous peoples rights and nature-conservation was treated as an unproblematic, essentialized relationship wherein indigenous peoples are considered to be stewards of nature. Many environmentalist projects, policies, and laws have been designed or written around this premise. However, in practice we have begun to see the breakdown of this tenuous association, and so it becomes necessary to study more than just indigenous peoples' activities and their impact on biological diversity. We need to know: How do indigenous peoples living in proximity with forests, interact with laws and policies that are aimed at regulating their use of natural resources, their main source of livelihood? More to the point, how do indigenous peoples and the implementors and/or advocates of environmentalisms interact?

Together these questions have guided the gathering of data that constitute the ethnographic basis of this collection of papers. To answer these questions, I will discuss what two groups of indigenous peoples, the Ngaju Dayak of Central Kalimantan, Indonesia and the Kalanguya of Benguet, Philippines, are doing as they live in places that other actors – who live in yet other environments – have identified as places where nature is under threat. I will show how these indigenous peoples allocate or appropriate, utilise, possess, and pass on affordances in their environments. I will also describe how these practices have changed – and continue to change – over time. As will be shown in the chapters that follow, the changes in the environment and in the lives of indigenous peoples are inextricably linked with identity and entitlement, with development and the future, and with matters of standards of living as much as with matters of survival. These changes are brought about by a myriad of things, such as media, markets, politics, and

education. In this study, I want to focus on how change is also brought about by agents of environmentalism knocking at the doors of indigenous peoples.

How have agents of environmentalism affected the lives and environments of indigenous peoples? In the two case studies of this dissertation, agents of environmentalism first arrived on the scene as outsiders bringing with them the idea of a threatened environment, with two pre-determined roles for people: to either exacerbate or improve the situation. With this idea in mind they opened negotiations, inviting people to participate in the planning, establishment, and management of protected areas. In the process, indigenous peoples too, influence and transform the objectives, work, successes and failures of environmentalist projects and their agents. Still in conjunction with the research questions posed above, I ask: What actually happens on the ground and between various actors when conservation spaces are negotiated, and when these negotiations are intersected with issues of identity and indigenous peoples' rights?

At the heart of this dynamic of environmentalist action are people's ability and propensity for boundary making. It would appear that the creation of new physical and social boundaries under certain projects tends to create conflict rather than consensus, and to serve less the purposes of the projects themselves, than the agendas of various actors (Barth 2000, Long 2001, Mosse 2005). In this study, I ask whether this is indeed the case in the dynamic of environmentalist action, and if so, why?

## **Theoretical Foundations**

The dynamic of implementing nature-conservation and indigenous peoples' rights on-the-ground is embedded within issues of identity, of standards of living and survival, of development and of the future. This dynamic is created by the interactions and negotiations of key actors, who may be agents of environmentalism, indigenous persons, or both, each with an array of positionalities.

In this chapter, I will elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of this study. First I identify the people – actors<sup>1</sup> – who make up the dynamic of environmentalist action. Then I identify the conceptual tools I use to analyze the many facets of the dynamic, and the ways in which these people interact. For these I have primarily drawn on the works of Tim Ingold on the environment, Fredrik Barth on boundaries, Barbara Adam on timescapes, and Norman Long on interactions. My approach to human-environment relationships is largely inspired by Ingold. However, his work is based on his studies of hunter-gatherer societies. In this chapter, I explore the applicability of Ingold's ideas for theorizing about indigenous peoples' rights and environmentalist projects among swiddeners and agriculturalists.

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<sup>1</sup> I avoid the use of the term 'stakeholders' although it is very much a part of the language of nature-conservation. My problem with the term is that it is all too easily assumed that when an individual and/or group does not have a visible stake in a resource, then they will hold no concern over and will be unaffected by decisions made around that resource. In place of stakeholders I use 'actor', after Long (2001).

As the theoretical discussion proceeds, I will answer such questions as, Who are the key actors in this study? Where do they locate themselves? What are their links to one another? When and where do they interact? Which of their actions, visions, and articulations are relevant to this study? Where necessary, I define and qualify my own use of the terminology in which my analysis of this dynamic is couched, asking: What do agents of environmentalism mean when they refer to natural resources, or the environment? What do indigenous persons mean when they speak of natural resources and the environment? What do I mean when I write about natural resources or the environment?

Environmental issues are social issues

This is a frankly anthropocentric study of environmental issues. I focus on the human side of deforestation in two communities in the Philippines and Indonesia respectively. In this dissertation, people are treated as the most important agents of change in the forest, whether or not they live in proximity with it. I do not take the position that humans are separate from the environment and acting upon an external nature from within a socio-cultural sphere. Instead, I take humans as an integral part of the environment – transforming the environment even as they are transformed by it. I will discuss this later on in this chapter, when I consider the multiple meanings of the environment. First, I will introduce the two main actor groups in this study: indigenous peoples and agents of conservation.

Indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples are taken to be key actors in this study because they occupy or live in proximity with areas that have been identified as threatened ecosystems in need of protection. They are heavily dependent on these threatened ecosystems for their daily survival and income. For this very reason, agents of conservation constantly make an effort to work in cooperation with indigenous peoples.

However, who indigenous peoples are, what their place is in the world, and why they should be treated any differently from every one else is under constant debate. Article 2 of the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 1997, declares that,

“Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular those based on their indigenous origin and identity.”

In the introductions of several volumes on indigenous peoples, one is bound to find a section that deals explicitly with the definition of indigenous peoples (Gray 1997; Harrison 2001; Howitt et al. 1996; Nathan et al. 2004; Niezen 2003; Posey 1999). Most ask, Who are indigenous peoples? Many refer to a 1987 United Nations report by Special Rapporteur Jose Martinez-Cobo, wherein indigenous communities, peoples, and nations are defined as:

“... those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present nondominant sectors of

society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.” (Martinez-Cobo 1987: 48, as quoted in Niezen 2003: 20)

In 1989, the International Labor Organization declares that Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries applies to,

“Tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;”

“Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present State boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.” (ILO Convention No. 169, Article 1)

Ten years after Martinez-Cobo’s report, Human Rights Fact Sheet 9, also of the United Nations, states that “Indigenous or aboriginal peoples are so-called because they were living in the lands before settlers came from elsewhere.” (United Nations 1997: 3, as quoted in Ingold 2000: 132)

Many have found these definitions wanting, including indigenous peoples themselves. For instance, in the final statement of indigenous participants at a UNDP consultation in Suva, Fiji in 1995, they declared: “[We] assert our inherent right to define who we are. We do not approve of any other definition” (Posey 1999: 578). Indeed, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples does not include an explicit definition of indigeness. Some peoples consider themselves indigenous in relation to outsiders who enter their territories and exploit their resources. In international forums, indigenous peoples have shared with one another common histories of the destruction and loss of the things that sustain them and form their life ways. This shared history too, defines them (Niezen 2003).

Scholars such as Howitt et al. (1996: 11) appreciate Martinez-Cobo’s definition because it takes indigenous identity to be a dynamic contemporary process. However, they also note that it fails to account for the diversity of circumstances in which indigenous identity is claimed. They cite as an example indigenous Fijians who are not necessarily “at present nondominant” in Fijian society. Niezen also notes that it does not fit neatly with the situation of many groups in Southeast Asia, where there have been long histories of displacement and migration across national borders (2003: 20).

Most notable in anthropological criticisms of these commonly cited definitions of indigenous identity are those attacking the premise of indigeness being embedded in bloodlines, or descent. This premise is apparent in the international definitions quoted above. Adam Kuper’s rather extreme critique likens the rhetoric of the indigenous peoples’ movement to that of racist Nazi and Boer claims to sovereignty. He observes

that “The initial assumption is that descendants of the original inhabitants of a country should have privileged rights, perhaps even exclusive rights, to its resources. Conversely, immigrants are simply guests and should behave accordingly. These propositions are extremely popular with extreme right-wing parties in Europe...” (2003: 390). He notes that if this rhetoric were to be pushed to its logical conclusion, it would apply to hardly any one, as the history of the world as we know it is a history of people’s movements across the globe.

Kuper expresses alarm at the persistence of the image of the noble green savage, especially where it meets with environmentalist rhetoric. Much literature has already dealt with this (Croll and Parkin 1992, Ellen 1986, Milton 1996). Most have concluded that indigenous cosmologies, even where markedly ecological, do not automatically lead to ecologically-sound practices. Instead, environmentally sound practices are contingent on factors such as other livelihood sources, population, socio-economic change, and practical decision-making on resource use. However, this image is perpetuated not only by environmentalist organizations that romanticise indigenous peoples as guardians of the world’s natural heritage, but also by indigenous peoples themselves. This is evident in the following statement from the Charter of the Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest, drafted in Penang, Malaysia in 1992: “We declare that we are the original peoples, the rightful owners and the cultures that defend the tropical forests of the world” (Posey 1999: 556). I explore the on-the-ground deployments and implications of this image throughout this dissertation.

Ingold tackles the premise that indigenous rights to land are based on original occupation, bringing it back to its basis on genealogies and descent. He asks, “Suppose – as is widely the case – that the people who were already living on the land when the settlers arrived are no longer alive today. On what grounds can contemporary generations partake of the ‘originality’ of their predecessors?” (Ingold 2000: 132) He says that indigenous peoples’ rights in the present are built around a genealogical model that implies that bodily substance and ideational substance are generated in, and handed down from the past. Bodily substance consists of blood, of genes, and ideational substance consists of culture. This leaves land as a mere backdrop to people’s lives, rather than something that has an important role to play in how people come into being. Culture is once again linked to the idea of tradition. Culture is merely expressed, but not generated, in the present. Furthermore, this ‘classic’ view of culture cleaves the passing down of culture from its practical functioning in the present<sup>2</sup> (Ingold 2000: 136-138).

In addition to the above, I share the reservations of other anthropologists regarding the over-emphasis on a concept of indigeness that conventionally becomes reduced to observable traits or identity markers are recorded by the ethnographer and/or manipulated by an indigenous elite (see Banks 1996, Barth 1994, Handler 1988, Schiller 1997b). I am

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<sup>2</sup> It’s no wonder then, that some anthropologists who think in terms of the genealogical model are upset with the so-called “invention” of new identities and “inauthentic” cultures.

also in agreement with Ingold (2000: 133) in that indigenous peoples may not necessarily think of themselves in the ways stipulated above.<sup>3</sup>

This brings me to a crucial question: Why refer to indigenous peoples at all, if they remain undefinable, if the rhetoric underlying indigenous peoples' rights is not part of people's daily realities, and is considered faulty in (some) anthropological analyses? Why not simply use the more inclusive terms, local people or forest-dependent people? The answer is found in the concept's embeddedness in the dynamic of environmental action, in which "indigenesness" is a card that people bring with them to the negotiating table. Furthermore, the term has attained its own importance as a category in the political and practical agendas of national and international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. In its guiding principles, the WWF-International states that it will: "involve local communities and indigenous peoples in the planning and execution of its field programmes, respecting their cultural as well as economic needs" (WWF, nd<sub>a</sub>). In its Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation, WWF-International refers to indigenous peoples as "natural allies" to conservation, and "stewards and protectors of nature" (WWF 2008: 1), promising to recognise and uphold indigenous rights in its programs. Thus, while indigenesness may allude to a history of oppression and loss of heritage, it also now holds its own advantages, and offers up a range of affordances<sup>4</sup> to those that can claim it.

In criticizing common assumptions on indigenous peoples and claims made by indigenous peoples about being stewards of the environment, I do not intend to undermine their ongoing struggle for recognition or to totally refute indigenous, ecological life ways. What I am opposed to is the tendency among proponents of this view to – knowingly or unknowingly – relegate indigenous people to frozen time and a bounded, distant space, and to imagine them as (ideally) perpetually performing static traditions inherited from the past. As Li (2001: 670) succinctly puts it: "Respect for cultural difference associated with nature conservation has become hegemonic, the kind of common sense on which many parties agree in principle, if not in detail." In this dissertation I aim to tease out the details on which relevant actors disagree and negotiate their understandings of this hegemonic, now global discourse (Dove 2006a: 200).

In Ingold's relational model, "both cultural knowledge and bodily substance are seen to undergo continuous generation in the context of an ongoing engagement with the land and with the beings – human and non-human – that dwell therein" (2000: 133). According to Ingold, it is in one's continuing relationships with land and beings that one's indigenesness arises. People become who they are – their identities come about – through their existence in a certain environment and their commitment to the relationships that are entailed by being in that environment. Ingold refers to this as one's

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<sup>3</sup> For an alternate, politicized view of indigenesness drawn up by indigenous scholars, see Alfred and Cornthassel 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Defined as "properties of the real environment as directly perceived by an agent in a context of practical action" (Ingold 1992: 46), affordances can be both physical objects, as well as embodied meanings. Different species, beings, or actors may attend to different affordances in the environment, and draw these into their experiences and their lives.

positionality.<sup>5</sup> Thus, identity, positionality and relationships with and in the environment are continually being generated and transformed through interaction. Alfred and Corntassel take a similar, albeit more political stance on indigenesness. They assert that “Indigenesness is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism” (Alfred and Corntassel 2005: 597). Furthermore, they point out that indigenes identities are “(re)constructed” (ibid: 600) at multiple sites and that it is important to attend to this multiplicity. Following these threads I aim to show that the men and women of various Kalanguya and Ngaju Dayak generations and communities are engaged in processes of transformation in ever-expanding spaces and spheres of interaction. For them, transformation and change are as much entitlements as are security of tenure and rights to resources. It is this unending state of being in transition and undergoing change that I aim to approximate in the papers collected here.<sup>6</sup>

In the dynamic of environmentalist action, indigenes peoples act in the same world as agents of environmentalism. Below I focus on the positionality of agents of environmentalism, whom I take as the other key actor in this study.

#### Agents of environmentalism

First and foremost, an understanding of the concept “agents of environmentalism” requires a brief definition of what constitutes environmentalism in this study. Milton proposes that for analytical purposes, anthropologists adopt a wide definition of environmentalism as constituting “any concern to protect the environment which implies a human responsibility” (1996: 34). The latter part of this definition fits well with the vision of the role of human beings in the environment that I pointed out earlier: that agents of environmentalism generally see two possible roles for people in ecological crises. People can either be part of the solution, or be part of the problem. Taking off from Milton’s heuristic definition, I find it necessary to discuss here the nuances of how different actors go about protecting the environment, and later on, the problem of defining the environment itself.

Quite importantly, Milton stresses the need to distinguish between environmentalism as a perspective, and the actions that result from it. We need to treat the relationship between the two as problematic for “without this distinction, it might be assumed that an environmentalist perspective will always generate the same kinds of action” (Milton 1996: 34). Following on this, I conceive of agents of environmentalism as dealing with this very relationship between perspective and action. They make it their vocation to generate in the world around them the prescribed actions that correspond to their own brand of environmentalism. I refer to them as agents to emphasise two things about these actors in this study. Firstly, they represent (are agents of) non-government organizations,

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<sup>5</sup> Positionality locates people within shifting networks in terms of their webs of relationships as well as in terms of their gender, status or class. Positionality is always evolving, context-dependent, and relational (Tetrault & Maher 1997: 198).

<sup>6</sup> When I refer to the present, now, today, or the contemporary in the succeeding chapters, it should be noted that I do not mean to freeze the Kalanguya or the Ngaju Dayak in the ethnographic present. References to the present are meant to denote the time frame in which this study was conducted.

government departments, or other such entities for which they implement planned projects and interventions. Secondly, they work to implement these projects within a set period of time, in bounded areas, and with groups of people that they have pinpointed as participants. I deal with this latter aspect of agents of environmentalism in Chapter Six. Here I will discuss their positionality as members of government departments and non-government organizations.<sup>7</sup>

In the field, indigenous peoples see these agents first and foremost as representatives of their particular organizations. It is in this capacity that they introduce themselves into the world of their ‘targeted’ or ‘participant’ communities. In some cases they may be explicit and transparent about the implications of their own positionality, but in many instances they are not. Some of the organizational things that are often hidden from the view of participant communities are agendas of state control in the case of governmental organizations, and the nature of donor relationships in the case of non-governmental organizations. Chapin notes that where the vocabulary appears inclusive, as in ‘community-based natural resource management’, ‘community-based conservation’, and ‘integrated conservation and development programs’, the vocabulary itself emanates from environmentalists and not from the communities they draw into their programs (2004: 20). While the decisions to begin such projects in a certain time and space may be taken in consultation with local people, the programs are mainly driven by the agendas of environmentalists, or even the state, with very little indigenous input.

In this regard, I treat environmentalist projects as a form of intervention which must be de-mythologized, and environmentalist agents as frontliners who bring to their work their own cultural understandings, individual leanings, styles of interaction, and creative decisions (Long 2001). Here I would like to highlight a few organizational aspects, often kept invisible or implicit on-the-ground, that exert influence on the effectiveness of environmentalist agents.

In an incisively critical paper Chapin deplores the recent rise of dependence among international conservation agencies on funding from corporations, and bilateral and multi-lateral donors. He notes that because these donors often work closely with national governments, conservation agencies are no longer able to openly oppose state policies on hot environmental issues such as mining, or governmental corruption and inaction (Chapin 2004: 25). In instances where on-the-ground conflicts of interest between indigenous peoples and conservation agencies’ funding partners have arisen, it may seem “financially unwise” for conservation organizations to side with indigenous peoples (Chapin 2004: 26). Another aspect of funding that is kept hidden from view is the distribution of the money. As in the top-down development paradigm, the benefits of funding are assumed to trickle down from the upper circles of organizations down to the ground-level staff and their local partners. This means that the environmentalist agents I am concerned with in this study work with a fraction of what international organizations actually receive. It also means that, like it or not, they may be unable to respond to

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<sup>7</sup> From here on, I will use the terms environmentalists and agents of environmentalism interchangeably. I specifically denote agents who are directly involved in the on-the-ground implementation of environmentalist action. I focus particularly on those who, within different capacities, work with indigenous peoples.



indigenous peoples' requests for assistance with infrastructure, basic services, education, health, or land tenure issues. These are labelled as "development issues" or "poverty alleviation", and are not considered within the scope of environmentalist work.

The labelling practices of environmental organizations and the vocabulary that their agents deploy, according to Long, tend to legitimise their planned interventions and establish the superiority and 'rightness' of what they aim to do (2001: 35). They work to 'save' biological diversity as the 'rightful heritage of future generations'. They encourage 'greener livelihoods' among 'multi-stakeholders'. They aim to do so with 'legal backing' so as to put an end to 'illegal and destructive activities'. It is assumed that the intervention is inherently good and will bring about a brighter future for every one involved, including humans that are yet to be born. Further examples of the legitimising vocabulary or buzzwords include co-management, environmental justice, and sustainable livelihoods.

Implicit in this is what Long (2001: 34) refers to as an "underlying belief" that ongoing practices in the environment are no longer viable or acceptable and must be changed, improved, restructured, or replaced altogether. Li (2001: 651) points out that in carrying out development and environmentalist work even non-governmental organizations exercise "governmental power when they seek to reform [people] in an 'improving direction'." I argue that in environmentalist projects, as with development paradigms and interventions, this leads to a devaluation of local practices, or a selective legitimization of 'preferred' local practices that reflect the agendas of intervening entities. Sometimes, the preferred or valorized aspects of local culture are no longer practiced because of changing social contexts, or they are practiced towards ends that are different from those expected or assumed by environmentalists. (I describe instances of this in Chapters Two, Four, and Five.) Alongside this underlying belief may come the underlying agenda of control. Long points out that:

"... behind the claim that intervention is the trigger or driving force of development is the fact that intervention practices more often than not aim to control the pattern of local economic and political development. Policy interventions seek to bring the dynamic of local initiative into line with the interests and perspectives of public authorities, and to reproduce the image of the state (or its agencies) as being the key to development." (2001: 38)

Taking this point further, it must be noted that in many Southeast Asian states, development has been based on the large-scale exploitation of natural resources. It is only in recent decades that some have undertaken a policy shift from centrally-controlled exploitation to conservation and collaborative natural resource management (Howitt et al. 1996, Hirsch and Warren 1998, Tuck-Po et al. 2003, Resosudarmo 2005, Snelder and Bernardo 2005, Vitug 2000). Due to the technocratic nature of state environmentalism, the enlargement of national parks that alienate indigenous peoples from their resource base and the criminalization of shifting cultivation become justified (Hirsch and Warren 1998: 9). The latter puts environmentalist agents at odds with the local people with whom they must interact, and the former policy shift puts them in a position where their work must be corrective as much as it is preventive. This effectively makes resource managers out of environmentalist agents. By this I mean to suggest more than just the basis of their work on the assumption that the environment can and must be managed. I refer as well to the need for them to have the capacity to balance on-the-ground relationships, agendas (often political) and conflicts, with the demands of their official positions. In addition,

they must also deal with inter- and intra-agency conflicts and competition, especially where mandates and objectives overlap. I elaborate on this in Chapter Six.

Given the above, we can see that agents are situated within an administrative world to which they both conform and sometimes deviate. Conformity implies drawing up and legitimizing plans, following guidelines, delivering project packages, meeting targets, and producing concrete outputs on time. These outputs include but are not limited to desired changes among participant communities, and a trail of text or official documents that are “the outcome of processes of persuasion and enrolment” (Gardner and Lewis 2000: 18, as referred to in Mosse 2005: 247, n. 23). However, this world does not hold the totality of the agents’ positionality and personhood. Like the indigenous peoples described above, environmentalist agents must be seen to be bringing their own opinions, aspirations, and past experiences to work with them. Thus, while the repertoires of agents may be similar because of the ways their actions reflect the images and priorities of the environmentalism they promote, the ways in which they interpret and carry out their tasks can be quite varied (see Long 2001). In this study I aim to depict them as having agency<sup>8</sup> of their own that extends beyond the mandates of their respective organizations. In this respect, they are more than mere representatives or implementers. Sometimes they may be effective even as they appear to circumvent the very bureaucracies they are meant to support. Thus, in this dissertation, apart from devoting attention to patterns of interaction between agents of environmentalism and indigenous peoples, their evolving relationships and emergent understandings and misunderstandings, I also discuss the statements or articulations they make on their work and on the indigenous peoples that they work with.

Treating environmentalist projects as interventions also makes it necessary to delve into the images of the state and of non-government organizations that indigenous peoples have developed through their interactions with environmentalist agents. I argue that these images have a profound effect on the ways in which indigenous peoples interact with these agents, and on the accomplishments of the agents themselves. I posit that the existence and non-existence of such images among actors have serious implications for agents, especially for those who are involved in the production of knowledge. I go deeper into these issues in Chapters Three, Five, Six, and Seven.

#### Combined entities and others

Having established the centrality to this study of the actor-categories ‘indigenous’ and ‘environmentalist’, I now devote some attention to other entities, for there are key actors who can be both, as well as actors who are neither.

By attending to the instances in which the categorization does not apply, I aim to avoid reproducing a two-step disengagement of the person-as-observer, which separates nature, culture, and modernity (Ingold 2000: 15). In this conceptual division, humans are first separated from nature. Then, indigenous peoples who live in cultures (but without history) are assumed to be ‘more natural’, and are thereby relegated to the realm of

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<sup>8</sup> Agency is defined by Long (2001: 240) as: “the knowledgeability, capability and social embeddedness associated with acts of doing (and reflecting) that impact upon or shape one’s own and others’ actions and interpretations.”

nature, separate from enlightened industrial society (to which most environmentalist agents belong).

Another example of the opposition between the more natural indigenous and the more worldly agents, is the persistent depiction of the former as ecosystem people and the latter as biosphere people. "Ecosystem people are those who live within a single ecosystem, or at most within two or three adjacent ecosystems." (Dasmann 1976, as referred to in Milton 1996: 29). On the other hand, biosphere people are part of the 'global technological system', and use resources and products from the whole biosphere.

This social and conceptual boundary that places agents of environmentalism on one side and indigenous peoples on the other, is not only artificial, but also permeable. The conceptual boundary only serves to perpetuate the illusion of egalitarian and homeostatic indigenous societies existing in isolation as opposed to hierarchical and fast-paced modern industrial societies that are linked through markets and media. In rejection of this, I wish to present an image of indigenous peoples and agents of environmentalism in flux, passing through one another's lives and lifeworlds in the context of particular agendas, each actor potentially capable of performing "functions of brokerage" (Sardan 2005: 176) between local, indigenous knowledge and the technical-scientific knowledge deployed in nature-conservation.

The Kalanguya and Ngaju Dayak in this study are undeniably part of the global economy. They purchase canned food and mass-produced clothing that originate from places other than their own country. They follow popular game shows and the news on satellite television. They use technology and products from around the globe in their work. At the same time, they continue to make a living by working in their environments. The products of this work not only feed their families, but also find their way to distant markets. On the other hand, the agents of environmentalism in this study make a living by working for the environment. This difference, rather than opposite and essentialized visions of modernity and natural harmony, is what sets the indigenous peoples in this study and other forest-dependent people apart from agents of environmentalism.

I aim to show how the conceptual boundary between the noble green primitive and the civilizing mission of agents of environmentalism and development is criss-crossed on a daily basis by combined entities; actors who, at various times, embody the positionalities of both agents of environmentalism and indigenous persons. Examples of these combined entities are professional indigenous people, and also those I refer to as incidental environmentalists. The latter may not consider themselves to be environmentalist, nor do they occupy positions as agents of environmentalism, but on-the-ground and in the interface, they occasionally act in this capacity. Professional indigenous persons are government employees, public officials, members of non-government organizations, and/or advocates of indigenous peoples' rights that have made a career of out of their being indigenous. They are also sometimes agents of environmentalism and development. Although professional indigenous persons do not always possess material wealth or status in the ways prescribed by either industrial societies or their own traditions, they certainly form a new elite in the cross-section of indigenous society. They live (at least part-time) in urban centers where they have far more access to information than those who remain in their villages. They gain knowledge and understanding of the state laws that govern the nation as well as indigenous life. Wielding this knowledge, some become part of influential networks of national and international scope, and/or are able to further their

own economic and political interests amongst their people. Others become caught up in conflicts between being part of local realities, being part of the global economy, and meeting the responsibilities of their professional positions. In the literature, people with such a positionality have been described as mediators and brokers (Hilhorst 2003, Korff 2005). As brokers, combined entities – be they primarily indigenous leaders or environmentalists – are in a double-bind similar to the predicament of brokers of development projects, as discussed by Sardan (2005: 169) between promoting the technical-scientific knowledge and objectives of nature-conservation as superior to indigenous knowledge, and creating a balance between both types of knowledge within their respective communities and/or institutions. I will elaborate on these particular actors and predicaments in Chapter Three.

Most professional indigenous persons no longer depend fully nor directly on their environment for sustenance or income. Their dependence is on a carefully manufactured, yet somewhat distant, nature-culture imaginaire (Zerner 2003), a concept that I will elaborate on in the following section.

#### Redefining environment, situating people

When agents of environmentalism, indigenous peoples, combined entities, and other actors refer to nature, the environment, or the forest, they each attach different values to it. In some cases they may concur on what they refer to as “environment”; in most instances, they do not. I assert that the difference arises from actors’ positionalities and, thus, from their locatedness or placedness. In the following section, I develop a definition of the environment that encompasses the diverse perspectives and positionalities of actors, drawing largely from the work of Ingold. I will begin by discussing a theoretical approach to the versions of nature which actors bring to the fore in the dynamic of environmental action.

#### Green positionalities in a nature-culture imaginaire

First I would like to expound further on Ingold’s idea of double disengagement, as this leads back to my assertions that 1) environmentalist projects must be problematized as forms of intervention, and 2) that agents of environmentalism work for the environment rather than in it.

Ingold insists that there are generally two ways of apprehending the world: Western, and non-Western. The one that he labels ‘Western’ (because this is its defining feature), separates “two, mutually exclusive domains of being to which we attach the labels ‘humanity’ or culture, and ‘nature’” (Ingold 2000: 63). Not only do humans transcend nature, they are also the only animals to have culture. Thus, humans live half in nature as organisms with bodies, and half out as persons with minds (ibid.). The separation of humans from nature is the first step in double disengagement.

This split has deep roots in Western thinking. It is a dualism that has been attributed to Cartesian mind-body and nature-culture dialectics, as well as to Newtonian science (Adam 1998, Croll and Parkin 1992, Descola and Palsson 1996, Latour 1996). Religions

and their teachings, perhaps more than science and philosophy, also create positionalities for humans vis-à-vis nature in everyday life. For example, according to scholars of ecofeminism, in “the mythologies of ancient Near Eastern, Hebrew, Greek, and early Christian cultures, one can see a shifting symbolization of women and nature as spheres to be conquered, ruled over, and finally, repudiated altogether” (Ruether 1999: 457).<sup>9</sup> The Christian Creation story has often been interpreted so that human domination over all of creation is considered a directive from God.

There is another tradition in so-called Western thinking, which romanticizes nature and the wilderness while lamenting the flaws and emptiness of civilization and, later on, industrial and/or market-oriented society (Thomas 1983). Nature, or wilderness, became a refuge from the ills of modernity, and so needed to be “preserved for the recreation of the human spirit” (Colchester 2003: 2). This perspective upholds a model of exclusive conservation that has dominated North American and European landscapes, and which continues to persist in nature-conservation projects and discourses. In the literature of the romantics nature is a cathedral where man goes not to live or work, but to worship and experience the sublime. Today the bounds of natural space are cordoned off, to protect it from further encroachment, and paradoxically to make it accessible to groups and individuals who come to worship or study at nature’s altar. Through man’s intervention nature has become a “domesticated sublime” (Cronon 1996: 75) – to be protected from man’s further intervention.

Ingold notes that “the concept of [social] appropriation, just as the concept of intervention, sets humanity, the world of persons, on a pedestal above the natural world of things” (2000: 64). He points out how it is assumed that the apex of being human is in the ability to reason. It is thought that man’s ability to take premeditated, planned action directed towards definite ends and objectives that sets ‘man’ apart from nature. In the dynamic of environmentalist action, humanity and nature are cleaved from one another in the cordoning off of spaces for nature-conservation. It is assumed that the absence of human occupation establishes the protected area as nature untainted by culture. Planned environmental projects based on this assumption create a division between the natural and the artificial, or the pristine and the man-made. Ironically and inescapably, the pristine is not really untouched by human hands, but is appropriated for conservation and managed through human agency and reason.

Environmentalist agents who work to set aside a piece of nature for conservation purposes seek to separate a non-human nature (i.e. the core zone) from the socio-cultural realm of human work (which is relegated and limited to the buffer zone or use-zone). Thus agents of environmentalism who aim to protect nature (also referred to as biodiversity, ecosystems, habitats, natural resources, the environment) cannot reside nor work in it (except within brief, bounded or discrete periods of time), but can only decide

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<sup>9</sup> By contrast, Buddhist teachings alongside Deep Ecology, have been lauded as worldviews suited to ecologically-sound and sustainable lifeways, engendering one-ness with all beings, as opposed to creating a dominion of humans over non-human beings. In addition, “natural religion” has been attributed to indigenous peoples, often portrayed as living in harmony with nature and guided by “eco-cosmologies”. See discussion below.

to do something about it from a position outside of it. It is this positionality of projects and their agents that make their actions a form of intervention. They must act from the outside going in, and once there, it is inevitable that they exit at some point. Through these movements of coming and going they become part of the world upon which they seek to exert their influence and agendas. This argument is explored further throughout the papers collected in this dissertation.

However, Colchester points out that when such conservation spaces are inhabited by indigenous peoples, they are sometimes kept there – as in the reservations in North America – “because of a common perception that indigenous people are ‘of nature’ – wild, natural, primitive and innocent” (2003: 4). They are also attributed with a natural religion, as mentioned above, that assumedly keeps them connected with nature. For example, Chief Oren Lyons of the Haudenosaunee (the Six nations Iroquois Confederacy), notes that

“The Lakota end all of their prayers with ‘all my relations’. This means more than their families or extended families. It includes all life on this earth... It is instruction to the human community of our relationship to the earth. We call the earth ‘mother’ to emphasize this relationship.” (Lyons 1999: 451)

The worldview that Lyons espouses is often placed in opposition to the predominantly Western worldview that considers humans above nature, and technological advancement as being immune to nature’s laws. This is indicative of the second step in double disengagement: a division is made within humanity, between indigenous people who have traditions and Westerners who have discarded tradition for the trappings of modernity. This second split is deeply embedded in the dynamic of environmental action where indigenous peoples are assumed to have and to perform ecologically-harmonious cultures. Cronon, writing in a similar vein, pointedly asks:

“Why in the debates about pristine natural areas are ‘primitive’ people idealized, even sentimentalized, until the moment they do something unprimitive, modern, and unnatural, and thereby fall from environmental grace?” (1996: 85).

Environmentalists’ perception of indigenous peoples’ lives and traditions as being aligned with the objectives of nature-conservation and sustainable development are part of the creation of a conceptual aggregate that Zerner terms the nature-culture imaginaire. “It is a space in which local needs and visions of a just regional political economy meet with the trajectories of internationally funded conservation missions, intersecting in multiple configurations” (Zerner 2003: n. 18). The nature-culture imaginaire is politically potent. It is now part of the arena of political debates at local, regional, national, and international levels that are concerned with environmentalism, sustainable development, indigenous peoples’ rights, and natural resource management. The imaginaire is particularly relevant to the sides of the conservation debate that argue that “to protect nature, it is necessary to recognize and respect local, legal and cultural practices and structures” (Zerner 2003: 64).

In summary, there are two spheres of nature in the articulations of environmentalists: a nature completely separate from humans, and the aggregate of nature, culture and human productivity: the nature-culture imaginaire. The former is envisioned as a place that is

meant to be free from human intervention, as in the core zone of protected areas. Because of this point of view, which is taken ‘from a pedestal’, from above nature, agents of conservation see fit to intervene in the livelihoods of indigenous peoples (who are perceived to be close to nature and so also viewed from a pedestal, if not sometimes strategically placed on it).

The nature-culture imaginaire is envisioned as “a space of justice, culture, and nature” (Zerner 2003: 49). The nature-culture imaginaire valorizes the customs of indigenous peoples as aligned with, even integral to, conservation and environmental management. In doing so, the nature-culture imaginaire seeks their inclusion, in order to redress the injustice of prohibiting the access of indigenous peoples to their sources of livelihood. In other words, humans are included in the nature-culture imaginaire, and not cast out of it. Local communities and the political economy of natural resource control come to the fore. By using Zerner’s terminology and referring to this conceptual aggregate as an imaginaire, I do not mean that it exists only in the minds of agents of environmentalism, or that it is merely a mental construct unconnected to on-the-ground realities. My use of the term ought to signify that the nature-culture imaginaire is a vision of an ideal space and an ideal mode of existence that its advocates seek to attain in cooperation with local communities (Zerner 2003: 49).

Zerner (2003: n. 18) goes on to note that nature-culture is an “imaginaire in which progressive social schemes and green dreams are aligned but in tension and sometimes in contradiction.” I posit that the directions that these schemes and dreams take are contingent on the actions of people who take up a green positionality. Following Agrawal’s (2005: 18) conception of environmental subjects, people who take up the green positionality are “individuals who see the generalized need for environmental protection in some form and whose practices and words bear the mark of this acceptance.” The green positionality entails a certain degree of internalization of, and engagement with, the objectives of agents of environmentalism. Environmentalists make it one of their goals, through environmental awareness programs and the like, to get members of local communities to take up the green positionality, the locus for which is within the nature-culture imaginaire. I explore the possibilities, tensions, and contradictions of green positionalities among Kalanguya and Ngaju Dayak throughout this dissertation, most especially in Chapters Two and Four.

Agrawal and Zerner separately own that the making of environmental subjects or conversions in the wilderness are part of a process of the imposition of surveillance, rationalistic methodologies, bureaucratic apparatuses, and regulation. Agrawal refers to this as environmentalism. It is about the simultaneous redefinition of environment and subject through the political economy. “It refers to the concurrent processes of regulation and subject making that underpin all efforts to institute new technologies of government” (Agrawal 2005: 23-24). However, I join them both in exploring the question of whether there might be “positive aspects of power involved in government and the production of new subjects” (Agrawal 2005: 237-238, n. 49), given that environmental issues and the hazards they portend are also social issues that may pose a threat to local populations. Zerner’s argument for the nature-culture imaginaire dovetails with Agrawal’s in that he (Zerner) points out that many community-based resource management programs promise justice and greater local political autonomy. They also aim to secure community economic and cultural rights. Finally, the nature-culture imaginaire provides a space in which local critiques and departures from the methods of political centers of power supposedly can thrive (Zerner 2003). At the time of his writing, Zerner declared that it is

still too early to tell what will come of the uneasy alliances, strategic linkages, and engagements between actors who wield the nature-culture imaginaire, and international conservation and development agencies. Will green marketing programs and the problematics of sustainable development swallow the nature-culture imaginaire? Or will the nature-culture imaginaire prevail? With the case studies I present in this dissertation, I argue that the nature-culture imaginaire has indeed been ensnared by the agendas and knowledge production practices entailed in nature-conservation.

This dissertation explores these possibilities through a detailed look into the discourses of indigenous peoples' rights and nature-conservation – particularly as they are produced and re-produced through the engagement and interactions of various actors in the interface between indigenous communities and agents of environmentalism. Additionally, this dissertation becomes one text among many scholarly discourses on the environment and human-environment interactions. I wish to make explicit here the role of the anthropologist as “one kind of cultural producer among others” (Marcus 1998: 17). Environmentality and the nature-culture imaginaire are in themselves discourses with which this study engages, as are Ingold's conceptualization of the environment and Adams' timescapes. In this dissertation I interweave these concepts and discourses into a critique of the implementation of conservation goals among indigenous peoples. I echo Li (2008: 116) in her assertion that, “Critique is not condemnation. It is an opening, a challenge to think differently about what is and what might be.”

As a final note, I wish to make it clear that I do not find the opposition between Western and non-Western ways of configuring the environment useful. It is not borne out by everyday life. Given how ideas, forms of production, and products themselves have spread across the world, I find that the actors in this study are capable of contextually taking up one view of nature or the other. People tack back and forth between “nature out there” and “the environment here” (see Adam 1998, Chapter 1). Thus the green positionality constantly shifts for different actors. However, for each actor there is a predominant view that corresponds to a way of being-in-the-world, or dwelling in the environment, which pervades daily life. I would prefer to say simply that in the dynamic of environmental action, apart from the two types of constructed nature, there are two ways of apprehending the world. One is by constructing a view from a point of distance, and the other is by dwelling in it and taking up a view in it (Ingold 2000: 42).

#### Environment and timescapes: actors in the environment

As I have demonstrated above, the separation of nature and culture underwrites much of environmentalist action. The paradox of this environmentalist line of thought is that, by situating modern humans here and nature ‘out there’, it becomes an option not only for humans to intervene with nature (and the ‘traditional’ indigenous peoples in it), but also to deny any responsibility or connection with the environment (see Cronon 1996, Hornborg 1996, White 1996). Some theories emerging in ecological anthropology in the past three decades counter this by attempting to recontextualize our relationships with the environment and other beings in it, thereby situating humans – and human technology – as part of the environment (see for example, Bateson 1972, Croll and Parkin 1992, Ellen (1996), Hornborg 1996, Ingold 2000). In this study I integrate the theoretical work of Ingold (2000) and Adam (1998) in order to re-define the environment as something more than nature-apart-from-humans and nature-without-process, and to re-situate people within environments and the nature-culture imaginaire.



For Ingold, “the distinction between environment and nature corresponds to the difference in perspective between seeing ourselves as beings within a world and as beings without it” (2000: 20). Nature, as discussed above, can only exist for a being that sees it from a detached point, or a safe distance. The environment, on the other hand, exists as a reality for the person or species that moves and dwells within it. Thus it is possible to speak of plural environments, each of which is relative to the being whose environment it is. This allows room for the existence and analysis of many, sometimes conflicting, actions and positions that people take in the environment. Actors will have their own experiences in the environment, so to each as well his/her own versions of the environment. In consonance with this, Adam states that:

“The environment is not a fixed condition but arises from the contextual capacity of a being’s consciousness and senses. It means that the same physical space will be a vastly different environment for different species and for different members of those species.” (1998: 34)

Moreover, environments are not composed merely of physical space and things that are available to the senses, but also of invisible, immaterial, temporal forces, the effects of which may only become tangible in an undeterminable future (Adam 1998). Actors – either as individuals, communities, regions, nations, or representatives thereof – and other beings shape the environment just as they are shaped by it. With this conceptual approach, persons and the environment do not interact as a matter of external contact in bounded time between the separate domains of nature and culture. “Persons and environment are mutually constitutive components of the same world...” (Ingold 1992: 51-52). This environment, however, is not in direct contradistinction with a nature that is “out there.” Rather, the environment can encompass nature, along with humans and human creations/products, plants, animals, the elements, and time.

That beings have agency and effectivity<sup>10</sup> in the environment is given importance in this theoretical frame, for environments are considered to be forged through the activities of beings living and tampering with the flow of natural processes and events. Notably, human actions, products and creations are part of the environment, and are released into it. This is quite different from the assumption – indeed, the belief – that human creations remain in the realm of society. The unboundedness in time and space of present environmental hazards (and future, as yet unknown hazards) such as haze from forest fires in Kalimantan, disease and congenital defects from chemical fertilizers used on vegetables in Benguet, or climate change, no longer make it possible for us to think of ourselves, of the economy, and of industrial society, as separate from nature, nor of nature as uncontaminated by humans (Adam 1998, Latour 1996). As Geertz (1972: 38) succinctly put it, “... advanced technology ties us in even more closely with the habitat we both make and inhabit... having more impact upon it we in turn cause it to have more impact on us.” However, the notion of nature as a timeless space to be separate from

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<sup>10</sup> Following Cutting 1982, Ingold (2000: 42) asserts that “effectivity denotes the action capabilities of the agent – what he or she is practically equipped to do” in the environment and with perceived affordances. I would add that effectivity is also shaped by one’s positionalities, including class, gender, and ethnicity.

human society persists in environmentalist projects where it is an implicit and/or explicit objective to insulate nature from the productive practices of local, indigenous peoples perceived as traditional communities or, in less drastic measures, to modify the productive practices of local communities.

In re-situating the actors in this study within the environment and observing their movements and practices within it, a fundamental difference between actors emerges: for some, the environment affords to them the bases of their existence (Adam 1998), while for other actors, the environment is reduced to a conceptually thin nature and must be culturally built up again to make it politically and economically compelling to conserve. Thus these actors operate within the nature-culture imaginaire (Zerner 2003). I give ethnographic examples of this difference in point of view in Chapters Two, Four, and Five.

Finally, to complete the picture, Adam insists that the temporality of the environment must be explicitly dealt with in the social sciences. The environment is not a finished product, but a work in progress that extends into an indeterminate, open future, and which is shaped in part by many hands and innumerable actions. Both Adam (1998) and Ingold (2000) use landscapes to refer to the visible, physical form of the environment in which we stand and take up a view. A landscape is a totality of actions and interactions. It is the unfolding relations of beings and the environment, in congealed form. Adam uses the concept of timescapes to bring to the fore the underlying, temporal aspects of the environment. While landscapes may be the embodiment of past activity, timescapes are “the embodiment of practiced approaches to time” (Adam 1998: 11). A timescape always includes the future, as well as the past and the present. Not all the effects of human and non-human actions are visible in the present, but they may become so at an indeterminate future (Adam 1998). Thus landscapes and timescapes are not only congealed forms of past and present activity. The environment as ‘work in progress’ (Ingold 1992: 51), has implicit within it future forms that it may take. Landscapes and timescapes hold future affordances that are yet to be drawn into the actions of various entities.<sup>11</sup>

Temporality is an important element of the environment that is often overlooked; not only in research, but also in the day-to-day actions and decisions of various actors (Adam 1998). For some actors, livelihood is subject to the timing of seasons. To others, costs and benefits are measured against the length of time it takes to achieve goals, or to earn profits. Temporality is more than merely seconds in clock-time or months in calendar-time, or phases in project cycles. It is also the passing of time in nature: the passage of seasons, of deep geological changes, organic and meteorological change, the turning of the world, the imperceptible changes that take centuries or millennia, cycles of fertility and birth, and death and decay (ibid.).

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<sup>11</sup> In her work, Adam pays more attention to the future surfacing of the symptoms of hazards generated in the present. She refers to this as latency, in order to highlight once again the invisible products of certain actions, which are already present in the environment. The unpredictability of hazards is taken for granted in an industrial way of life, and she argues convincingly that we should focus more attention on this aspect of modern societies. For more, see Adam 1998, Chapter One.

In this study, timescapes are taken to be contextual and relative to different actors. This is what emerges in Chapter Five, which explores actors' images of the future and relates these imagined futures to behavior and decisions taken in the present. In a reversal of Vayda's progressive contextualization<sup>12</sup>, images of future possibilities are linked backwards in time to the practices of actors in the present. Adam cites the economic practice of discounting the future as one of the ways that industrial society disregards the living conditions of future generations and the future costs of present actions taken in the environment. In contrast to this, agents of environmentalism invoke the value of nature for future generations as the reason it should be protected and conserved. However, agents of environmentalism – perhaps unknowingly – perform another form of discounting the future: they subordinate the desired futures of contemporary actors to an envisioned, shining future of nature. The current approach to this vision is couched in the ethos of management. When taking environmental time and different actors' timescapes into consideration, Adam argues, it becomes clear that the environment cannot be merely 'managed' or controlled. Again, this has to do with environmentalism as a form of intervention. However, when a timescape perspective is taken up, then we see that the temporalities of different ways of life (for example, industrial and agricultural) and the temporality of nature (of which humans form a part), are intertwined and mutually constitutive. Thus, as Adam puts it, "every in/action counts and is non-retractable" (1998: 56).

A focus on shifting timescapes and landscapes is vital to an understanding of the Kalanguya and Ngaju Dayak as indigenous groups in transition. Although ethnographies today manage to show how indigenous peoples' lives have changed over time, the challenge remains as to how to show that they continue to transform by their own impetus, and that they desire (and fear) particular changes in their lives. The timescape is a useful analytical tool for creating a space – or time – in social analysis for people's unpredictable, yet anticipated futures. I expound further on time and management issues in Chapter Five.

Throughout this study I aim to situate actors in the environment, and to pay attention to their differentiated and shared positionalities, timescapes, and practices. In so doing it is my intention to shed light on crucial misunderstandings between actors in the dynamic of environmental action, not as failures, but as points where interactions can be changed for the better. In addition, this analytical position of mutual constitution of people and environment can encompass many ways of perceiving the environment without perpetuating the problematic opposition between nature and culture. In it, people dwell in a shared environment, and not in a constructed space away from the environment. That is to say, culture and sociality are not presumed to take their course independently of a

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<sup>12</sup> The process of inquiry that Vayda terms progressive contextualization simply involves "focusing on significant... people-environment interactions and then explaining these interactions by placing them in progressively wider and denser contexts" (Vayda 1983: 265). This entails examining "who is doing what, why, and to what effect" (McCay 2008: 15) and progressively contextualizing backwards in time and outwards in space, or even inwards and upwards in levels of society and governance (ibid).

process-full, temporal nature. The nature-culture divide persists in the assumptions and actions of people, I argue, because of people's propensity for making boundaries.

### Boundary-making

Boundaries do not exist in and of themselves in the world. For instance, a stream running between the territories of two Kalanguya villages in Benguet is not a boundary in and of itself. Rather, it is designated, recognized, and maintained as such by the Kalanguya who live by it. Boundaries are purposively made by people to separate themselves or to separate matter or certain objects from the rest of the environment (Barth 2000). In the dynamic of environmental action, boundaries are ubiquitous. Protected areas are delineated and zoned, objectives are placed within time-frames, stakeholders are identified and categorized, nature is redefined as and divided into "natural resources", livelihood practices are classified as sustainable/unsustainable and legal/illegal. Intertwined with this is the indigenous peoples' movement and its goals of recognition of their rights to territories and resources by virtue of their identities and their histories. Thus, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are also drawn around who qualifies as indigenous, and who does not. The nation-state, as a geographical and bureaucratic entity, also exists by virtue of boundaries. In government programs, "bounded categories of beneficiaries" (Barth 2000: 29) are identified and actors are expected to fit into these to qualify. By far the most common (and yet the least explicit) in the dynamic of environmental action, is the boundary that is drawn between humans and Nature. The boundaries with which I am concerned in this study are the boundaries of places (parks, property, villages, nations), boundaries of time (seasons, work-time, project cycles, the future), and social boundaries (boundaries of relationships, interactions, behavior and positionalities). Apart from the boundaries of definition I myself conceptually draw between the actor-groups in this study, I consider social, physical, and temporal boundaries as they are created and lived by actors themselves.

Here I raise some of my assertions about boundaries. The first, already mentioned above, is that they are made and maintained by humans. Making a boundary is a way of engaging the environment. The environment includes the boundary-makers themselves, other humans, and other non-human beings. Boundaries separate others, not selves from a defined environment (Barth 2000). This is particularly so in what Ingold (2000: 64) has referred to as social appropriation. For example, the indigenous peoples in this study follow the principle of *primi occupantes*. A person or a family obtains use-rights to a space in which they are the first to invest labor, and which they maintain through either continual or seasonal labor. As with property, use-rights include the right to pass it on to descendants. By drawing a boundary around say, a swidden field, individuals do not separate it from themselves, but draw it into their lives. Ingold holds that appropriation is another way of setting humanity "on a pedestal above the natural world of things" (2000: 64). In this particular instance, I disagree with him. Although we may think of boundaries as the edges of containers, or as barriers, we must be aware that this does not always fit the complex reality of people's movements through the environment. I expound on this in Chapters Two and Four.

My second assertion on boundaries, is that boundaries are permeable. This is important because, in "protected areas" zones are created in which different activities are sanctioned. Zonation is a model that is based on the assumption that the delineated areas are discrete units, and that actions taken in one zone will not affect the others. It is assumed, further, that the zones can be contained from one another through policing,

involvement, and education of indigenous peoples and other local communities that live in proximity with protected areas. This assumption is ineffective in apprehending people's interactions with each other and the environment, as is demonstrated repeatedly in this dissertation. Barth asserts that human activities create leakages in borders, and re-connect what has been separated (2000: 28). This is done through "inventive behavioral responses to the imposition of boundaries, and the effects of social positioning" (ibid). In the light of this and what agents of environmentalism aim to achieve, I argue that social boundaries are more difficult to permeate than physical ones. The critical social boundary I have in mind is ethnicity and indigeness. Given that being born indigenous is the first requisite, it is apparent that this is a boundary that is not so easily crossed, although there are possibilities for changing membership and participation through other positionalities and relationships. Marriage is a simple example, and also the formal act of being ritually "adopted" as a member of an indigenous community. Barth asserts that it is not isolation and absence of contact or mobility that keeps ethnic categories distinct. Rather, ethnic distinctions

"entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories." (1994: 9-10)

In this study, I show how the formal recognition of indigenous rights to land and natural resources has transformed these processes of exclusion and incorporation, thereby also affecting the permeability of ethnic boundaries. However, the territorial boundaries that correspond with the social identity ones can be, and are crossed, all the time. Thus, while some actors will be concerned with the imposition of boundaries, others will be looking for loopholes in them. Through their actions, people create and take advantage of affordances that arise out of the boundaries, treating the latter more as conjunctions than as barriers.

This brings me to my third point on boundaries: they are sites of enforcement, regulation, resistance, and negotiation. Physical boundaries can shift in location as a result of negotiations between communities or actors. Social boundaries can be broken or reformulated as a result of resistance or as a result of changes actors bring about in their own positionality. Indigenous communities, especially those that rely directly on their environments for their livelihood, are negotiating the entitlements and affordances that they can activate at the sites of state-created boundaries, not to revive the past, but to propel themselves towards an envisioned future. In the course of these interactions, people create new social and physical boundaries between themselves, activating various affordances. Political boundaries, as Barth points out, have been rich in affordances throughout history. "They are a constant field of opportunities for mediators, traders, and middlepersons of all kinds" (2000: 29). Professional indigenous persons in particular, as well as actors who position themselves as environmental 'managers' in the dynamic of environmental action, thrive at the sites of boundaries. They are capable of controlling who or what is allowed to move across borders. They also manage relationships between the state and local actors, as well as between environmental projects and local actors (Sardan 2005: 177). I bring up management here once again, because the possibility of managing the environment is itself founded on the existence of spatial and temporal boundaries (Adam 1998: 81). These boundaries are not static, but constantly subject to change.

People can reconceptualize boundaries based on the events that take place around them, and the affordances that actors are able to harness. The boundaries between state laws, customary laws, and other state laws are also blurred by human action. Thus, social and physical boundaries not only serve to separate, but also to connect (Barth 2000: 30), and these connections are spun out of the work of people who respond to affordances selectively and pragmatically. According to Barth, the presence of a boundary sets social and material processes in motion, with emergent results.

In addition, I would argue that some boundaries can also lie dormant, and may be activated strategically by actors when involved in negotiations. One of the emergent results of the creation of all the boundaries discussed in this study, is a complex layering and intersecting of borders at the site of any environmental project. My aim is to shed light on these boundaries and affordances, and their repercussions for environmentalist agendas.

The interface: green entanglements

“Interfaces typically occur at points where different, and often conflicting, lifeworlds or social fields intersect, or more concretely, in social situations or arenas in which interactions become oriented around problems of bridging, accommodating, segregating or contesting social, evaluative, and cognitive standpoints.” (Long 2001: 65)

The entirety of the dynamic of environmental action is an interface because of the intertwining of the discourses of environmentalism and the discourses of indigenous peoples’ rights. We can think of it as a hub around which several other interfaces converge. Long defines a social interface as “a critical point of intersection between lifeworlds, social fields or levels of social organization where social discontinuities, based upon discrepancies in values, interests, knowledge and power, are most likely to be located” (2001: 243). Alternatively, I would like to use the term environmental interfaces, to emphasize that social interactions and the environment are mutually constitutive. I argue, as Adam does, that interactions take an effect on the environment, just as the environment affects interactions. There is no such thing as an interaction that can take place without an environment. On the other hand, as shown in previous sections of this chapter, there can be interactions that are thought to be contained in and confined to society without affecting the natural world, as though human actions were not part of the natural world.

I focus on environmental interfaces as they take place within the context of the environment that holds the bases of existence of indigenous peoples and other local communities, and that agents of environmentalism work to protect. The sites for this study are not confined to the immediate spaces of territories, villages, or protected areas. Rather, any interaction that concerns or involves the environment, indigenous peoples, agents of conservation, and green positionalities (be it a meeting in a board room or government office in the city, or a confiscation of illegal logs on the river, or negotiations on a road-building project in the mountains) is treated as potentially significant and revealing of how different actors’ interests are played out, and of how knowledge, power and cultural interpretations are “mediated and perpetuated or transformed” (Long 2001: 50). I look at the way understandings and misunderstandings between actors evolve in face-to-face interactions, as well as in the maintenance of long-distance relationships. I pay attention to how actors negotiate and internalize meanings as well as affordances. Like boundaries, interfaces are ripe with negotiations. According to Long, even though

interfaces usually bring together actors with some degree of common interest, interfaces can also generate conflict because of unequal power relations or actors' contradictory agendas and objectives.

In the dynamic of environmental action, livelihood is an important aspect of interfaces, not only because it is a vital part of daily life but also because it is a constant source of explicit and implicit conflict between agents of conservation and indigenous peoples. Negotiations regarding livelihood are often couched in terms of sustainability and low environmental impact on the one hand, and life aspirations, obligations, and representations of modernity and development on the other. Livelihood is as much a matter of ownership of information and managing skills and relationships, as it is about economic and material concerns. It also entails organizing time, coping with uncertainties, and responding to new opportunities (Wallman 1982, as referred to in Long 2001: 54). I discuss the livelihoods of Kalanguya and Ngaju Dayak in Chapters Two and Four respectively, and relate livelihood to issues of development and sustainability as formulated by themselves, and by agents of environmentalism.

By being attuned to what takes place between actors at the interface, I aim to draw out an understanding of how the implementation processes of environmentalist projects come to form part of daily life, and part of an array of affordances for involved groups and individuals. This brings me back to the two underlying questions that have guided this study: How do indigenous peoples living in proximity with forests interact with laws and policies that are aimed at regulating their use of natural resources, their main source of livelihood? More to the point, how do indigenous peoples and the implementers and/or advocates of environmentalism interact? In the papers collected here I will point out ideas and actions that may concretely strengthen future efforts to improve human-environmental conditions and relations.

## Methodology

### Fieldwork

This research began with the objective of studying the implementation of nature-conservation policies among indigenous communities in Southeast Asia. The parameters for field site selection were simple. The field sites would have to be indigenous communities with a strong and explicit declaration of indigeneity, a defined and bounded territory, and the visible presence of nature-conservation initiatives working within that territory, whether these were governmental or non-governmental programs. Given this, site selection and key informant interviews were guided by purposive sampling.

It was decided that one of the case studies should be located in the Philippines since it is the only Southeast Asian country thus far with a law that both protects indigenous peoples rights and stipulates environmental protection and sustainable development within indigenous territories. I began by asking officers of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples about areas where the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act was being implemented. In the Cordillera Administrative Region I was informed that many implementation activities were planned for the ancestral domain claim of Kabayan. I was also informed by local government officials of Kabayan that while they were pushing for their ancestral domain title, there was also the issue of the barangay of Tawangan being

entirely within the bounds of the Mt. Pulag National Park. The local implementation of both an indigenous rights law and a nature-conservation law (the National Integrated Protected Areas System) in one place made Tawangan a suitable site for this study.

Despite the absence of a law concerning indigenous peoples rights and a strong rhetoric that considers all Indonesians to be indigenous, Indonesia has a thriving indigenous peoples' movement that intersects with nature-conservation goals. At the time this study began, the World Wildlife Fund was in the early stages of advocating for a protected area in Central Kalimantan, where identity politics were evident in the history of the province and the high visibility of Ngaju Dayak elite in political spheres and various advocacies. Because of my interest in the agency and practices of agents of environmentalism, my work in Indonesia began with the local team of the World Wildlife Fund based in the provincial capital of Palangkaraya. It was the local team that pointed me towards Baun Bango, where the residents were predominantly Ngaju Dayak and local leaders interacted with the WWF on a fairly regular basis.

The fieldwork for this study was multi-locale and multi-sited and did not remain within the geographical bounds of village life in Baun Bango and Tawangan. In line with the objective of building an ethnographic account of environmental policy/project implementation and interfaces, I also attended government meetings, training workshops, seminars, consultations, and negotiations that were organized by (government and non-government) agents of environmentalism. I chose those that involved the localities of Baun Bango and Tawangan either indirectly through the scope and agendas of the meetings/venues, or directly through the participation of representatives from the villages. The selection of which meetings/venues to participate in was also limited to those dealing with nature conservation, the management of the national parks of Mt. Pulag and the Sebangau area, the assertion of local/indigenous rights to resources, and negotiations over boundaries and entitlements.

Given that my fieldwork began with agents of environmentalism the selection of informants proceeded at first through snowball sampling (Bernard 2002), in which government officials, NGO workers, indigenous elite, and community leaders introduced me or referred me to one another as well as to other actors in the defined interface who would be willing to speak with me, or whom they thought would have valuable information or reflections to impart. My presence at such venues and in the villages was mainly as a participating observer, one who, based on Bernard's (2002: 327-328) distinctions of different forms of participant observation, is present as a researcher with the permission of the actors involved, but who does not engage directly in, or interfere with the interface. For example, I lived in the villages and accompanied people when they did their work in the fields or in the forest. I observed and documented their activities, shared their food, conversed with them to the best of my abilities in newly learned languages (Kalanguya in Benguet, Bahasa Indonesia in Central Kalimantan) and with the help of research assistants, but as an unskilled worker I did not do fishing, logging, or farming activities except to assist in very small tasks. I sat in at meetings, workshops, and negotiations and documented proceedings. I formally introduced myself at these venues and explained my reasons for being there and I joined participants in informal discussions during meal breaks, but I did not act as a facilitator or speak up during plenary discussions.

After an initial period of participant-observation and unstructured interviews (Bernard 2002) in the villages, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with individuals



whom I saw to be knowledgeable, competent, and engaged in certain domains that I was interested in, such as particular forms of livelihood, as well as particular advocacies. This process was facilitated by an expanding circle of acquaintances, as well as the slow growth of familiarity and rapport between villagers and myself. Interviews were recorded on digital video with the consent of the interviewees. It is interesting to note that NGO workers and government officials consistently declined to be interviewed on video, but gave me permission to film them at work in different meetings/venues. Most village-based interviewees accepted on the condition that they be allowed to watch the footage of their own interviews and activities afterwards. Village-based interviewees who consented to video-documentation were also filmed going about their everyday livelihood activities. I will discuss further this aspect of my research methods below.

There was a notable difference in the ways actors apprehended my research and expressed their opinions on the areas and topics that they thought to be appropriate for me or aligned with my interests. For example, most agents of environmentalism I encountered in Indonesia thought that I should be doing all my research in the villages, among indigenous communities, and not in their workshops or seminars. The WWF team in Palangkaraya eventually consented to share their data and welcomed my interest in their work and their dynamics with local communities on the condition that I share my impressions and observations with the local team. In the Philippines, government officials implementing the law on indigenous rights and the law on protected areas took it for granted that I would be interested in how they go about their work (how implementation happens) and they often pointed out to me things that were said or that transpired, which they thought were significant.

The fieldwork for this dissertation was carried out at intermittent periods from 2003 to 2005. Fieldwork was conducted in Indonesia from January to May in 2003, and again from June to August 2005. Fieldwork for the Philippines took place from December 2003 to May 2004, in August and December 2004, and finally from February to March 2005. The months in between these periods of fieldwork were spent in the Netherlands for study, and developing the research further in discussions with colleagues and my supervisors.

In the following sections I discuss in more detail the methodological aspects of this study that deal with the future, comparison, and visual anthropology.

#### Studying the future<sup>13</sup>

“In choosing a stance which explains the ethnographic present as a result of an irretrievable past, anthropologists often stand with their backs to the future. Generally speaking, the future is remarkably absent as an explicit object of anthropological research during fieldwork” (Persoon and Perez 2008: 287). In ethnographies, the future usually appears in the form of the anthropologists’ recommendations, reflections, and projections, indirectly meant for policy-makers, development-workers, missionaries, and other agents of change involved or interested in the anthropologists’ own areas of study.

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<sup>13</sup> This section is drawn from the methodology discussions we put forward in Persoon and Perez 2008.

By contrast, the future is a constant concern of agents of environmentalism. Among their most important analytical tools are models that aim to predict and/or approximate future scenarios for the environment. Policies on such environmental concepts as sustainability and conservation are future- and outcome-oriented (ibid).

Earlier in this chapter I suggested that agents of environmentalism (sometimes unknowingly) subordinate local, contemporary actors' desired futures to an envisioned future of harmonious community-environment interactions and sustainable development. Anthropologists concerned with environmental issues, nature-conservation, and sustainability perpetuate this disregard when they fail to inquire into contemporary actors' visions of the future and relate this to actions taken in the present. Instead the shaping of the future is often attributed to others – agents of change such as environmentalists, development workers, missionaries, and government officials.

This is partly due to the propensity within anthropology to describe and understand present day behavior through causal and historical processes. The future is rarely treated as a topic for discussion with informants.<sup>14</sup> In this study I argue for the importance of explicitly dealing with the future as a topic for inquiry in anthropological studies. I present ways in which this can be done in the field on the conviction that “approaching the future could improve our understanding of the present, especially when coupled with an understanding of the historical past” (ibid).

One method I tried out for approaching the future was to engage informants in imagining scenarios for their own surroundings, which I pegged at a specific time horizon. For example, informants were asked to describe how the forests and/or rivers in their area might look in ten years' time. They were also asked to imagine the possibilities for their villages and their own families within that time horizon. In the case of the latter, people often expressed their hopes or desires for the future. These aspirations were then related to the present with follow-up questions on how the informants were working towards the attainment of their goals. This was applied in interviews with indigenous individuals, agents of environmentalism, and combined entities. In this way, activities carried out in the present become linked to future possibilities, in addition to being articulated with the historical past.

In Persoon and Perez (2008: 291), we suggested that “anthropologists have focused too much on local people themselves, without paying sufficient attention to the non-local people and institutions, missionaries, traders and companies that greatly affect the lives and thereby also the future of forest dwelling people.<sup>15</sup> Usually these agencies and institutions are defined as external to the local situation and not made an explicit part of

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<sup>14</sup> Sandra Wallman wonders whether this can also be attributed to the absence of the concept of the future in non-industrial cultures (Wallman 1992). There is also the question of whether or not local informants are accustomed to, or comfortable with discussing the future. However, I am convinced of the importance of trying to find out, especially within the context of future-oriented environmentalist policies and programs, as is the case with this study.

<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless the last decade has seen the creation of a wealth of anthropological material on precisely this interaction between outside institutions and local people, hinged on the environment. (For example, Greenough and Tsing 2003, Nevins and Peluso 2008, Li 2007, and Tsing 2005.)

the research. Ironically, these very same actors are given the upper hand when attributing the production of new futures [in] a community.” The inclusion of agents of environmentalism and their actions, and the very focus on how implementation takes place was built into the design of this study so as to counter this tendency. The way people react towards the activities and visions of other groups and individuals is also crucial (Vayda 1997: 12).

Finally, the search for representativeness in anthropology may occlude the ways in which people influence the future by innovating and taking risks. In overlooking innovation, we might miss out on how research participants themselves see and act upon possibilities or options for change.

Comparison: worlds apart?

At first glance the proposed comparison of the case studies presented here appears to violate at least one traditional tenet of comparative studies in general: “that the items compared must share certain fundamental traits” (Nader 1994: 87). Nader (*ibid*) refers to this as “the notion of controlled comparison,” based upon anthropology’s early conformity to the canons of positivist science, which include the identification of and control over discrete variables in stable laboratory settings or, as was thought to be the case with human societies, in bounded, static, homogenous communities. The comparative approach of this study has been questioned repeatedly on the following terms: the invalidity of making generalizations on the basis of a single case study per country, the lack of representativeness of Baun Bango and Tawangan for the Indonesian and Philippine contexts respectively, the absence of measurable key variables in both case studies, and the vast differences between the two nation-states.

I argue that drawing connections between Baun Bango and Tawangan is a plausible – perhaps even imperative – exercise that can produce new insights through the juxtaposition of different locales so as to explore what “mutual critical commentary they make upon each other” (Marcus 1998: 52). The comparative chapters of this dissertation perform this very juxtaposition following Marcus’ (1998) methodological discussions on multi-sited ethnography and Nader’s (1994) suggestions on the need to cultivate and nurture the comparative consciousness in anthropology. I also proceed from the recognition current within anthropology that variables in the field cannot be controlled as they are in a laboratory setting, and that different aspects of human society are not discrete units that can be treated as separate components of a whole.

This study is multi-sited in two ways: firstly, there are two separate field sites that are central to the entire research project, and secondly, there is more than one interface or field of social interaction pertinent to the research questions posed above. The comparisons I present here are not mere abstractions or artificial connections. They are based on firsthand ethnographic work and on-the-ground documentation of “processes that cross-cut time frames and spatial zones in quite uncontrollable ways...” (Marcus 1998: 73) – namely, processes of negotiating and implementing discourses, policies, and practices on environmental conservation and indigenous peoples’ rights. As was discussed above, the dynamics of environmental issues and the way different actors apprehend them is a process that leaks through boundaries and timescapes, and which also intersects with identity and everyday life. The key actors themselves, including the researcher, physically as well as intellectually cross boundaries constantly and participate in several timescapes, landscapes, and social interfaces. Thus, instead of staying within the physical boundaries of Tawangan and Baun Bango, or the ethnic boundaries of being

Kalanguya or Ngaju Dayak, this study moves across various locales and sites, following actors, ideas, discourses, and issues as they interact and are played out in different settings. The transfer, translation, and exchange of data and insights from site to site also entailed paying attention to the differences between the conditions and methods for fieldwork where discourses on policies are produced, and in the communities affected by such policies.

While it certainly can be said that the discourses of environmental conservation and indigenous peoples' rights are not well-defined variables equally applied to or replicated in each case study, my comparisons come from putting questions to the emergent contours and relationships of these two topics in "complexly connected real-world sites of investigation" (ibid: 86). As the comparative chapters of this dissertation will show, the juxtaposition of case studies herein consists of seeing the increasingly global discourses of environmentalism and indigenous peoples' rights as integral parts of parallel, local-yet-fluid situations. Simply put, through a comparative consciousness one can tease out shared dimensions of human experience from small geographical regions within the larger spheres of interaction among transnational systems that give rise to change locally (Nader 1994).

Although Tawangan and Baun Bango belong to nation-states that in turn belong to the region of Southeast Asia, the two sites appear to be worlds apart. However, in Marcus' writings on multi-sited ethnography he suggests that, "Activities and local sites of knowledge blind to each other, might through the analyst's efforts be brought into engagement with one another to produce new insights. The point then is that multi-locale ethnographics can reveal new opportunities for critical comparative juxtaposition, that otherwise might not have made sense." (Marcus 1998: 52-53, emphasis added). It is the aim of this study to tease out new insights from the very juxtaposition of the ways in which the local worlds of Tawangan and Baun Bango articulate and/or collide with the international discourses of indigenous peoples' rights and nature-conservation.

#### Visual ethnography

Nowadays mass media enables people from around the world to watch each other's actions and hear each other's opinions without ever meeting face to face. A constant flux of imagery from all around the world forms a significant, yet taken for granted part of people's immediate environments, including in Baun Bango and Tawangan.<sup>16</sup> This flow of imagery and ideas is overwhelmingly from North to South. The direction is rarely reversed South to North, periphery to center, or even South-South (Smith and Ward 2000). Thus, although villagers from Baun Bango possessed some knowledge of the Philippines, and villagers from Tawangan were vaguely aware of Indonesia, the two field sites were literally blind to each other in that they lie below the radar of international mass media. They may be recipients of the imagery of mass media, but they are not included in these images. Apart from my own analyses of the parallelisms between Tawangan and Baun Bango, I sought to build a comparative bridge and, to a certain extent, shrink the blind spots between the two field sites using methods drawn from

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<sup>16</sup> At the time of fieldwork however, there were no television sets in Tawangan yet, as the source of electricity was from a mini hydrological dam that was only enough to power the village's lights and radio sets.

visual ethnography. The use of visually-mediated interviews (also known as video elicitation) and focus group discussions in this research aimed to change this “blindness” and to make Baun Bango and Tawangan momentarily visible to each other as two sites connected by their parallel situations and by their inclusion in this study.

Filming began early in fieldwork, particularly in the form of establishing shots. “An establishing shot lets viewers infer spatial relationships” (Barbash and Taylor 1997: 110) between agents (or ‘actors’) and locations. They also give viewers an impression of the surroundings of certain key actors. These environmental establishing shots include: forests, fields, rivers, degraded/burned/logged portions of forest, good/healthy/conserved parts of forest, human habitation, close-up and detailed shots of what people deem important in the natural environment, because I asked people for suggestions on what to film. Filming also focused on meetings, workshops, and negotiations, with the consent of the participants. The filming of people/environment interactions and establishing shots served three purposes: the recording of data, it helped to generate further questions for interviews, and it also made clearer to informants and other village residents what I was interested in when I played back raw footage for them, mostly at their request. Some of the interviews I conducted were filmed mainly for documentation purposes alongside note-taking during the discussions I had with various informants.

As fieldwork progressed interviews and all other footage were logged, transcribed, and translated for quicker access, with the help of research assistants. This made it easier to find and pull out footage when informants requested to view footage that they appeared in, or when it was needed for creating montages, or assemblages of video clips, for visually-mediated focus group discussions. This was a process that admittedly increased the amount of work hours clocked but it had its added value for the research.

Towards the latter part of fieldwork visually-mediated focus group discussions were held in each site. The focus groups were composed of youth, women, men, and elders respectively. Each group was first shown video clips depicting different aspects of everyday life and livelihood in their own village. The exact same assemblage of video clips was shown to each focus group. The contents of the video clips included images of work in the environment and everyday life in the village. Participants were asked to comment on the video clips in terms of their incompleteness, and on whether the clips were acceptable depictions of their lives. The discussions were quite detailed for each clip and these are presented in the appendix.

After viewing footage of their own villages, the focus groups in Baun Bango also viewed video clips of Tawangan, and vice versa. This was an exciting part of the visually-mediated discussions for both the researcher and the focus groups. For me, this widened the comparative horizons of the research and pushed further the possibilities of innovative visual anthropology. For the focus groups, the viewing of footage from the other field site (which they were aware of as being part of the same research work) prompted questions and observations about work and livelihood, governance, rituals, tradition and heritage, and other perceived commonalities and differences. The video clips and photos acted as a third party in the focus group discussions, eliciting insights or information that straightforward interview questions might not have drawn out.

Using images to mediate discussions brought a collaborative element to the research, allowing informants and researchers to discuss, negotiate, and to a certain extent, influence each other’s views (Pink 2001, MacDougall 1997, Banks and Morphy 1997). It

was also interesting how different actors interpreted the images, which were also the ethnographer-videographer's visualization of reality (Pink 2001: 68). Mediated by digital video, the researcher and participating residents of Baun Bango and Tawangan together engaged the question of "what among locally probed subjects is iconic with or parallel to terms of another, related or 'worlds apart' site?" (Marcus 1998: 93). The aim of this exercise was not so much didactic as to extend the privilege of making comparisons to members of the researched communities. Through this exercise of the comparative consciousness, observations that reached across the two field sites were made not only by the researcher, but also by the participants in the focus groups. The participants in the focus groups responded quickly to the footage from the other field site for, as Nader puts it, "the act of thinking comparatively is probably universal" (1994: 89), even if we are not always conscious of it.

The technology of digital video lent itself well to this cross-cultural exchange in a way that is unmatched by written documentation (Devereaux and Hillman 1995: 71-72). Although I do not refer directly to the use of the audio-visual data in the textual chapters of this dissertation, the writing was nevertheless informed by what was gained from employing the methods of visual ethnography. The quotations from informants in the interviews are drawn directly from taped interactions or interviews, some of which they themselves also viewed and commented on further. The steps I followed and the results of the visually-mediated focus group discussions are shown in the appendix, which is a combination of text and video on DVD.

#### The researcher in the landscape: my positionality

"In practice, multi-sited fieldwork is... always conducted with a keen awareness of being within the landscape, and as the landscape changes across sites, the identity of the ethnographer requires renegotiation" (Marcus 1998: 97).

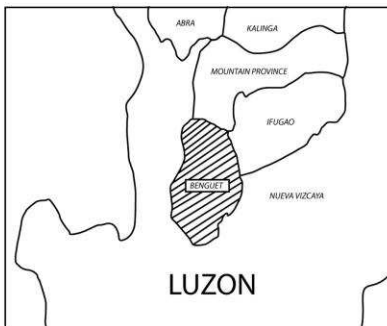
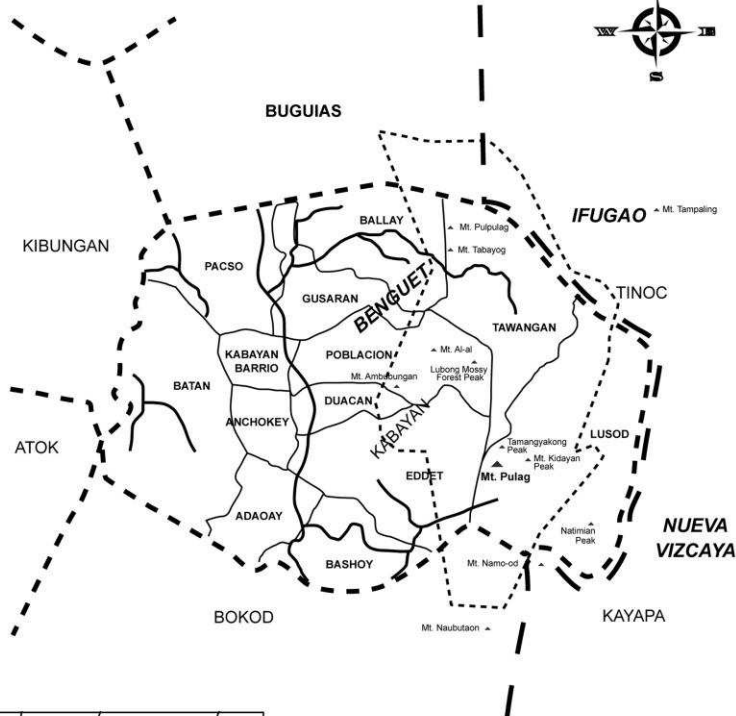
I found this statement to be true on several levels – the ways in which I introduced myself to people and emphasized my position as a researcher varied from site to site, whether I was speaking to individual residents in the villages, or before a gathering at meetings or workshops. In Baun Bango it was necessary for me to emphasize that I was not an employee or a partner of the World Wildlife Fund in Indonesia, although many aspects of my research and the places I went were also dependent on the activities and relationships of WWF in the field. The same could be said for Tawangan, where I had to dissociate myself repeatedly from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, or any other government agency, although I was often present in the same sites as they. Among the Kalanguya of Tawangan and the Ngaju Dayak of Baun Bango, I was known to be rather interested in the environment. In both places, I had to explain that my desire to understand how people lived their lives and how they moved in their environments stemmed primarily from my being a student of anthropology and an observer in their midst. On the other hand, agents of environmentalism had marked me as a researcher from the beginning and seemed to prefer to restrict our discussions to matters they perceived to be related to my study, even if I sometimes felt that on a personal level my own commitments to environmentalism paralleled their convictions and actions.

The constant renegotiation of my positionalities was also evident in the way people in different sites positioned me *vis-à-vis* their selves and their partial awareness of my relationships with people in the other field sites. During the visually-mediated focus group discussions, participants in Baun Bango often asked me about 'my people' and 'my

country' when posing questions about the footage that they had seen of the Kalanguya from Tawangan. Thusly, I was positioned as a foreigner representing her own country and community. In Tawangan, participants in the focus group discussions referred to Baun Bango as 'that place', or 'over there' and they referred to the Ngaju Dayak in the third person. Clearly, I was not seen to be either a part of Tawangan or Baun Bango. The questions of the Kalanguya were articulated in such a way that my role in the visually-mediated workshops was as an interpreter and storyteller of the situation in Baun Bango and the lifeways of the Ngaju Dayak. It was through these nuanced positionalities and discussions in each site that the informants and I traced, translated, forged, and negotiated connections between actors and across sites.

In closing I wish to refer back to the conception of landscapes that guides me through this dissertation: it is the visible, physical form of the environment in which we stand and take up a view; a totality of actions and interactions made up of the unfolding relations of beings, actors, and the environment, in congealed form. Through this dissertation and during the time of fieldwork, it was a privilege as well as a challenge to have moved within and participated in the landscapes of each field site.

**LOCATION MAP**  
**KABAYAN**  
 PROVINCES OF BENGUET,  
 IFUGAO AND NUEVA VIZCAYA



**LEGEND:**

- PROVINCIAL BOUNDARY
- MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
- BARANGAY BOUNDARY
- MT. PULAG NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY
- ROADS
- BARANGAY TEXT
- MUNICIPALITY TEXT
- PROVINCE **TEXT**
- MOUNTAIN PEAK



## CHAPTER TWO



Photo 2.1: Tawangan's landscape is dominated by vegetable gardens.

### **Kalanguya Landscapes and Timescapes: Social and Environmental Change in a Benguet Village**

‘A man was out in the evening catching bats with his net, a tawang, when a group of Spaniards came by and asked him in Spanish, “What is this place?”. The man, who couldn’t speak Spanish, misunderstood the question. He held up his net and said, “This is a tawang, for catching bats.” The Spaniards said to one another, “Ah, we are in Tawangan.” That is how our place got its name.’<sup>1</sup>

This is a story that is told by the Kalanguya residents of Tawangan when asked about the origins of their village. In another version, also told by several Kalanguya, it is an American<sup>2</sup> who comes. He asks for the way to Buguias, and then the story continues in the same way, except that the American whips out a notebook and misspells the word, writing down Tawangan instead of tawang as the name of the place he has passed through.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a composite of the story as told to me by Kalanguya informants living in Tawangan.

<sup>2</sup> However, this may not refer exactly to an American. Across the Cordillera region, the label ‘Amerikano’ is applied to most white foreigners.

This story alludes to two aspects of Kalanguya life and history that are the focal points of this paper. Firstly, it stands as an assertion of their inclusion and visibility in the domain of governance. This assertion is significant, for the Kalanguya are a marginalized and stigmatized indigenous group among more dominant groups in the Philippine Cordillera, such as the Ibaloy and the Kankana-ey. Secondly, the bat-hunting, although no longer practiced in Tawangan, alludes to a livelihood that is intertwined with the immediate environment. My aim here is to create a brief ethnographic account that shows the intertwining of governance, the Kalanguya, their environment, and the transformations to Tawangan that they have experienced and affected over time.

The following questions will be addressed here: Who are the Kalanguya, where do they live, and how do they make a living? In addressing this I will discuss briefly their situatedness in the geo-political landscape of the Cordillera Administrative region, and their inclusion within the bounds of the Mt. Pulag National Park. What events and changes do the Tawangan Kalanguya deem as having had a relevant impact on their present lives? I am particularly interested in their experience of environmentality; their expectations on forms of governance that have sought to control or transform their way of life. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, the National Integrated Protected Areas System, and the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program are three such laws that are being implemented in Tawangan. What do Kalanguya reflections on the past and their anticipation of the future reveal about their perspectives on environmental governance? What influence has the nature-culture imaginaire had, if any, in the formation of green positionalities among the Kalanguya? In the future, what changes do the Kalanguya wish to see in Tawangan?

Tawangan is one of 13 barangays within the municipality of Kabayan, Benguet Province. The Municipality of Kabayan is located on the slopes of Mt. Pulag in Benguet Province. It is 85 kilometers northeast of Baguio City and 335 kilometers north of Manila. Kabayan is bounded by five other municipalities, two of which belong to neighboring provinces. One is the Municipality of Tinoc, Ifugao Province on the northeastern side of Kabayan, and the other is the Municipality of Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya on the southeastern side of Kabayan.<sup>3</sup> The other three municipalities belong to the province of Benguet.

In 2004, there were 736 Kalanguyas living in Tawangan. The barangay is spread out across several sitios or clusters of households, on the eastern slopes of Mt. Pulag. In its entirety, the settlement falls within the boundaries of the Mt. Pulag National Park. This has created unresolved issues in which development projects and nature-conservation are framed opposite one another, as though the two goals were completely incompatible. Tawangan is also a site of disputed ancestral domain claims between multi-ethnic Kabayan, which is predominantly Ibaloy,<sup>4</sup> and the municipality of Tinoc, which is predominantly Kalanguya. Thus, in Tawangan seemingly conflicting objectives and programs of the state come to a head. This places the Kalanguya of Tawangan in the

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<sup>3</sup> These two municipalities figure prominently in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, in which I discuss the complexities of ancestral domain claims and boundary conflicts at length.

<sup>4</sup> In a census of 10,509 Kabayan households in 1995, 58.49% identified Ibaloy as their mother-tongue, as compared to 36.38% households that identified Ikalahan (or Kalanguya) as their mother-tongue. Other households identified Kankanaey, Tagalog, Ilokano, and other Philippine languages. Source: 'Profiles', Book I of the Kabayan Ancestral Domain Management Plan.

center of a tug-of-war involving issues of territory, resources, politics, internal revenue allotments, and identity.

This chapter is an ethnographic account of the Kalanguya of Tawangan, the formation and transformation of their landscapes and timescapes, and how their everyday lives articulate with the present inclusion of Tawangan in a national park and an ancestral domain, and its status as an agrarian reform community. In looking into everyday life in Tawangan, I focus on various sources of income and sustenance available to the Kalanguya – their livelihood repertoire, and their cultural practices. This chapter includes Kalanguya opinions and reflections on the implementation of the laws mentioned above, and the future scenarios that they imagine or envision for themselves.



Photo 2.2: Timescapes of inum'an or sweet potato swidden fields.

### **Shifting Timescapes and Landscapes in Tawangan**

Here I will show the confluence of past and present in the timescapes and landscapes of the Tawangan Kalanguya by focusing on how they re-work the environment through daily activities that are aimed at generating income and sustenance. I will also show how the re-working of the environment is intertwined with the ways in which they engage with issues and debates surrounding processes of governance and development, their history, and their identity in a process-full environment.

The very name of the people that speak their language has been debated among the people themselves, as well as in anthropological literature. Are they Kalanguya,

Kalangotan, Kallahan, or Ikalahan? Their identity and their ethnic label had not been fixed in any of the historical or ethnological literature of Spanish and American colonial times.<sup>5</sup> The people who carry these names and who share a language have become spread out across the contiguous areas of the provinces of Benguet, Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya, Nueva Ecija, and Pangasinan. This situatedness of the people is the result of their movements as swidden cultivators, as well as of the arbitrary political boundaries drawn and re-drawn by Philippine governments since American times. They remain a relatively silent and overlooked minority in each of these provinces. In the late 1980's this situation led the educated elite to work for the unification of their people and to make demands for recognition from the government.<sup>6</sup>

Originating from the province of Benguet, these leaders put themselves forward as the Kalanguya people, and formed the Kalanguya Tribal Organization. At the First Kalanguya Congress, also attended by people coming from Nueva Vizcaya and Nueva Ecija, there was a highly emotional debate as to the name of their people, which brought some elders to tears. Those coming from Imugan in Nueva Vizcaya insisted on the label Ikalahan, which has gained currency partly as a result of the advocacy of Pastor Delbert Rice. The ethnic label Ikalahan is also widely associated with images of sustainability and forest stewardships awarded to the Kallahan Educational Foundation by the Department on Environment and Natural Resources.<sup>7</sup> Others insisted that they had always called themselves Kalanguya, since 'time immemorial'. This debate shows the contentious nature of identity, ethnic labels and boundaries when intertwined with issues of access to affordances that range from land itself to the ability to perform green positionalities and derive benefits from various networks.

The word Kalanguya is said to originate from the Kalanguya sentence, 'Kallay ngo ya?', which means, 'Why is that?' and is sometimes used as an expression of surprise or puzzlement. According to Patricia Afable (1989), residents of Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya prefer to be called Kallahan because their Kankana-ey neighbors use the phrase 'Kallay ngo ya' to make fun of their speech. Founders of the Kalanguya Tribal Organization insist that the label Kalanguya connotes peace, because the phrase is also used to rebuke some one who has done wrong. On the other hand, Ikalahan literally means 'from the forest' or 'people of the forest'. The term has its roots among their Ibaloy neighbors who settled the lower slopes of Mt. Pulag, and referred to the mossy oak forests as kadasan. Thus, the i-kadasan, or i-kallahan are the people from the mossy oak forest; just as the i-baloy, are said to originate from an area which was covered by a plant known locally as baloy. I make use of the term Kalanguya because this is what they call themselves in Tawangan.

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<sup>5</sup> The seminal historical Blair and Robertson volumes do not contain any mention of the Kalanguya or Kallahan (Rice 2002: 1). According to Resurreccion (1998: 94) David P. Barrows, chief of the American colonial Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, notes the mention of the Kalangotan language spoken in the village of Tucucan, which is now a village in the municipality of Tinoc.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 3 of this dissertation for a discussion of the role of the elite in shaping Kalanguya identity and claims made for recognition and territory.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed and gendered account of the continuing conflict between the Kalanguya Tribal Organization and the Kallahan Educational Foundation, see Resurreccion 1998. See also Rice 2002 for an approach to the puzzle of the ethnic labels Kallahan, Ikalahan, or Kalanguya based on oral history.

### Memories of time immemorial

The Tawangan Kalanguya point across the mountains to the east, when asked where their ancestors came from. Along with the Ibaloy and some southern Kankana-ey speaking groups, the Kalanguya (or Kallahan in neighboring regions) trace their descent to “‘Tinek’, this being the name not only of a settlement but also of a larger region that includes the Ahin and Kadaklan headwaters, the Mount Pulog (original spelling) heights, and the Matunu headwaters region known as Danggu” (Afable 1989: 157). In a joint affidavit submitted as a supporting document with the ancestral domain claim of Kabayan, a group of Kalanguya men attested, “That we are members of the indigenous peoples of the Philippines belonging to the Kalanguya tribe of Benguet Province and descendants of Bayeng, the great ancestor of all Kalanguyas, who inhabited, since time immemorial, portions of the provinces of Benguet, Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya and Nueva Ecija...” (Kabayan Ancestral Domain Claim 1995). There are three relevant points embedded in this affidavit.

First, the wide swath of the areas occupied by apical ancestor Bayeng, is part of the people’s history of movement, migration, and swiddening across the Cordillera. Bayeng’s grandson, Billit, son of Odan, is considered the first settler of the area that is now known as Tawangan. Second, it indicates the participation of the Tawangan Kalanguya in the discursive practices of documentation and legitimization that is attributed to the government, or “gubyrno”. This affidavit is part of the process of claiming rights to territories and land under the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act. Thus, the statement must also be seen as a political assertion, precluding other claims to Kalanguya/Kallahan territories in the four provinces mentioned. Their participation in this process is felt by them as inclusion and recognition in times and places where they are frequently excluded as a silent, invisible minority. Third, there is an internal contradiction in the phrase ‘time immemorial’. The Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act requires a people to prove occupation of an area since ‘time immemorial’ to claim an ancestral domain. That is to say, a time that can no longer be remembered by the living occupants of a place. It is a time that indigenous peoples invoke frequently when asserting their rights to territories, but it is also a time to which no one wishes to return, or that no one wishes to revive. On the other hand, when considered in terms of the continuous generation of Kalanguya timescapes, ‘time immemorial’ refers to a history of environmental interactions – a past, or a plurality of pasts, to which the present and the future are inextricably connected. Thus, time immemorial, the present, and the future, are not mutually exclusive as is evident in the way ‘time immemorial is invoked by the Kalanguya,

‘Time immemorial’ is usually invoked through stories and genealogies that have been passed on orally from generation to generation. These narratives are almost always tied to the landscape. They tell of how the ancestors altered the landscape, witnessed alterations in it, or are buried in it. Narratives of ancestors working a landscape are references to making improvements on land as the customary way of gaining usufructuary rights to a bounded area. In these same narratives, the graves of ancestors are customary indications of either clan or individual ownership of land. In this chapter I give examples of narratives about work and changing landscapes from ‘time immemorial’. I place these alongside narratives that assert presence and participation in government processes, which are perceived to give legitimacy to Kalanguyaness.

‘In the time of our grandfathers,’ as the elders sometimes began their stories, work was made up mostly of maintaining the *inum’an*, or swiddens, carrying their root crops and leaves up to their houses from the valley, and gathering firewood with which to cook the

ubi, or sweet potato (*Ipomea batatas*). The Kalanguyas also gathered their basic needs from the mossy oak forest, such as bark cloth, medicines, wild fruits, and other edibles. June to August was hunting season for wild boar, deer, monkeys, birds, and cloud rats. The Kalanguyas did not hunt from February to April, because these were the months when most animals would be pregnant or giving birth.

Hunters were cautious about following their quarry into the mountains that they deemed to be part of Bokod and Ifugao, which are contiguous with Tawangan. Clearly, there was recognition of bounded territories. Although there was awareness that caution must be exercised in crossing these boundaries,<sup>8</sup> there was no need to pin down the boundaries permanently, or to define them with any form of ownership. Belonging to an ili<sup>9</sup> was more important than the borders between different ili. The ili is the locus for a shared home territory. Within this home territory, resources such as water, soil, timber and non-timber forest products are held in common by kailian.<sup>10</sup> That is to say, all ili members have access rights to these resources.

Elders say that in the time of their ancestors ownership was not of primary importance to people. If a family or individual were the first to clear an area for the swidden, their prior rights to that area would be recognized. They would hold the land in usufruct, and they could pass this land on to their children or relatives as inheritance. However, if the land was not in use, other families could plant on it and make use of it until such time that it is reclaimed by the first users. Thus they also recognized the principle of *primi occupantes*. Children usually received their inheritance when they married. Both male and female children received equal parcels of land from their parents. Married couples could choose where they would live. The decision on where to settle usually depended on the size of the parcel of land that was given to the couple. It should at least be large enough to produce a crop that would sustain the newly-married couple. In the past there was always the possibility for newlyweds to clear new swidden fields for themselves. Clearly, social arrangements such as marriage and inheritance are viewed as practices that take place within the environment, having a direct impact on the landscape. The system of inheritance, called *tawid* by the Kalanguya, is followed to this day although it exists alongside many new ways of transferring ownership of, or use-rights to land. For example, some parents said that although the lots that they could pass on to their children were decreasing in size, their children could at least make money now and buy more land elsewhere. The latter option, in their narratives, was made possible by government. Transformations in the landscape and the ability to relocate to new environments are seen by the Kalanguya as results of the confluence of their own agency as well as the influences of a distant state.

In Tawangan all water sources can be accessed by all Tawangan Kalanguya. Even if a spring is within one's land, one cannot claim sole ownership over the water. An

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<sup>8</sup> For example, when traveling outside their own territories for trade, it was always best to move in groups of at least 10, to deter headhunters, slave raids, or thievery.

<sup>9</sup> Magannon (1984: 244, as referred to in Finin 2005) interprets the ili as more than merely a village. He describes it as the "permanent home of people and spirits embodying both familial and religious affections and loyalty" (Finin 2005: 301, n. 2). Thus, the ili is a place of origin as well as the place in which identity and relationships with the human and non-human environment develop (Ingold 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Kailian refers to fellow settlers or fellow villagers.

individual who is not recognized as belonging to the Tawangan community cannot tap these water sources. In order to be able to legitimately say that one is i-Tawangan (of Tawangan, or from Tawangan) if not Kalanguya by blood, then one must become a member of the community through marriage or by performing a ritual and butchering sacrificial animals on the invitation of an elder.

These rights of access within home territories can be found among indigenous groups across the Cordillera and the Philippines. Somehow, these shared rights have become misconstrued as a form of communal ownership, now enshrined in the definition of ancestral domains in the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act. Communal forests in particular are considered an essential aspect of ancestral domains. However, the Tawangan Kalanguya clarify that they have no traditional communal forests or rivers. One elder remarked that communal forests were only kept in Ifugao, but not among the Kalanguya. These findings are corroborated by the research of Afaible (1989) among the Kallahan in Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya, and among the Ibaloyos of Kabayan as found by Wiber (1998) in her research in the central barangay or poblacion. Communal forests and watershed areas in Tawangan were established through a barangay resolution in 2004, because it was required by the Department of Interior and Local Government. This requirement, along with the provisions of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act concerning environmental protection and sustainable development, are examples of government regulations that aim to make people take up green positionalities; what Agrawal (2005) would call government technologies aimed at creating environmental subjects, or environmentality.<sup>11</sup>

The arrival of government in Tawangan is also credited with the settling of the swiddening Kalanguya into a sedentary way of life. At first it was the threat of headhunting, slave raids, and thieves that led the people to seek security in numbers. They eventually built their huts closer together to deter the Bongkilaw,<sup>12</sup> a troublesome group of bandits that came to steal their copper pots and take captives to trade as slaves elsewhere in the Cordillera. They were less easily victimized when they lived in larger groups, but this also meant that they had to become less mobile.

The area where the center of the settlement of Tawangan now stands was a fertile valley, suitable for swiddens and pigs. It is called Daklanto, meaning flat place. Before it grew into the barangay that it is today, the Kalanguyas maintained their swidden fields in the valley of Daklanto, and lived with their pigs in the hills surrounding it. In a discussion group in which informants viewed some of my research footage, many of them insisted that I include in my writing the traditional zonation practices of the Kalanguya. The spaces where the pigs and chickens were allowed to roam freely were called dayahhan, and the places where people built their homes were called higeban. Hunting areas were known as duangan, and these areas are the farthest up the mountains that the Kalanguya went.

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<sup>11</sup> In Chapters Six and Seven I describe the interface at which these government technologies are applied and I look into the results of such interactions between indigenous communities and agents of environmentalism.

<sup>12</sup> Rice (2002, and personal communication) suggests that the Kalanguya living in areas surrounding Tinoc may be descended from the Bongkilaw. Nevertheless, this does not discount the possibility that the Bongkilaw posed a threat to their immediate kin as well as to strangers.

These spaces became formalized as ‘traditional zonation’ under the auspices of the Department on Environment and Natural Resources, when it was mandated to collect data on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP). IKSP forms part of the required documentation for ancestral domain claims. These distinct zones are no longer recognizable in Tawangan since the timescapes have changed much since the period when the so-called ‘zones’ were part of everyday life. The present landscape of Tawangan is dominated by vegetable gardens. For the youngest generation of Kalanguya attending school in Tawangan, these zones are merely old traditions or stories told from ‘time immemorial’ – if they are told at all. They will probably not even learn about them in school, since such traditions are not part of the national curriculum. However, I see the insistence that I take note of these traditional zones as a reference to the legitimacy accorded by government to the Kalanguya and their traditions. It is, as it were, codified and recognized history from ‘time immemorial’. It is also part of a body of knowledge that is meant to attest to the presumed ecologically sound traditions of the Kalanguya.

The stories about the naming of Tawangan that I presented at the beginning of this paper are also told from ‘time immemorial’. Although they do not form part of the proofs or documents for the Kabayan ancestral domain claim, the stories that involve the Spaniard and the American in the naming of Tawangan form part of another salient set of claims. There are two notable things about these versions: the presence of an outsider, and the creation of a place-name through misunderstanding. Indigenous peoples, it has been argued, can only be defined by contrast with an outsider other, with that which they are not (Kuper 2003, Niezen 2003). Many indigenous peoples experience alienation and come to see themselves as marginalized under colonial rule (Niezen 2000). In the case of the Tawangan Kalanguya, this experience continues in their relative invisibility in a modern nation-state, and also by their stigmatized identity among fellow uplanders in the Philippine Cordillera. These stories are told as an assertion of presence in the landscape prior to the arrival of outsiders. In addition, the stories establish Tawangan within the routes not only of indigenous trade, but also in the routes taken by representatives of the colonial states. In this story, Tawangan becomes a recorded, geo-political entity, fixed in a notebook or in the knowledge of a few stray colonialists, and much later in maps, affidavits, and municipal development plans. These stories assert inclusion in the historical process of the Philippines becoming a nation, and the genesis of Tawangan as a named and bounded landscape.<sup>13</sup>

There is yet another version of the story of the naming of Tawangan that is strikingly different.

‘A group of men were on one of the slopes above the valley catching bats with their tawang. A headhunting party came from the hills of Ifugao. They stealthily hid themselves and watched the bat-hunters, waiting for an opportunity to strike. As they waited, the headhunters noted that their quarry were chewing betel nut quids and spat their

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<sup>13</sup> I once heard the story being interpreted in yet another way by a school teacher. She told it as a moral story with an admonition to young Kalanguya children to learn English and ‘not be ignorant like that Kalanguya man who could not speak foreign languages.’ This admonition too stems from a vision of the Kalanguya as a people removed or excluded from progress.



reddened saliva out on the ground. They hesitated and said to one another, ‘We should not take heads in the tawangan [roughly translated, ‘the place where people use their tawang, or hunt bats with their tawang’]. They may be our relatives for they chew betel nuts like we do.’ And with that, they left the Kalanguya men unharmed.’

This version of the story was told to me by only one elder who lived in a sitio far from the center of Tawangan. When asked about it, other elders merely shrugged and re-told the story about the Spaniard or the American. It is possible that this version of the story is suppressed because headhunting history in general is suppressed. Furthermore, the chewing of betel nut quids is considered by some to be an embarrassing remnant of their alleged backwardness, rather than a shared identity marker among upland communities in the Cordillera. What is remarkable about this story is that the naming of Tawangan stems from an understanding of commonality, a shared landscape, and the possibility of relatedness, rather than from extreme otherness. The story suggests that there is a need to reassess the definition of indigenous peoples through contrast with outsiders who arrive in the landscape at a later time. This freezes the genesis of identity to a single point in time that is first contact. Instead, Ingold (2000) suggests, we need to think of identity and personhood as being generated over time, alongside a person’s evolving knowledge of and involvement with the landscape, which always includes other people.

#### Timescapes of commercial agriculture

The way in which the daily passing of time is presently experienced by a majority of Kalanguya in Tawangan has to do with the labor that goes into commercial vegetable farming – or gardening, as they call it. They have recently joined the long production chain of commercial agriculture that is now a global, industrial economy. The Kalanguya of Tawangan are positioned at the lowest links of the chain. Their produce – such as cabbage, carrots, bell peppers, sweet peas, green beans, to name a few – only reaches as far as Philippine lowland markets but many of the farming inputs they need such as pesticides, herbicides, seeds, and plant varieties are expensive imports from around the world and, as I will show in this section, Kalanguya gardeners are heavily dependent on these.

Not so long ago, the only way to reach Tawangan was on foot. At that time, a few local households were already involved in commercial gardening. They planted sweet peas because transporting these on foot to the nearest road was relatively easy. They packed their produce in sacks and hired local men and boys to carry them to where the nearest road ended, two to three hours’ walk from central Tawangan. At the road the sacks would be loaded unto trucks or jeeps and taken to the trading post in La Trinidad, the provincial capital, where the produce would be sold to the highest bidder. The middlemen or traders in the urban centers would re-sell the vegetables to restaurant suppliers, groceries, and vendors in marketplaces.

In 1997, a farm-to-market road was built from funds coming from the municipal government of Kabayan, a former congressman, the provincial government, and calamity funds. This triggered a wave of changes to the uses of time and space in Tawangan. It then became possible for four-wheel drive vehicles, especially privately-owned jeeps and trucks, to reach the village. Many more Kalanguya converted swidden fields planted with ubi into vegetable gardens. Some wet rice terraces in the central area of Tawangan are

also occasionally drained in order to be planted with vegetables, although the families that own them keep the option of converting them back to rice paddies. Portions of the mossy oak forest in the upper reaches of Mt. Pulag have also been affected by the sweep of commercial cropping, with forest lands being cleared up until the present for new ubi fields and vegetable gardens. At the time of my fieldwork, majority of Tawangan's households were gardening on their own land, or working in other people's gardens. The few who could not yet afford it aspired to begin gardening in the near future.

This explosion of commercial gardening was initially financed by Kalanguya, Ibaloy, and Kankana-ey elite residing in the more affluent barangays of Kabayan, or in La Trinidad, and Baguio City. An elite-financed transformation of the Tawangan landscape and people's practised approaches to time ensued. These elite indigenous persons stood as capitalists to start the production, providing money, inputs, equipment, and transportation. Tawangan Kalanguya worked on their own land. Profits from the harvest were divided according to prior agreements between the gardeners and the financiers, ranging from equal shares to 60-40 or even 70-30 with the larger chunk usually going to the gardener who provides the land and the labor. Locals call this arrangement 'supply'. Nowadays, a few Tawangan residents are able to finance themselves and stand as 'suppliers' or capitalists as well in arrangements made with other local farmers.

The lucrative image of vegetable gardening is questionable. The capital to plant a crop of carrots, for example, in a one-hectare garden may reach up to 8,000 Philippine pesos.<sup>14</sup> This capital is spent on seeds and inputs such as chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. The most commonly used fertilizer is dried chicken manure. The expected harvest for a hectare would be 4,000kg. of carrots. If there is no glut in the market and the price of carrots is good at the time of harvest, farmers and their suppliers can get a gross income of PhP. 80,000 from one crop. When prices are as low as five pesos a kilogram, then the gross income is a meager PhP. 20,000. This means that in a three-month cycle beginning with field preparation and ending with harvest and sales, earnings could range from PhP. 12,000 to 72,000 net. It can be roughly estimated that given at least one successful crop each quarter, a household with a hectare of land devoted to commercial crops and that provides its own capital may earn PhP. 288,000, or €4,570 a year.

These earnings are spent on a household's daily food, clothing, medicines, schooling for children and younger relatives who are in university. Part of the money also goes towards the maintenance of vehicles for transporting the produce and pipelines from water sources. Gardeners are prone to going bankrupt due to crop failure or low market prices. The common response to this occurrence is to gamble another round of expenses or loans on another crop of vegetables in the hopes of regaining losses. They may opt to borrow money from wealthier kin, or to avail again of the informal 'supply' arrangement described above. This enmeshes them within a sticky web of occasional windfalls, bankruptcy, and debt. Vegetable gardening remains the only viable source of income available to Kalanguya who choose to remain in Tawangan, and they consider the income they earn to outweigh the risks and losses.

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<sup>14</sup> The figures presented here are based on fieldwork conducted in 2004 and 2005. These fluctuate quite frequently depending on factors such as inflation, and increases in fuel prices in the Philippines.

In a paper on vegetable gardeners in Sagada, Mountain Province, Villia Jefremovas points out that the rates of success and relative independence of gardeners in the Philippine Cordillera will depend on '[f]actors such as social structure, cultural values, communal rights and obligations, and the extent to which status hierarchy conditions social relations...' (1997: 10). In turn, the existence of these structures would be contingent upon whether a farming community was an agricultural society prior to commercial cropping, or established through migration. In cash-cropping, the Kalanguya continue to rely on assistance from traditional institutions such as kailian, and labor-exchange practices such as ubbo and dang-ah.

The kailian is a cooperative group that is 'like a neighborhood association', as it was explained to me. Its origins are nebulous but I will attempt here to explain its emergent praxis in the context of Kalanguya commercial cropping. As mentioned earlier, the root word of kailian is *ili*, which translates broadly in various Cordilleran languages as village, hamlet, or settlement. Kailian is a word referring to co-villagers, or fellow settlers of a place. In the early days of the settling of Tawangan, there were four such groups: Balakawan, Nangabulan, Daklanto, and Kanawalan.<sup>15</sup> Aside from being the names of kailian groups, these are also names for specific locations within what is now known as Tawangan. This indicates that kailian is place-based. The originators of these four kailian groups were four siblings. The four originators were considered elite in the community for having held *padit*, a series of redistributive feasts in which the status of the *padit*-giver increases in direct relation to the number of feasts held and the number of animals butchered each time. Each successive ritual calls for a greater number of slaughtered animals to be fed to kin and community. Meat parcels or live animals are distributed to kin in portions corresponding to consanguineal ties. This suggests that the kailian group is also kin-based.

The present members of respective kailian groups do not live in one location, or in proximity with one another. It is likely that people have moved from the points of origin of the four known groups because they convert former swidden fields in distant locations into vegetable gardens. They are still considered kailian, provided they do their part in the reciprocity that is entailed in being kailian and contribute to peaceful relations within the cooperative group. Given the decline of the defining ritual of kailian groups and kailian leadership, and the physical distance between member-households, this cooperative group is invisible as a day-to-day entity in the lives of Tawangan Kalanguya. However, it continues to exist as an affordance in the environment that can be activated at different times and as the need arises; for the kailian as a cooperative group becomes visible when one of its members is in need of assistance.

When a person needs assistance in completing or quickening a difficult task such as carrying timber for a house from the pine forests, or even setting the foundation for building a new house, then this person can call for a *dang-ah*. In the *dang-ah*, the person's kailian gather together to assist in the task at hand. Usually, the size of the group and their collective labor makes it possible to complete the task in one day. Thus, the *dang-ah* is reserved for tasks that can be completed in a day by a large group of people

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<sup>15</sup> Kanawalan is now considered to be part of the neighboring barangay of Lusod, also settled by Kalanguya.

working together. In exchange for the help, the person who called his/her kailian must feed the assembled laborers for the day with rice and meat, and also provide them with tapey, or rice beer.

Certain rules apply in the dang-ah. A person cannot respond to a call for dang-ah if he/she is not kailian. This is because without the relationship of kailian there is no obligation to reciprocate either the labor or the food. It is this principle of reciprocity that makes the dang-ah effective and the kailian a cohesive group. Also, individuals must not call for a dang-ah often, and take too much of other people's time from their own work or concerns. In fact, it is considered good practice to wait until one or two other kailian have called for dang-ah before considering to hold a second one in a year. If one is constantly absent from other people's dang-ah, social sanctions will come in the form of people refusing to attend the transgressor's dang-ah, and ultimately, the elders may ask such a delinquent kailian to shift his/her membership to one of the other cooperative groups existing in Tawangan. This shows that for the Kalanguya, social cohesion and the maintenance of good relations among community members is of utmost importance, and this is evident in the continuing practice of the dang-ah.

In commercial vegetable gardening the tradition of the kailian group continues to be recognized and harnessed by the Tawangan Kalanguya as a source of labour-exchange. The dang-ah is sometimes called for when people need help in directing water from a distant source to their garden. Further to this, the kailian group is also a source of the people's social security and sense of belonging. The praxis of kailian has embedded within it the concept of membership and belonging. Kailian members, "must abide by certain obligations and exercise certain rights. Generally, citizens who migrate outside the community are still considered as members of the village and have certain rights to exploit common property resources" (Prill-Brett 2001: 7). Thus, the kailian as a cooperative group is an example of an elastic and permeable social boundary that connects people even as it separates them from others.

Salda and obbo are further examples of traditional forms of social support that continue to be practised in Tawangan today. In the context of gardening, salda is an arrangement in which a plot of land is used as collateral for a loan. In the context of commercial gardening, the owner of a piece of land who is in need of cash pawns his/her lot to a gardener. The gardener gives the lot owner an agreed-upon amount of cash. The gardener then has the right to till the land and keep all the profits from it, until such time that the owner of the lot redeems the land by returning the full amount of cash that was given at the beginning of the transaction. About three generations ago, salda exchanges were done for pigs, blankets, or tapey jars. It is important to note that salda is initiated in the context of the immediate need of the owner of the plot of land, who gives his lot as collateral for cash. It is not entered into by a gardener for the purpose of renting a plot of land with a one-time payment. Obbo is a one-to-one exchange of labor and time. For instance, if one works in a neighbor's garden harvesting today, then that neighbor would reciprocate with one day of harvesting in the other's garden.

In other parts of the Cordillera traditional institutions and rituals have persisted despite predictions of their decline alongside the peoples' increasing participation in the cash economy. For instance, Lewis (1992) shows that in Buguias, Benguet successful vegetable farmers stage increasingly costly rituals meant to please the ancestors as well as raise the status of the feast-giver. In Sagada, Villia Jefremovas (2007) asserts that innovation is a tradition in itself, and that community rituals persist in spite of predictions

of their demise that were made in the 1950's. From the time of my fieldwork, it remains to be seen whether the kailian group, the dang-ah, obbo, and salda will continue to be a key part of the Tawangan environment.<sup>16</sup> The Tawangan Kalanguya assert that they want these ugalli (traditions) to continue into the future. "They are important to our unity." The persistence of institutions such as these show how certain traditions do not fade away when intertwined with new forms of income and a deeper entrenchment in the global cash economy.

Vegetable gardening is labor-intensive, especially for those households that have planted lots larger than one hectare. In Tawangan it is almost entirely done manually. There are no tractors or any machinery employed in the day-to-day work of gardening.<sup>17</sup> It takes up to 10 hours of an adult's daylight hours, regardless of the weather. The gardens in Tawangan are not sheltered in greenhouses but are open and exposed to the elements and to pests. The only times they do not tend to their gardens are on Sundays, which are days of worship, and on days when the force of typhoon winds and rains makes it dangerous to be out. When speaking of the time they spend working in their vegetable gardens, the Kalanguya often contrasted this with the way swidden fields dominated their landscape, but not their waking hours. This contrast was rarely expressed as 'then' and 'now' or past and present, because for many, swiddening continues to be practised today, alongside commercial gardening. In gardening, workdays are generally felt as being longer, with men and women heading for their fields at first light, and returning home just as darkness begins to fall. The most labor-intensive parts of the vegetable cycle are the field preparations, planting, and harvesting. However, regular maintenance can also be taxing as this includes manually weeding the fields and maintaining water lines – hoses that stretch from the gardens to springs two to three kilometers away.

The temporality of commercial vegetable gardens decontextualizes crops from seasons. Commercial vegetables can be planted at any time of year, regardless of the season. Crops can be harvested within three to four months of planting, under a regimen of pesticides and fertilizers. The growing demand for top-quality vegetables has increased the reliance of farmers throughout the province of Benguet on these chemical inputs (Cheng & Bersamira 1994: 50 - 59). However, the rise of commercial gardening has not meant that the agricultural timescape of the Tawangan Kalanguya are completely aseasonal. In the rainy months, from June to as late as October, they have to contend with the possibility of their gardens being destroyed by typhoons, or the roads being washed out and closed for days. From November to May there is considerably less rainfall, and so there is less water for the gardens. Trips into the forest for hunting or to gather wild fruits, medicinal plants, and firewood in different seasons have declined. This is explained by them as a lack of need, rather than a lack of time. When their cash income allows, they purchase the commodities they need as part of their everyday life.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 4 of this dissertation for a discussion on similar forms of exchanges of labor practices by the Ngaju Dayak in Baun Bango.

<sup>17</sup> The only time heavy machinery is used is when bulldozers are brought in to clear and level forested land for new gardens. Later on in this chapter I discuss the presence of bulldozers in the national park.

<sup>18</sup> In Sagada, Mt. Province the purchasing power of local vegetable gardeners has translated into a significant drop in the people's dependence on forest products such as firewood, which has now been replaced by gas. In this respect, the cash economy has helped the preservation of Sagada's forests. However, there were also early

This new purchasing power comes with a heavy reliance on pesticides and chemical fertilizers. In a timescape perspective in which both the past and the future are implicit in the present (Adam 1998: 131), the costs of this form of agricultural production can be weighed against its benefits. Water and soil may become contaminated with an accumulation of non-biodegradable chemicals and other industrial pollutants. There may be a loss of clean drinking water. Soil may undergo erosion, desertification, and degradation. There is a very real threat of toxification and the consequent loss of the nutrient base for food. Furthermore, pests will gain increased resistance to chemical pesticides and plants and animals will become more vulnerable to disease due to reduction in genetic and species diversity (Adam 1998: 147 – 148; Cheng and Bersamira 1994: 13 – 19).

In the first study of its kind to be conducted in Benguet, Cheng and Bersamira (1994) show a disturbing correlation between daily handling of pesticides and ill health among 2000 farmers, 500 of which were women. Dr. Cheng found a high incidence of stomach cancer. They also reported that women who had been handling pesticides for more than ten years had two or three miscarriages (*ibid.*, pp. 77 – 84). Women who were directly exposed to pesticides until the last month of pregnancy bore children with congenital defects (*ibid.*). Aware of these health hazards, the Tawangan Kalanguya keep a separate, pesticide-free plot where they plant vegetables for their own consumption. In most instances however, this plot is contiguous with the chemically-loaded gardens and cannot be said to be risk-free. This is an area for further scientific study that would be highly relevant to the future of the Kalanguya and for farming communities across the Philippine Cordillera.

The government programs that push for speedier production rates, modernized agriculture, and higher profits do not seem to take the risks and hazards of chemically-aided commercial cropping into account. They conceive of commercial gardening as an economic activity, not an environmental one. This sleight of hand is only possible from a perspective that separates nature from culture, and conceives of the latter as not having any effect on the former. However, from a timescape and landscape perspective it is apparent that all human activities seep into the environment, just as the environment makes indelible marks on human life. Adam asserts that ‘every in/action counts and is non-retractable’ (1998: 56). The use of chemicals to boost productivity and effectively kill pests decontextualizes commercial gardening from the temporal aspects of the environment such as seasonal variation, changing soil conditions, and hazards that are unbounded in time and space (Adam 1998: 140). Monetary concerns take the limelight and the environmental and health hazards brought about by the daily use of toxic chemicals seem to disappear from sight.

In commercial gardening, profit depends on the capacity of the gardeners and their environment to produce more crops in less time. However, the Tawangan Kalanguya commit themselves to yet another practiced approach to time, another timescape. They

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community-led decisions to leave certain forested areas untouched. (Villia Jefremovas, personal communication)

continue to maintain swidden fields dedicated to ubi. The ubi fields in Tawangan make up a different timescape from the vegetable gardens, although they co-exist.

#### Timescapes of sweet potato swiddens

The *inum'an* or swidden fields of the Tawangan Kalanguya are, by all accounts, a testimony to the way of life of their ancestors. Tawangan elders remember a time when they often moved residence with their parents. According to the elders' accounts, this was because the Kalanguya were constantly in search of a place where their pigs could thrive. The health and growth of the pigs was a gauge of whether a place was suitable for living or not. The pigs roamed freely and were called in at feeding time. If the pigs were not doing well, they would leave a swidden and find a better area where another swidden could be started. If a sow gave birth in one place, then they would stay for a longer period. Ubi and pigs were two valuable forms of currency that the Kalanguya had, and it was the women who were principally responsible for both.

Pigs were important for rituals such as the *padit*. The other main purpose of the pigs was trade. People came to trade with the Tawangan Kalanguya from Kabayan, Buguias, Guinsadan, and from the neighboring province of Ifugao. They brought hand-woven cloth and blankets, which were valued among the Kalanguya who made and wore bark cloth up until the early 1900's. They also traded cooking pots, axes, and rice for the pigs. Indeed, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Dominican friars took note of 'an Igorot trade route across the Cordillera – Bayombong, Ituy, Tinok, Buguias, Tanulong, Kayan, Tagudin and Bangar...' (Scott 1974: 7), matching the accounts of the Kalanguya elders on the people they traded with and the places the traders came from. The Kalanguyas also traveled far to trade their pigs and chickens for different produce. One of the elders recalls how, in his childhood, he and his parents once shared the struggle of coaxing a stubborn pig along the trail on a three day walk to Baguio, to trade the animal for salt and other amenities in the marketplace. Nowadays, it is the vegetable trucks plying the route between Tawangan and La Trinidad that bring home salt, sugar, and other commodities.

The Kalanguya also traded *bakkol*, sun-dried ubi that has been pounded into a fine powder. In this dry form, it can be stored for months without spoiling. One method of cooking *bakkol* is to wrap some in a banana or gabi leaf and boil or steam this package. Ibaloy from Kabayan recount that for them, *bakkol* was a famine food. They would walk from Kabayan to Tawangan, Lusod, and sometimes Tinoc to trade their belongings or livestock for *bakkol* when their rice crops failed. For the Kalanguya on the other hand, the root crop in its different forms was a staple food. Its peel could be fed to chickens, dogs, and pigs alike.

Ubi and the *inum'an* of the Tawangan Kalanguya are viewed with ambivalence by their neighbors, the Ibaloy and the Kankanaey. These two indigenous groups reserve for themselves the prestige of wet rice agriculture. Ibaloy were proud of their status as wet-rice cultivators, and to them the Kalanguya were merely swiddeners (Afable 1989: 166). Some Ibaloy elders go as far as to say that the Kalanguya aspired to wet rice agriculture when they saw how the Ibaloy did it, but they never succeeded in equalling Ibaloy skill and wealth. Until this day, the Kalanguya are often depicted by some of their neighbors as a group that "lived in the forest", "wore only bark cloth", "spoke funny," and "ate only ubi". These descriptions however discount the advantage the Kalanguya of Tawangan had over their neighbors. Despite their perceived poverty the elders of Tawangan do not recall ever having times of famine or hunger. There was always ubi.

Once a Kankanaey woman visiting in-laws and friends in Tawangan asked my host-family, 'Are you converting all your *inum'an* to gardens?'. Their answer was noncommittal. She urged them to keep their swidden fields, 'So that you will still have something to eat, even if you sometimes get bankrupt.' In Ballay where she lives, she said, they had all given up planting ubi a long time ago, and today this is sometimes cause for regret.

Today the work of swiddening continues to move with the seasons. March is one of the driest months of the year, and thus it is the preferred time for clearing and burning forested areas for swidden fields. The selected area is first cleared of shrubbery and medium-sized trees. This work is usually done by men. They wait a few days for the cut shrubbery and trees to dry and then they set fire to the dried brush. In April or May, when the regular rains are just beginning, the first set of ubi is planted by the women. The women have a specialized knowledge of ubi. In Tawangan there are at least 11 varieties kept and propagated by the women and they recognize each by its color, size, and shape.

It takes four to five months before the ubi is ready for harvesting. At around September, the women plant another batch of camote, and again before the end of the year. One household could be maintaining several *uma* with ubi in different stages of growth at one time. Unlike in gardening, there is no need to work in the *inum'an* on a daily basis. Usually the women go to the *inum'an* when the household needs ubi for meals, or for a short visit to cut some of the ubi vine to feed to their pigs. One field can yield ubi for three to five years. Traditionally, an old field, called *kinnaba*, would be left fallow for at least 20 years before it would be cleared and burned for planting once more. This length of fallow time eventually receded to seven or eight years. *Kinnaba* that have been converted into vegetable gardens fall out of the timescape of swiddening and no longer have fallow periods. They become part of the now dominant timescape of gardening.

The question remains as to whether the Tawangan Kalanguya will take heed of the urgings of the woman from Ballay, and maintain their ubi-centered timescapes well into the future. Clearly, the success of some farmers in vegetable gardening provides the impetus for many to follow suit. At the time of my fieldwork, more and more Tawangan Kalanguya were clearing forestland for vegetable gardens. This will take its toll as they steadily cut into their watershed, higher up the slopes of Mt. Pulag. The farmers of Ballay who have done well for themselves in commercial cropping have to find their water sources farther and farther from their homes and gardens because they have completely cleared the watershed in their area. Observing this trend in Nueva Vizcaya, Resurreccion (1998: 118) declares that swidden farming is now relegated to the 'agricultural backwaters' of the Kalanguya.

However, the involvement of the women I interviewed in maintaining *inum'an* show that the increase of vegetable gardens is not accompanied by a sharp decline in swidden farming in Tawangan. It barely serves as a source of income<sup>19</sup> but the *inum'an* continues to hold an important place in the work and sustenance of households and their pigs. Since swidden fields do not require daily attention or long hours of work, women can take on

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<sup>19</sup> This may change if the Tawangan Multi-Purpose Cooperative is successful in its efforts to bake and market cookies made with *bakkol*.



other activities. Women who do not have small children usually work in the vegetable gardens alongside their husbands and other menfolk.<sup>20</sup> It will be interesting to see whether the combination of these two different temporal practices and ways of shaping the environment will continue side by side, or whether one will eventually erase traces of the other. Kalanguya women have always been bearers of their culture and identity, as it is mainly their labor that has produced and maintained the ubi and pigs that supported their rituals and now their livelihoods as well (Resurreccion 1998: 124). From a timescape and landscape perspective, Kalanguya women will play a pivotal role in either the demise of swiddens as a food safety net, or the continuing, simultaneous growth of both swiddening and gardening timescapes.

#### Other sources of livelihood

There are other sources of income to which the Tawangan Kalanguya devote their time. Outside the bounds of Tawangan, some Kalanguya women have found work as domestic helpers in urban centers in the Cordillera as well as abroad. Some families based in Tawangan receive remittances from their overseas relatives, which they invest in gardens and the education of children.<sup>21</sup> A few men also work as casual laborers on the farms of distant relatives in Buguias or Kabayan Central. Within the bounds of Tawangan, a few households have taken advantage of the growing demand for commodities and have set up their own small stores or trading businesses. They pay the drivers or owners of the vegetable trucks and jeeps to come back with a load of goods to sell in the stores. One relatively wealthy household possesses some cattle and pasture lands. The livestock is usually sold or traded in the nearby municipal center of Tinoc, Ifugao. Another source of income available in Tawangan is casual labor in other people's gardens, paid on a day-to-day basis. They refer to this as *poldia*; possibly originating from the Spanish for 'per day'.

One source of income in Tawangan that is actively condemned by the government is tree poaching. Unlike logging, which takes place on a large scale, tree poaching involves the cutting of a small stand of pine trees (up to around 10 trees) to be sold as lumber outside of Tawangan. All Tawangan *kailian* have right of access to timber or firewood sourced from the pine forests within the bounds of the settlement. However, the government sanctions the removal of timber for commercial purposes, especially if it is to be sold outside the bounds of Tawangan. Farmers confided in me that they resort to tree poaching when crops fail and they have debts to pay.

Finally, a handful of Tawangan Kalanguya earn small honoraria as elected local government officials. It is their responsibility to generate timescapes of governance in their area. Sometimes they get caught in the dissonance between government perspectives on how things should be done, and the realities of how goals are attained in Tawangan. In the following discussions I show instances in which the ongoing generation of landscapes and timescapes are intertwined with people's interactions with, and perceptions of environmentality.

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<sup>20</sup> Among the Kalanguya, men also share in the task of looking after the children.

<sup>21</sup> For an interesting look at remittances and change in other parts of the Cordillera, see McKay (2003).

## Conflicted Positionalities in the Nature-Culture Imaginaire

The Tawangan Kalanguya hold a conflicted view of the government as the key to development on the one hand, and as an impediment to it on the other. In this section I examine how environmental protection and development become opposed to one another in Tawangan landscapes. As we shall see, this view arises from the interactions of the Tawangan Kalanguya with representatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the Department of Agrarian Reform, and other local government officials and politicians. The dualistic view of governmental assistance on the one hand, and imposition of environmental regulations on the other is further bolstered by the ways in which the Tawangan Kalanguya experience their positionality as a marginalized community, and how they try to be something other than ‘left behind’.



Photo 2.3: Joseph Molitas, former barangay captain of Tawangan, looks across Lake Ambulalakaw, which is considered by the Department on Environment and Natural Resources to be a threatened section of the Mt. Pulag National Park.

### Bulldozers in the national park

The ways in which the Tawangan Kalanguya re-shape their landscape calls into question the persistent vision of indigenous peoples as stewards of nature. One clear example is their utilization of bulldozers. Bulldozers are used to make the mountainous terrain of Tawangan suitable for vegetable gardens, by clearing and levelling hilly areas. Once a large rock became dislodged from a hill and struck a bulldozer that was being used to build a small road to gardens located directly below the central sitio of Tawangan. The bulldozer operator and the farmers could not get the bulldozer to work the rest of the day. What would have been an ordinary mishap or breakdown requiring the attention of a mechanic turned into a matter for the attention of the mabaki, a traditional Kalanguya

ritual specialist. That evening, people said that they saw a dog shifting from black to white following one of the village men as he walked home from the road site at dusk. That same night, the operator of the bulldozer dreamed of little people asking him why he was destroying their home. Taking note of the dog and the dreams, the mabaki advised the people involved in the roadwork to bring two chickens, tapuy or rice beer, clothes and some money to the road site. He then ritually sacrificed the chickens and prayed, roughly translated: "Please move to a new home. This is government work for vehicles to pass, so please move. Here is money as payment, here is tapuy, and here are clothes for you." The next day, the bulldozer was successfully repaired and the work continued anew, now with the legitimacy accorded to it by the ritual. Who could stop the bulldozer when even the spirits acquiesced to step aside for it? In this particular instance, the Department on Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) did not and could not intervene, primarily because they have no presence in the barangay. The headquarters of the Protected Area Superintendent and the forest rangers are located in Bokod, a good day's walk from Tawangan.

In one other instance involving a bulldozer, forest rangers threatened to set fire to one that they found in another village in the Mt. Pulag National Park. Local residents dared the officers to burn the village people first. The latter incident has taken on the proportions of a local legend. It is oft-repeated by officials of the DENR as an example of how "indigenous peoples themselves are destroying the forests, when they are supposed to be protecting them." For these government officials the bulldozer is a tool of environmental destruction, illegally present in the national park. Residents living in the vicinity of Mt. Pulag tell this story as an example of how far they are willing to go in the defense of their main source of income. For them, the bulldozer is a tool for transforming landscapes and expanding a way of life. On the other hand, environmentalists see the use of the bulldozer inside the national park as an indication that the indigenous peoples of Mt. Pulag have fallen from environmental grace.

As I mentioned earlier, the entire settlement of Tawangan lies within the boundaries of the Mt. Pulag National Park. The DENR, its Bureau of Forestry, and the Protected Areas and Wildlife Service are the government agencies responsible for the policing of the park. A Protected Areas Management Board, composed of local government officials, barangay representatives, and 'tribal representatives' is mandated to create policies for the park.<sup>22</sup> In spite of this, indigenous peoples affected by the park's regulations, namely the Kalanguya, Ibaloy, and Kankana-ey, have a strong sense of entitlement that is matched with a discourse along the lines of: 'We have been protecting these forests even before they came with the park boundaries. How can they tell us that we can no longer do what we want with our land?'<sup>23</sup> This shows that indigenous peoples themselves are making use of the idea of environmental stewardship as a primary indigenous occupation. The image of the noble green savage, static though it may be, lives on because it is an

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<sup>22</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the Protected Areas Management Board and how it functions, see related sections of Chapters 3 and 7, this dissertation.

<sup>23</sup> Even members of the Protected Areas Management Board have aired this grievance, which points to a conflicted positionality among supposed environmental subjects. Their positionality is such that they are officers responsible for the creation of regulations and enforcement, but they are also indigenous residents and farmers.

affordance that indigenous peoples can make use of in their negotiations and relationships with agents of environmentalism. Whether this discourse forms a substantive part of daily practice and their way of life is something that needs to be investigated.<sup>24</sup>

While I align myself with the anti-essentialist literature that aims to dispell the static vision of the noble green savage (Ellen & Harris 2000, Croll & Parkin 1992), I would also like to point out that the arguments of the Kabayan Ibaloy, Kankana-ey, and Kalanguyas against the national park are well-founded. The park rules and boundaries are spoken of as an insult to the prior rights and occupation of the Tawangan Kalanguya, and of the Kabayan Ibaloy and Kankana-ey. In their eyes, it is unjust that a law such as the National Integrated and Protected Areas System is imposed upon them. While the law recognizes the primary occupation of indigenous peoples in protected areas, it does so with the clause that they should be living as ecological stewards and that their livelihoods should be for subsistence only. The Tawangan Kalanguya have been working the landscape not just for subsistence but also for trade since “time immemorial”. The establishment of the national park produced a situation in which, by “simply doing what they had always done, villagers committed acts that had become illegal” (Agrawal 2005: 5). This situation was often described to me by the Tawangan Kalanguya and their Ibaloy and Kankana-ey neighbors as unjust governance on the part of the DENR. One elder expressed this feeling in an interview by saying that the DENR “only tells us we’re not allowed without coming here to see how we do things.”

Here we have two conflicting perspectives on and attitudes towards government and their representatives. On the one hand, there is the negative perception that the government, as represented by the officials of the DENR do not understand that the people living in the park need to expand their farms. This is unjust governance that is viewed as an impediment to desired development. On the other hand, when the mabaki prayed to the spirits to allow the road building to continue, he called it “government work”. In fact, it was not a government project. The bulldozer had been rented by a group of farmers who pooled their money together to pay for its use and for the labor of the operator. However, the mabaki’s statement must have stemmed from the fact that bulldozers had been brought into the area before, through the intercession of influential Ibaloy politicians. Furthermore, the road to Tawangan was built through the efforts of municipal and provincial government units<sup>25</sup> and the general perception is that roads are built by governments. The Tawangan Kalanguya view roads and other forms of infrastructure as evidence of good governance, and as indications that ‘the government cares’. This may be just, but it is not necessarily lawful or licit governance. Politicians couch the aid they extend to indigenous communities in the rhetoric of “they have been living there for centuries and yet they still don’t have basic services, so we do our best.”

This is how livelihood needs become a trivializing argument against environmental conservation. The presence of bulldozers, not only in Tawangan, but also in other barangays within the park, has come to symbolize both the promise of progress and the

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<sup>24</sup> For an example of an approach to indigenous claims to environmental stewardship and how this forms part of daily practice and sociality, see Cepek 2008.

<sup>25</sup> For a detailed look into the legal complexities of government-built roads inside the national park, see Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

threat of destruction. The bulldozers are used to clear and level land for vegetable gardens. They are also used to open roads that serve as arteries leading from vegetable gardens to main roads. This makes it easier to load vegetables (5,000 to 10,000 kg at a time, depending on the size of the garden and the available trucks or jeeps) unto transportation headed for lowland markets. In times when roads have been blocked or destroyed by typhoon-caused landslides, the bulldozers have also proven useful to local people in re-opening the roads as quickly as possible. In the absence of bulldozers or skilled operators, people have had to rely on their own manual labor to open roads and rebuild collapsed portions. For the indigenous farmers, the roads represent a decrease in labor inputs, expenses, and damage risks for transporting harvests to markets. The roads also provide access to basic services, hospitals, and medicine. To indigenous people living and working in the ili, the bulldozers are clearly useful tools. For the DENR, the roads (and bulldozers) pose a serious threat to biodiversity conservation. "Time is running out. We are losing forest lands as we speak," they often repeat.

This conflicted green positionality, in which indigenous peoples reproduce ideas of ecological stewardship and at the same time resent government attempts to enforce that idea, can be expected to continue. The conflicted green positionality arises from the face-to-face interactions between locals and representatives of the state. These interactions open up time and space for negotiations in which no less than the continuation of daily life is at stake for indigenous farmers. The actors representing the state, who wield the power of delivering or denying the basic services so desired by the indigenous peoples also have something at stake in these negotiations. As one indigenous politician remarked, "Trees don't vote, but farmers do."

#### Tongtong and security of tenure

The Tawangan Kalanguya have endured a history of insecurity of tenure in their own lands.<sup>26</sup> In their ongoing attempts to counter this, they take advantage of several, overlapping land tenure instruments at once. These land tenure instruments, namely the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC), and the Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) have been made available to them through the implementation of two government line agencies' programs.

When the road reached Tawangan, the Kalanguya living there anticipated increased opportunities for income. They were also banking their hopes on the potential commercial value of their land. There was a sudden upsurge in conflict over land; so much so that in the memories of young Tawangan Kalanguya, their fathers did nothing but attend tongtong at the time. Tongtong is the public settlement of disputes presided over by respected village elders. This practice is widely spread throughout the Cordillera. Usually the offended side approaches the elders to ask them to mediate. The tongtong takes place in the house of the one who requested for the hearing. Any one who wishes to attend and speak is welcome to do so. Based on their knowledge of genealogies, inheritance, and through their skills in negotiation, the elders guide the opposing parties toward a compromise on the boundaries between parcels of land. Agreements are usually

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<sup>26</sup> For a brief discussion and further references on this history for indigenous peoples in the Philippines, see Chapter 7.

sealed with the offering of chickens or a pig, and the drinking of rice beer, or tapuy. The party that requested for the tongtong is obliged to feed all who attend.

Afable (1989: 103) points out that the tongtong is a source of pride and identity, because it is an example of a Cordilleran custom that is often chosen over externally-imposed judicial processes in conflict resolution. However, nowadays it is difficult to draw a clear line between external judicial process originating from the state apparatus and traditional tongtong. Elders also hold positions as elected or appointed barangay officials and manage local conflict in this capacity. Tongtong are sealed with a written and signed document that is filed with other official barangay documents. Owners of farm or house lots or idle land would pay tax declarations to the municipal government to further bolster claims and settlements that had been established at the village level.

Now the payment of tax declarations has stopped in Tawangan, because the residents are holders of a 'mother Certificate of Land Ownership Award' (CLOA) from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). This exempts them from having to pay land taxes. In the issuance of the mother CLOA, residents identified the agricultural lands within Tawangan. These lands were surveyed and put together as one block, and all the farmers whose lands were encompassed by this block were listed as owners in the mother CLOA. The Tawangan Kalanguya are hopeful that in the future, the mother CLOA will be broken up into individual certificates of land ownership.<sup>27</sup> An individually held CLOA can be used as collateral for loans, but it cannot be sold.

Similarly, in the event that a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) is awarded to the municipality of Kabayan, the Tawangan Kalanguya as well as the Kankana-ey and Ibaloy farmers of Kabayan would like to see it divided into individual Certificates of Ancestral Land Titles (CALT). Unlike the CLOA, titles for ancestral domains and ancestral lands cannot be used as collateral for loans. They are also inalienable and cannot be sold outside of the indigenous community. As I mentioned earlier, at the time of fieldwork Tawangan was caught in a tug-of-war between the ancestral domain claims of Kabayan and Tinoc. Since Tinoc is directly adjacent to Tawangan, and is settled by Kalanguya that have kinship ties stretching across generations with the Tawangan Kalanguya, it would appear to make more sense for Tawangan to be part of this ancestral domain. However, the Tawangan Kalanguya themselves refuse. They choose to be part of the Kabayan ancestral domain claim even if it is dominated by their Ibaloy neighbors. They feel that the municipal government of Kabayan had done much to improve their quality of life, while Tinoc had done nothing. Furthermore, elected government officials in Kabayan have expressed the fear that should the territory of Tawangan be ceded to Tinoc, Kabayan will have a lot to lose in internal revenue allotments. This concern was echoed by barangay officials in Tawangan.

In this case, political alliances and the importance of basic services has taken precedence over ethnic alliances and even kinship. This has not happened as a result of the machinations of an indigenous elite alone. Indeed, if the educated Kalanguya elite residing in Baguio and La Trinidad could have their way, Tawangan would be a part of

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<sup>27</sup> Technically, Tawangan does not qualify as an Agrarian Reform Barangay. For an explanation of the confluence of politics, negotiations, and agreements that made the mother CLOA possible, see Chapter 3.

Tinoc as this would bring them closer to their dream of a unified Kalanguya territory.<sup>28</sup> Remaining within the ancestral territory of Kabayan was a choice made by Tawangan farmers because of the benefits they have received from Kabayan – such as the road – despite their being a minority therein. Nevertheless, they lament the divisions and conflict this has created within families.

Both the mother CLOA and the CADT are viewed by the people as an effective negation of their inclusion in the Mt. Pulag National Park and their being subject to the rules and regulations of the National Integrated Protected Areas System. Furthermore, the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act is spoken of as a long overdue recognition of their prior rights. Together, the CLOA and the promise of the CADT signify the inclusion of the Tawangan Kalanguya in processes of national government. However, they do not create green positionalities – the objective of the DENR in the protected area and the IPRA – for the Tawangan Kalanguya. On the contrary, they reinforce the view of environmental conservation as a barrier to local development.

The IPRA asserts that the right to an ancestral domain is accompanied by the responsibility of developing it sustainably and protecting the environment. This law encapsulates the nature-culture imaginaire as it is described by Zerner, bringing together social justice and green visions among indigenous populations in the Philippines (2003). However, in their information campaigns, representatives of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples in Benguet push the right to control resources as incentives to people to apply for ancestral domain or land titles. There is little mention of the responsibility or the possible benefits of environmental protection. Thus, while the IPRA may have the legal basis for the making of green positionalities among indigenous peoples, the focus of implementation is more on the right of indigenous control over natural resources and not on the attached responsibility of sustainable development. Certain advocates and analysts equate this imposition of sustainable development on less-privileged societies as a form of green imperialism.<sup>29</sup> However in this case, it may in fact be a wise provision, given the potential hazards of the Kalanguya's favored form of commercial livelihood – vegetable gardening. As was discussed above, these hazards remain hidden in the perspective of economic development, but become visible to us when we think in terms of timescapes.

At the time of writing, the prevailing sentiment of the Tawangan Kalanguya towards the regulation of garden expansion was frustration and quiet resistance. Notably, Agrawal points out that in the case of Kumaon's forest councils, the "legitimacy of the [regulatory] regime derives not from collective visions of dazzling projects of sustainable development and large profits but from the tempting promise that if villagers restrain their current consumption levels their needs will be met indefinitely" (Agrawal 2005: 160). Arriving at a similar understanding may be difficult in Tawangan however, for what is at stake is not simply people's consumption of forest products such as firewood, but their transformation of the forests into income-generating landscapes of vegetable gardens. What is being risked is not merely the loss of biological diversity and the

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<sup>28</sup> This is discussed at greater length in Chapter 3.

<sup>29</sup> Though the term 'green imperialism' appears in many forms in the literature, it's most noted use is in Grove, R. (1995).

destruction of ecosystems; these are problems of a conceptual 'nature' that is external to people's daily lives. What is at risk is the loss of a vital watershed and the spread of health hazards from the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers in an environment that shapes people and is shaped by people. The fact that the hazards remain invisible and unbounded in time and space make it even more difficult to argue convincingly for alternatives, which remain tantalizingly invisible as well.

In the foregoing discussion I have shown how the nature-culture imaginaire in Tawangan is conflicted for at least two reasons. First, the various government line agencies and local government officials have somehow failed to work together. Each government agency pushes its own agenda, regardless of what others have already accomplished. In instances where there have been efforts to harmonize their policies and work together, collusion and political interests have undermined any possible progress. Secondly, the interactions of government representatives and the Tawangan Kalanguya have created affordances and expectations that also work against each other. 'After all, institutions are as much about expectations about the future as they are about the mechanisms that prompt expectations' (Agrawal 2005: 99). Ironically, in their efforts to gain the sympathy and participation of the Tawangan Kalanguya in the transformation of the environment, they have relied heavily on the promise of security of land tenure and income generation, and not on what Agrawal (2005: 160) so aptly calls "the tempting promise... [that] their needs will be met indefinitely". The Tawangan Kalanguya have taken advantage of the affordances brought about by their interactions with government representatives. In effect, they are hedging their bets and waiting to see who will deliver on their promises first. In the process, the aims of agents of environmentalism to encourage people to orient their thinking and actions towards the protection of the environment, have not been realized.

### **Kalanguya Futures**

Thus far, I have shown how the transformations of Tawangan's timescapes and landscapes are contingent upon both the resident Kalanguya themselves, and their interactions with instruments of the state in the past and present. The impact of these on the emergent changes and relationships in the Tawangan environment-as-work-in-progress remain to be seen. Nevertheless, it could be instructive to take heed of the future as imagined by the Tawangan Kalanguya themselves. They experience change as happening fast, but for some it is not fast enough. In our discussions on what might transpire in the next generation and further beyond, they were both optimistic and pessimistic. They are ambivalent towards the future but do not hesitate to discuss the possibilities.

As mentioned earlier, in the Kalanguya form of inheritance, called *tawid*, parents parcel out land in equal portions to their children. Through the generations, the size of the land that is passed on becomes divided into ever smaller plots among increasing numbers of descendants. The Tawangan Kalanguya fear that 'the land is shrinking' and that in the future, they will no longer be able to give their children land parcels that will sustain their families. However, they say, in the future their grandchildren will have more money, so they can buy land for themselves elsewhere if ever it becomes impossible for them to continue with *tawid*. They were also apprehensive that the conflict of interests with the national park would continue and that, consequently, succeeding generations of Tawangan Kalanguya would not be able to hold land titles. This was spoken of as unjust governance that would continue into the future.





Photo 2.4: Laria Nimo, Dilin Nimo, and Sarsilia Bugtong discussing their views of the future with the researcher.

The possibility of losing land in ancestral domain boundary conflicts was painful for them to consider, for the dividing up of land was experienced not only as a parceling out of the landscape, but also the breaking up of Kalanguya clans into opposing political factions. Those who participated in discussions among politicians and government officials said that people feared that in the future, internal revenue allotments would be based on ancestral domain boundaries, and no longer on municipal boundaries. This is why municipal-level officials are so anxious to secure their jurisdiction and their municipality's revenue allotments by claiming ancestral domains along municipal boundaries. Tawangan Kalanguya expressed a wish for this to stop, but viewed this future darkly for it was infested with the personal interests of politicians, who had a very faint idea – if any at all – of what life was like for the people who lived in the places that they were fighting over. The conflict however, is a peaceful conflict and this peacefulness and the ability to thresh things out without resorting to violence is much valued among the Kalanguya, and they hope that this and the practice of *tongtong* will continue into the future.

Many said that the Tawangan landscape would be dominated by vegetable gardens, and there would be no more stands of pine trees left, as could be seen in some areas along the Halsema Highway. One rather apocalyptic vision of the future came from a Kalanguya man<sup>30</sup> who feared that the Tawangan Kalanguya were endangering themselves by indiscriminately clearing forestland. His fears were based on recent disasters in other

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<sup>30</sup> This man formerly worked for the Department on Environment and Natural Resources as a forest ranger on Mt. Pulag and clearly takes up a green positionality.

parts of the Philippines where entire villages were buried in mudslides or washed away with landslides. He also bases his fear on the story of Nalheb. Nalheb is the name of a portion of Tawangan that collapsed in a landslide, approximately in the early 1900's. When a portion of the mountain came crashing down, it covered the area that is now the central sitio of Tawangan. He wishes that his people could be wiser and maintain more forestland to prevent loss of water and large-scale disasters. He feels however that no one listens to him, in spite of the fact that with time, he may come to be considered a community elder. But the question remains as to whether elders will continue to command respect and hold some power among younger generations of Kalanguya. If things continue apace, he says darkly, something disastrous will happen in Tawangan, and the Kalanguya will finally realize, "It's our own fault." In consonance with his fears, some Kalanguya interviewees said that the forest will have to remain "as is" in order to assure that their water supply will continue. However, they said there would have to be some form of control, and they were not amenable to the tendency of the DENR to tell them what to do from afar.

In spite of their visions of "shrinking land" the Kalanguya were positive that gardening would remain a viable source of income. Another thing which they said was important to maintain into the future was their ugalli, such as the dang-ah, which they describe as a form of bayanihan, referring to the idealistic national culture in which Filipino countrymen help one another. Some also wished that their children would strengthen their faith in God. Another wish was for their children's children to be able to eat three healthy meals a day. In line with this, the barangay healthworker hoped that in the future there would be less sickness and mortality in Tawangan. She spoke of the means to attain this as being a 'clean and green' community, which is a government slogan across the country or a title that is usually awarded to communities with 'beautification' projects such as tree-planting or the planting of ornamental plants around people's homes, and also waste management projects. The concept of 'clean and green' does not extend as far as the use of toxic chemicals in vegetable gardening as this is likely to take a heavy toll on the health of the Tawangan Kalanguya. Adam would argue that this shortsightedness is due to a lack of emphasis on the temporal aspect of our activities in the environment.

One Kalanguya woman said that it was her dream for Tawangan to have its own college, and that it didn't matter to her that it might take many decades before the government builds one there. A government-employed teacher in Tawangan, herself of Kalanguya and Ibaloy descent, remarked that children in Tawangan are deprived educationally because they live in a remote environment. Their ambitions are usually limited to the professions they see, such as teacher or midwife. Few children will say that they want to become farmers because at home they are told that the reason they are in school is so that they won't have to work hard on farms later on. Many parents with small children hoped that in the future their children would become professionals. In the meantime, they said, they would have to work very hard to make this possible. By contrast, young Kalanguya in their teens, and in high school or college, said that should they prove unsuccessful with finding jobs after college, then they would return to Tawangan to work on the land as farmers. In spite of this, their teacher expresses the hope that ten years from now her students will have completed school and will return to Tawangan to apply their professions in their ili, their home and place of origin. In her vision of the future, "Tawangan will become progressive."

## Discussion

The definition of the landscape and timescape as the congealed form of people's works and ongoing life-cycles lends itself well to an account of the Kalanguya as an indigenous people in transition who have transformed and continue to transform the environment, inasmuch as the environment transforms them. As I have shown here, looking into the timescapes of the Tawangan Kalanguya illuminates the transitional quality of their lives. Rather than reifying them as an indigenous group living as ecological stewards frozen in time, the timescape perspective shows that they selectively maintain certain traditions as they change their way of life. They particularly favor those that enable them to attain desired changes in their lives, and that effectively mediate certain interactions with the environment and other people in it. The timescape perspective also reveals that the Kalanguya-environmental interactions can hardly be expected to remain ecologically-balanced or harmonious. The actions of the Kalanguya in their environment are aimed at survival and a desired quality of life, fuelled in part by government-driven programs for economic development that appear to be ill-fitted to the formation of green positionalities.

The Tawangan Kalanguya see positive change as contingent on just governance. In no way is this to be misconstrued as passivity, for they actively participate in government programs and harness the affordances that arise from every interaction or relationship with the state. Their notion of just governance is a bottom-up conceptualization of the social contract. It is a notion that rests less on the foundations of state law, than on a strong sense of what really matters in everyday life, and a fierce desire for the recognition that the daily life of a stigmatized indigenous people matters. Interactions between the Tawangan Kalanguya and government representatives become couched in negotiations revolving around visible livelihood development and income-generation, which are further rationalized as owed to the Tawangan Kalanguya who have lived at the margins of the state since "time immemorial". This interface is potentially a manifestation of the nature-culture imaginaire, at least the side of it that advocates social and political-economic justice. However, even though state laws and institutions with a presence in Tawangan already hold the kernel for the kind of positive subject-making environmentality that Agrawal describes in his study, and the potential for creating a healthy nature-culture imaginaire, the cooperation between government representatives and indigenous peoples over environmental matters remains conflict-ridden. Beneath the surface of economic development, political involvement, and the question of livelihood and security of tenure, environmental threats and hazards continue to be generated at the very interface of indigenous peoples and agents of environmentalism. The antagonistic opposition of nature-conservation and the development aspirations of the Kalanguya stems from a view that cleaves nature from human productive activity, a view which is taken up by indigenous peoples and agents of environmentalism alike.



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## CHAPTER THREE

### **Governing Indigenous People: Indigenous persons in government implementing the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act<sup>1</sup>**

In the political landscape of the Philippines, governance and politics are distinct in the Cordillera region because individuals who identify themselves as indigenous peoples dominate local government. This political dominance – in terms of numbers as well as the levels of positions attained – rises out of the creation and maintenance of boundaries around difference, which had its beginnings in the upland resistance to Spanish colonial rule in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and produced an elite indigenous class in the final years of the American colonial regime. It has remained more or less constant since then. Indigenous individuals in public office often attribute the success of government programs in the region to understandings between fellow indigenous Cordilleran officials. On the other hand, they attribute failed public initiatives to a lack of understanding of local conditions by non-Cordillerans in the higher echelons of national government agencies. I see these governing indigenous individuals, or professional indigenous persons, as agents of state processes of boundary-maintenance, inasmuch as they are engaged in renegotiating the very boundaries their government posts are designed to implement. They move between deploying power and being subjected to power; between being agents of the state implementing national laws and policies in the Cordillera, and being Cordilleran natives asserting the distinctiveness of being indigenous and creating spaces for a measure of indigenous self-determination. This agency that they possess becomes quite apparent in the spaces and times when ancestral domain claims are negotiated under Republic Act No. 8371 of 1997, also known as the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA).

The implementing agency for the IPRA is the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). It is distinct from other national government agencies because it is composed entirely of indigenous commissioners and officers representing the different regions and indigenous groups across the country. NCIP officers carry out a mandate to protect indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination even as they assert the national culture of the state at local levels and often in remote, or marginal areas of Philippine political geography and ideology. When they engage indigenous peoples in the ili, or home-villages, they also become translators and brokers – translating the letter of the law and making it applicable in local situations, and brokering agreements that will seal and fix the boundaries of ancestral domains. As such, they are in a position to influence the ways in which indigenous people assert their rights to territories and natural resources on the basis of identity, patrimony, and occupation from “time immemorial”. In this paper I will focus on how the positionalities of local-level officers of the NCIP and other governing indigenous individuals influence the process of making claims as well as the very nature of claims to ancestral domains in the Cordillera, particularly in the province of Benguet. In Chapter One I put forward the observation that conflict appears to increase

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<sup>1</sup> Published as: Perez, P. (2009) ‘Governing Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous persons in government implementing the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act,’ in *The Cordillera Review* vol. 1, no. 2.

around the creation of new physical and social boundaries and I explore that point further in this chapter, in the context of ancestral domain claims.

In addition, I will show how the IPRA happens to people, as well as how people make the IPRA happen. A decade after the IPRA's promulgation, I ask: How is the IPRA transforming the ways in which indigenous peoples make claims to land and resources? What roles do indigenous government representatives from various agencies play in these transformations? Is indigenous identity a key factor in the interface of government representatives and indigenous communities? If it is, when does it count and how is it brought to the fore during interactions?

By focusing on the interface of indigenous persons in state-sanctioned roles and indigenous persons based in the *ili*<sup>2</sup>, I present here a detailed examination of the local-level implementation of state law and policies through the actions of indigenous elite. I will describe what takes place in scheduled meetings at which traditional knowledge and legal matters about ancestral domains are discussed and negotiated. These are the times and spaces in which the implementation of the IPRA is said to happen in the view of the officers of the NCIP. Sardan (2005: 169) points out that brokers and mediators are spokespersons on behalf of the “technical-scientific knowledge” of development, or in this case, the indigenous elite become spokespersons for the legal processes of the state and must manage relationships between the state and local actors. Sardan (*ibid.*) goes on to say that brokers are caught in a double bind, for they “must promote technical-scientific knowledge... as superior to popular knowledge”, while at the same time creating “a balance between both types of knowledge”. This can be transposed to this case study in that the officers of the NCIP implement state processes over and above local, indigenous processes for settling claims to land. The double bind is particularly complex in this instance for these indigenous elite, to a certain degree, identify with or belong to the indigenous groups among which they implement the law.

To recapitulate, in this interface I examine three aspects of indigenous life in the Philippine Cordilleras: the positionalities of contemporary indigenous elite as brokers and mediators,<sup>3</sup> how policy implementation comes about in indigenous communities, and the negotiation of boundaries around maintaining cultural difference while belonging to a nation-state. Finally, I focus on aspects of law and policy that are geared towards the production of green positionalities, and reflect on how the implementation of these laws and policies shape – and are shaped by – different actors' timescapes and relationships with the environment, and the nature-culture *imaginaire*.

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<sup>2</sup> By saying that members of indigenous communities are *ili*-based, I do not mean to say that they are bound to the physical space of their home-villages. *Ili*-based indigenous persons reside and work in their home-villages but they are also mobile and may travel regularly to municipal and urban centers to visit relatives, or to carry out government and business transactions.

<sup>3</sup> Indigenous elite in the Cordillera are not necessarily materially wealthy, but they are educated and have access to powerful networks in politics and business. Some, but not all, may also fit into indigenous conceptions of elite in terms of possessing land passed down through the generations, or descending from families remembered for performing prestige rituals in their respective communities.

### Historical roots of indigenous elite participation in the state

It is important to make a short foray into history in order to arrive at an understanding of the creation of difference and the emergence of an indigenous elite, a class of Cordilleran society that has been understudied to date. Geographically speaking, the Cordillera region is comprised of the chain of mountains on the western side of the island of Luzon, stretching northward from the tip of Pangasinan. It is a diverse region, both geologically and ethnolinguistically: there are three mountain range systems within the region and at least seven major indigenous languages with several local variants (De Raedt 1991: 355 as referred to in Finin 2005: 10). From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the Spanish colonizers and lowlanders generally referred to the people occupying the Cordilleras as “Igorots” (Scott 1975: 41), a term that came to be hotly debated, and then later accepted by some, but not all indigenous groups in the region. During the Spanish colonial period, the Igorots did not think of themselves or present themselves as one unified population. Their loyalties and affiliations belonged with their villages and kin. The discussion below describes briefly a small part of the historical emergence of a pan-Cordilleran identity.

Gerard Finin (2005) argues that it was primarily during the American period of Philippine history that resistance to foreign encroachment became articulated as indigenous patrimony, and as a ‘natural’ attachment of Cordillerans to the Cordillera. However, uplanders in Northern Luzon defended their independence with their lives long before the emergence of a pan-Cordilleran sense of entitlement. In fact, Cordilleran resistance to foreign aggression predates the American propagation of difference by at least three centuries (Scott 1974 and 1993).

Relations between the Spaniards, the Christianized lowlanders, and the so-called pagan uplanders, commonly referred to as Igorots, were largely ambiguous during Spanish rule in the Philippine islands. Many expeditions were dispatched, but they failed to yield gold, or to make Catholic, tribute-paying Spanish subjects of the mountain people. The Spaniards sent many punitive expeditions into the mountains across the three centuries that they ruled the Philippines. Most of these expeditions were defeated, if not by the fierce upland warriors themselves who would ambush the troops by the hundreds, then by the harsh environment of the Cordillera mountain range. In the case of the latter, the indigenous uplanders would simply go into hiding and wait it out before expeditions would crumble.

This dynamic prevailed into the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Strategic cooperation between Igorot leaders and the Spanish government and missionaries eventually developed. Some Igorots actively sought out baptism, while other groups did so on the condition that they be exempted from tribute and forced labor in their lifetime. Nevertheless, this did not bring about the total Christianization and reduction of the Igorots in the mountains. Even Igorot chiefs described as pious Christians continued to adhere to their own rituals and turned upon missionaries who attempted to completely abolish old life-ways. Part of the ongoing conflict between Igorots and the Spanish government had to do with illicit Igorot trade in tobacco, cattle, gold, and vegetables. The military occupation of the Cordillera was hardly stabilized when it began to crumble as the Katipuneros launched their fight to overthrow the Spanish government in the Philippines. Scott aptly describes this as a time when “Filipinos in the lowlands were getting ready to fight for that liberty which had never been surrendered in the highlands” (1974: 296). The Spanish occupation of the Cordillera – and the Philippines – ended in 1898. Following close on the heels of the Spanish colonial era came the age of America’s empire.

The establishment of the Mountain Province in 1908 effectively put into place an American administrative grid that reflected “a mode of thinking on the part of American colonial officials characterized by an affinity for packaging the Cordillera’s complex historical and cultural realities into neatly compartmentalized bureaucratic structures, thereby allowing for placement of arbitrary social and political boundaries” (Finin 2005: 14). The boundaries of the seven coterminous subprovinces of the Mountain Province corresponded to the ethnic boundaries created by Dean C. Worcester<sup>4</sup> in his attempts to “scientifically” classify the peoples of the Cordillera.<sup>5</sup> American planners drew the municipal boundaries around their perceptions of “geographic and ethnic factors”, aiming to cluster populations in such a way as to minimize inter-village conflict (Keesing and Keesing 1934: 105, as referred to in Finin 2005: 107-109). The Americans deemed it necessary to protect indigenous highlanders from scrupulous lowlanders and they put in place policies to this effect (ibid: 40, 247).

In 1901 the Philippine Commission established the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes within the Department of the Interior. The bureau worked under the directive of then President McKinley to “adopt the same course followed by Congress in permitting the tribes of our North American Indians to maintain their tribal organization and government” in dealing with the “uncivilized tribes” of the Philippines (Forbes 1928: 445, as quoted in Finin 2005: 29). The election of local officials was first tried out by the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes in Baguio and Benguet before anywhere else in the Mountain Province. At first, villagers simply respected the wishes of their elders who saw advantages in cooperating with the Americans and they voted for candidates pre-designated by the elders, which is a clear instance of local agency aiming to maintain a measure of control over the new, emerging politics. Under American administration, villagers “increasingly found that issues now fell within the purview of a single presidente” instead of bringing their problems to the council of elders (Finin 2005: 112). In turn, the presidente continued to consult the traditional elders for important decisions. Today, this is reflected in patron-client relationships that have developed between local politicians and elders; with powerful politicians – at least at the level of municipal mayors and provincial governors – having their own set of elders to consult with and from whom to draw legitimacy. According to Finin (2005: 107-108) these elections gradually led to forms of leadership in the Cordillera that were filled in by formally educated indigenous persons, at first without replacing completely the roles of traditional leaders and councils of elders.

When the Philippines became an independent republic, Cordillerans soon after were elected into office as governors of the Mountain Province, or to seats in congress. The *Midland Courier*, a newspaper that was owned, written, and circulated by indigenous intelligentsia called attention to the “parallel between the struggle for freedom of the

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<sup>4</sup> Influential member of the Philippine Commission and also Secretary of the Interior, which oversaw the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes. For details of Worcester’s part in Philippine American colonial history, see Fry (1985) and Finin (2005).

<sup>5</sup> Thus, the Ifugao sub province, which was created from Nueva Vizcaya, was for the ‘Ifugao tribe’, Kalinga was created for the ‘Kalinga tribes’, Benguet was for the ‘Benguet Igorots’, and so on. Municipal districts were eventually formed. Previously scattered and independent settlements were incorporated into a single administrative entity and were identified under one name, such as the municipality of Kabayan.



subject peoples of Asia and the legitimate desire of the mountain people to reach the same level of civilization and enjoy the same rights as their lowland brother” (28 May 1950, as quoted in Finin 2005: 149). Laurence Wilson, a long-time American resident of Baguio City, wrote, “With the... popular election of the governor of Mountain Province, the Igorot inhabitants can no longer be classified as wild, Non-Christian Tribes. They are Filipinos” (Wilson 1955: 249, as quoted in Finin 2005: 186).

These statements made in the *Midland Courier* and by Wilson allude to the beginnings of the boundaries that indigenous leaders negotiate to this day. They point to the prevalence of a sense of difference between the indigenous occupants of the Cordillera and “their lowland brothers”, as well as a desire to be duly recognized as part of the Filipino nation. The conception of an indigenous territory that encompassed the entire Cordillera region is traceable to the reification of the Christian vs. non-Christian divide, which had its beginnings in the Spanish colonial period and that heightened differences between highlanders and lowlanders who were previously culturally similar (Finin 2005, Scott 1974). The combination of strong local agency, with prolonged resistance to Spanish subjugation followed by American paternalistic policy built the foundation for a sense of entitlement to the right to live, prosper, and govern in their own territory among Cordillerans throughout the region. On the other hand, the segregation of the uplands from the lowlands also gave rise to the prevalent view of the region and its people as the backwaters of the nascent Philippine Republic. Upland populations came to be viewed with both fear and prejudice.<sup>6</sup> This was a view that the indigenous intelligentsia actively strove to change and that continues to surface from time to time so that contemporary professional indigenous persons still have to push against this boundary in different, perhaps subtler ways.<sup>7</sup>

To summarize, indigenous individuals in the Cordillera have actively positioned themselves for political and/or economic gain at turning points of Philippine colonial and post-colonial history (Finin 2005, Fry 1983, Scott 1977). The historical progression of this indigenous elite can be traced on through World War II and Philippine independence but this brief account shows how the cumulative effects of sustained resistance to Spanish rule, American colonial policy, and local agency have brought about indigenous elite control over much of the Cordillera region. Finally, an important link here between history and the present is that the NCIP and the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes are parallel instruments of governance in two distinct periods of the nation’s history; each established to handle matters pertaining to a sector of the Philippine populations perceived to be “different” from the majority.

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<sup>6</sup> For discussions on the origins and the implications of this prejudice, see Scott 1993 and Bacdayan 2001.

<sup>7</sup> For a colorful and interesting debate on the present-day implications of this prejudice, see the debates on these two blogs:

[http://philippinecommentary.blogspot.com/2007/08/are-ilocanos-pampangos-tagalogs\\_19.html](http://philippinecommentary.blogspot.com/2007/08/are-ilocanos-pampangos-tagalogs_19.html)

<http://igorotblogger.blogspot.com/2007/09/links-good-reads.html>

## **The NCIP and the implementation of the IPRA in Kabayan**

One of the interfaces in which the tension of difference and belonging is played out is when the officers of the NCIP in the Cordillera region do their work of implementing the IPRA. As translators and brokers they work with the awareness that the ili-based indigenous peoples they are mandated to serve do not always correspond with the category “indigenous peoples” as defined in the law that they implement.

The IPRA defines indigenous peoples as:

“... a group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, become historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos...” (R.A. No. 8371, Chapter 2, Section 3).

The officers of the NCIP are confronted with differences in the processes through which indigenous rights are determined and demanded among ili-based indigenous groups and the administrative protocols and implementation regimes under which they must operate. This will be made apparent in the following ethnographic description of the roles and actions of officers of the NCIP and other indigenous leaders and agents of the state in the implementation of the IPRA in the municipality of Kabayan, Benguet.

This micro-ethnography on the work of the NCIP in the municipality of Kabayan is drawn from fieldwork conducted at different periods between 2003 and 2006, and from official documents that were drawn up between 1996 and 2006. When appropriate I have quoted at length statements made by officers of the NCIP, other indigenous individuals in government, and ili-based indigenous persons, in order to render visible the ways in which notions of identity and territory are articulated, negotiated, and manipulated by different actors. First I will describe the general structure and functions of the NCIP, and then I will proceed to describe how the IPRA’s implementation was played out in Kabayan in the period specified here.

Indigenous identity, aside from professional and educational attainments, is among the government’s established requisites for officials of the NCIP. In the Benguet Provincial Office of the NCIP, all of the officers/employees trace their ancestry to various ili within the Cordillera region.<sup>8</sup> They reside in the urban centers of Baguio and La Trinidad. The

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<sup>8</sup> At the time of fieldwork, some of the officers of the NCIP had been absorbed from the now-defunct Office of Northern Cultural Communities, a government agency established under former President Corazon Aquino that carried out a mandate also similar to that of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes. The focus of the ONCCS programs in the Cordillera region were on health care, and the staff that had been absorbed into the NCIP were trained as nurses or health workers. Thus the tasks that fell to them as officers of the NCIP were beyond their professional capabilities, such as facilitating negotiations, documenting genealogies, kinship patterns, and

work of the staff of the Provincial Office takes place largely in two different settings. The office is physically based in La Trinidad, the provincial capital of Benguet. From time to time, ili-based indigenous persons visit the NCIP offices in La Trinidad to submit documents or to make queries and requests. Here “the textual discipline of reporting” (Mosse 2005:110) predominates. Documents relating to ancestral domain claims are drafted, finalized, and forwarded to the appropriate offices and individuals, or filed away. Plans and schedules are drawn up, budgets are drafted and approved, and letters are sent out to various communities, informing them of future meetings or seeking support from local government units in mobilizing community members to attend NCIP meetings. The office is the springboard for trips to “the field”, the other main setting in which the provincial office operates.

The field is where the interface between the NCIP and ili-based indigenous communities is at its most intense. For officers of the NCIP, just as for anthropologists, any given field visit is a trip to any of the villages, municipalities, or ancestral domains in which they work with local people to implement the IPRA. In the field they conduct information and education campaigns on the law, they guide – or as some would argue, they impose upon – indigenous groups in the preparation of papers and proofs to support their claims to land, they gather information on village genealogies and customary law, and they facilitate the formulation of Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans, to mention but a few of the local-level tasks and responsibilities spelled out for the NCIP in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the IPRA.

For the officers of the NCIP, the field is where they work under the pressure of “the temporal discipline of schedules and deadlines” (Heaton 2001, in Mosse 2005: 110) vis-à-vis the often slower, more deliberate ironing out of issues within ili. For ili-based indigenous people, the scheduled meetings are a time of both confusion and negotiation. These meetings also become the venues at which translations are made, agreements are brokered or stalled, and meanings are negotiated. Below, a NCIP officer explains to gathered people at one such meeting:

“... the purpose of the ancestral domain is protection.... You have been given the right to protect and manage your ancestral domain, the watersheds you are fighting over... The government is... honoring your ownership of this domain.... Whatever benefits come from this domain will go to you! You will make your own policies for your domain...”<sup>9</sup>

This statement not only encapsulates one of the key purposes of the IPRA, it also conjures up the nature-culture imaginaire in the law’s promise of recognition

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cultural practices, and drafting legal documents. Many of them pointed out to me that they had to adapt quickly in spite of a lack of training, as their positions in the NCIP were their “bread and butter”.

<sup>9</sup> An officer of the Commission spoke this quote during an Ancestral Domain Boundary Resolution, which is described in detail in the next section of this paper. The officer was addressing a gathering of ili-based indigenous people who were negotiating the boundaries of their territories. Quotes spoken by actors in the field have been translated from Ilocano, Ibaloy, or Kalanguya by the researcher with assistance from Violeta Miranda, Violy Tinda-an, and Julius Bac.

(“honoring”) of indigenous ownership and control over their territories, and of benefits from the land accruing to the indigenous peoples themselves.

Given that the field is a crucial interface at which these notions are brought into play, the following section trains its focus on the background of the Kabayan Ancestral Domain Claim, and to the processes taking place in the field that would lead up to the awarding of an ancestral domain title to the municipality.

#### The Kabayan Ancestral Domain Claim

As of 1995, the Ibaloy comprised 58.49% of the household population, followed by the Kalanguya at 36.38%, and then the Kankana-ey at 0.01% (Kabayan Ancestral Domain Management Plan 1998: 69).<sup>10</sup> There are other ethnolinguistic groups represented in Kabayan but regardless of the multi-ethnic composition of the municipality, its ancestral domain is officially known as the “Ancestral Domain of the Ibaloy, Kankana-ey and Kalanguya Cultural Communities found in the Municipality of Kabayan.” Kabayan is bounded by five other municipalities, two of which figure prominently in the sections of this paper dealing with boundary conflict. One is the Municipality of Tinoc, Ifugao Province on the northeastern side of Kabayan, and the other is the Municipality of Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya on the southeastern side of Kabayan.

The Kabayan ancestral domain claim was first made under the Department on Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order No. 2, series of 1993. This administrative order was a predecessor to the IPRA in that it mandated the DENR to identify, delineate, and certify ancestral domains and the indigenous cultural communities occupying them. The key difference between the IPRA and the Administrative order is that the latter stopped short of awarding land titles within ancestral domains, thus withholding legal ownership of land from indigenous people living in forested areas.

In 1994, local government officials and other educated Ibaloy of Kabayan led the formation of a Technical Working Group. An individual who was part of the working group said that they also had Ibaloy consultants, not necessarily from Kabayan, based in Baguio who helped to edit the manuscripts for the claim as well as for the Ancestral Domain Management Plan. The Technical Working Group conducted workshops, seminars, and interviews in order to collate the requirements for the claim, such as genealogies of indigenous residents of the domain, photographic proof of indigenous improvements, structures, and maintenance work in the domain, and testimonies of elders on the boundaries of the domain. Elders from around the municipality attended these workshops and shared their knowledge about territorial boundaries, genealogies, the peopling of Kabayan since “time immemorial”, and the cultural traditions of the Ibaloy, Kalanguya, and Kankana-ey indigenous groups.

One of the elders told me in an interview that he and the other elders who participated had followed the boundaries that were set by the Americans at the beginning of the century. The Municipality of Kabayan is spread across 19,490 hectares, but the boundaries of the ancestral domain that were determined during these workshops

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<sup>10</sup> These figures are based on a survey of 10,509 households asked to identify their mother tongue.

expanded the territory to 27,252 hectares (Kabayan Ancestral Domain Management Plan 1998). With the implementation of the IPRA these political administrative boundaries have turned into bones of contention in the ancestral domain claims of contiguous municipalities. The correspondence of administrative and ancestral boundaries and the labeling of the domain as the municipality's have been questioned repeatedly and I will show why as the paper progresses. Elders, local government officials, and other Kabayan intelligentsia that participated in the preparations for the first application with the DENR informed me that this delineation was chosen 'for convenience's sake'.

In 1996 the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim was awarded to Kabayan. In 1997 the IPRA was enacted. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples was organized, and it took over from the DENR the powers and responsibilities of delineating ancestral domains. Under the IPRA, existing ancestral domain claims could be converted into ancestral domain titles. The conversion from a certificate to a legal title requires a process of re-validation of all the official documents and supporting evidence previously submitted to the DENR under Administrative Order No. 2, series of 1993. In order to re-validate documents, the NCIP convenes community assemblies and presents the documents to the community for them to re-verify and/or revise the contents of the documents and evidences. Another crucial step towards the titling of an ancestral domain is the resolution of all existing disagreements over boundaries with adjoining domains and/or local government units. Many, previously unresolved conflicts over the boundaries of the Kabayan ancestral domain claim surfaced, each of which had to be settled before a communally held land title could be awarded to Kabayan. Thus from 2004 to 2006, the heaviest and most complicated work of the NCIP in Kabayan involved Ancestral Domain Boundary Resolutions.

#### Ancestral Domain Boundary Resolution

Ancestral domain boundary resolutions (ADBR) are negotiations that are convened for the purpose of settling any conflict over land and boundaries between residents of adjacent ancestral domains and ancestral lands.<sup>11</sup> Such was the case in the Ancestral Domain Boundary Resolution between Lusod, in Kabayan, and Balite, in the municipality of Kayapa, both predominantly Kalanguya settlements. This section focuses on one particular event, the Lusod-Balite ADBR. The discussion is carried out in much detail, with a view to revealing how various indigenous actors voice out and negotiate their claims, how the NCIP frontliners implement the IPRA in the presence of ili-based indigenous peoples, and how they move back and forth across boundaries.

This ADBR was to be the fourth meeting between Barangay Lusod and Barangay Balite. On the negotiating table were tracts of land that included forests, farmlands, residences, and the peak of Mt. Pulag. In previous meetings, participants and witnesses had signed a certificate of non-agreement. This meant that the two barangays could not arrive at a compromise and the case would have to be brought before the Hearing Officer at the

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<sup>11</sup> Ancestral domains are considered to be owned communally by an entire indigenous cultural community. Ancestral lands are owned privately by indigenous individuals and/or clans.

regional office of the Commission. The settlement of the boundary would be treated as a court case, with both sides presenting evidence to support their claims.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, funding had come into the regional office of the NCIP from the European Union supporting the costs for the titling of ancestral domains in Benguet. Because of this, there was some external pressure to accomplish the titling for Kabayan (and the other ancestral domain claims in the province of Benguet) before the funding program was to end. Given this target, the non-agreement between Lusod and Balite was not acceptable to the NCIP. The Benguet Provincial Office of the NCIP called for this fourth meeting so as to push for a “preliminary and temporary settlement”. This temporary agreement would allow them to proceed with the delineation of boundaries and erect markers along the borders of Kabayan’s ancestral domain. Notably, this would enable them to make efficient use of the funds and to report accomplishments back to the donor.

It took two days for the officers of the NCIP to travel across grueling roads from La Trinidad to Babadac,<sup>13</sup> the appointed venue for the negotiations between Lusod, Kabayan and Balite, Kayapa. With their permission, I traveled with the group from La Trinidad in order to get a sense of how NCIP work is carried out by these frontliners. There was some difficulty reaching the venue due to the unavailability of a four-wheel drive jeep. Some of the officers suggested turning back and re-scheduling the ADBR. However, one officer reminded them that the communities had been notified about the meeting, a pig had already been purchased, and since there was no way to send word to Babadac, the pig would probably be slaughtered first thing the next morning and would be cooked and served to the ADBR participants by noon. She said that if there was still no vehicle available the following day, they should be prepared to proceed to the village on foot, just as all the ili-based participants would be doing. This officer’s exhortation to her colleagues suggests a familiarity with and sensitivity to how the assemblies organized by the NCIP take up local time and resources. This awareness can be attributed to understanding acquired from the frequent field visits of the NCIP, as well as to the knowledge the officers have as indigenous insiders.

When the NCIP officers reached Babadac a small gathering of people from Lusod was already waiting. Their group was a mix of male elders, young men, women, and their small children from Lusod. Only one elder was present from the opposing village, Balite. The NCIP officers called the elders together and every one faced a wall on which the officers had tacked up a hand-drawn map of the area in question, which was later replaced with a map made with a global positioning device. The atmosphere was calm and the discussions proceeded cordially and in soft voices, as is often typical of Kalanguya gatherings.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The decision of the hearing officer would be taken as final, unless any of the parties would decide to take the case to the Court of Appeals, a drawn out and expensive process.

<sup>13</sup> Babadac is a small settlement of Kalanguya vegetable farmers in the municipality of Kabayan. It is also the location of the DENR forest rangers’ station and one of the popular entry points for hikers into the Mount Pulag National Park.

<sup>14</sup> The Kalanguya take pride in the peaceful nature of their gatherings, even when they come together to discuss conflict.

First, one of the officers of the Commission explained the agenda for this particular ADBR, and the meaning of a temporary and preliminary settlement. The elder from Balite then complained that it would be difficult for him to make decisions because he was alone. He claimed that his fellow elders and villagers thought that the meeting would be held in a different village. He did not know whether any of his companions would arrive. The Benguet officers were adamant that they had sent invitations to the NCIP provincial office in Nueva Vizcaya, and that the officers there should have informed the villagers. Although the Balite elder had expressed his hesitance about proceeding due to his being alone, the NCIP officers insisted that the ADBR proceed and that they should reach a temporary preliminary settlement by the end of it.



Photo 3.1: Residents of Lusod listen in on the negotiations at the ancestral domain boundary resolution between Lusod and Balite.

When the elders spoke, they did so one at a time and heard each other out, just as in a traditional tongtong.<sup>15</sup> When they wanted to identify specific locations, they stood beside the map and pointed out the places they referred to. The elders of Lusod presented their rights to the area under question by invoking the places where their ancestors had opened up uma, or where they were buried. For example:

“This place, Dagway, that is the place we... remember from our childhood. If you were to look at this place, you would see the evidence: the trees... that people planted and used for firewood before. Back then, there was no alnos yet.

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<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 2 for details on tongtong, the public settlement of disputes presided over by respected village elders.

There used to be coffee trees there, but they have died. The trees my ancestors planted spread out up until Huyucto.... My father is buried there, and my grandfather. My great-grandfather Liggew is also buried there, and so is Ingosan. There are many more of them buried there.”<sup>16</sup>

In this statement, the elder spoke of the land in terms of a connection forged through generations of interaction. In the context of the negotiations, relationships with the land were not presented in the abstract, idealized terms of a harmonious co-existence.<sup>17</sup> Instead, relationships with the land were expressed in the contexts of transforming the landscape through work, and becoming part of the landscape through death.

Others put emphasis on the land tax declarations they were paying to the municipal government, as evidence of their rightful ownership to land within the contested area. The choice of paying land taxes to Kabayan was explained as stemming from Kabayan’s investments in infrastructure for the areas in question. For example:

“When they built a road here, funded by Kabayan, we all witnessed it. That is why we pay our [land tax] declaration there [in Kabayan]. That is why, what we want is for our land to be surveyed as part of the CADT of Kabayan. Those of us who live in this area also want our other places to be part of Kabayan, here in Huyucto, Yakong, and Nagkampil. That is all.”

Both of the previous statements refer to the environment as a work in progress and describe a landscape that is transformed by different actors – in this context, the Kalanguya swiddeners and the municipal government.

The elder from Balite, being alone, enumerated a list of place names that indicated a path that was frequented by people from Balite since before “peace time”. Peace time refers to the years that came immediately after the end of the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines, at the end of the Second World War. The Balite elder also asserted that the peak of Mt. Pulag belonged in Kayapa territory.

When it became clear that each side was only repeatedly stating their claims without making any compromises, one of the NCIP officers stood up and made an appeal to the assembly. Her words reveal the textual and temporal disciplines under which the NCIP operates:

“This law was made for you. Let’s not waste it. If we show people that there is no understanding between us, that we refuse to share, it will not look good. What is more, let us not disappoint our donors. If they see that it is difficult to fund these negotiations, that they take too long and bear no results they will be disappointed. This is one reason why we must have a preliminary settlement.

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<sup>16</sup> The burial sites of these ancestors may date back to the end of the 1800’s.

<sup>17</sup> For contrast, see for example the following statement made by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, at the Indigenous Peoples’ Summit in Hokkaido, Japan, 2008: “For us, indigenous peoples, we want to maintain a harmonious relationship with nature and we regard all living creatures as our relations. So we do not seek to control or dominate nature and our relationship with nature and others is guided by natural law.”



Don't worry. Even if we do [a preliminary settlement] now, if you win in the courts that is [the decision] that will be followed, not this one."

Here is a situation that clearly shows how activities and expenditure against targets become measures of performance for frontliners in the implementation regime (Mosse 2005: 112). The officers of the NCIP at this ADBR were working under the pressure of temporal discipline – in this case, project cycles and a donor's fiscal year. The pressure to perform, as felt by the NCIP, was brought to bear on the ili-based indigenous people as pressure to arrive at a decision. It was clear from the initial reticence of the gathering that the temporary agreement was a compromise they were not willing to make. Here, the complexity of inter-community issues became reduced to delays in implementation (Mosse 2005: 110). Furthermore, I interpret this as a collision of different practiced approaches to time. The NCIP move through a timescape of targets and deadlines. It is a timescape that stretches from the office to the field.

The NCIP officer was trying to offer the people gathered assurance and guarantees that this temporary agreement was for the benefit of all. First, she assured the assembly that the law was made to work for indigenous peoples, thereby implying that they could feel secure about the law, and that the government is a benevolent and caring entity. Second and in relation to the former, she proffered the certainty that the government would resolve the conflict between the two villages and that the decision made in the NCIP hearing office would be honored over and above the temporary agreement.

What she did not say was that both the temporary agreement and the hearings were fraught with uncertainty for each village. The decision-making process in the hearing office would be out of their hands, and it was unclear what they could gain from the temporary agreement. How sure could they be that any compromises they made in this ADBR would be rescinded by the NCIP court decision? What assurance did each party have that the court would decide in their favor as against the opposing village's claim? Several implicit threats hung in the air. For the NCIP, there was the possibility of losing funding, and also the loss of credibility of individuals as well as of the whole process. For the ili-based indigenous people, there was the threat of losing an opportunity to hold titles to their land.

Another significant point that can be pulled out of the NCIP officer's statement is her own positionality. Above she uses the plural first person, addressing the gathering in a respectful manner but also positioning herself as one indigenous person to whom the law pertains, and for whom the law was made. As she continued her statement, she tacked back and forth between the first person and the third person, alternately emphasizing her being an agent of the state and indigenous, and the need for a decision from the representatives of Lusod and Balite.

"...One more thing you should think about now is the meaning of 'ancestral domain'. The ancestral domain is the territory that is still occupied by the first people, the caretakers [who settled in the place]. From then until the present it is still occupied by them, used by them, and cared for by them. That's ancestral domain. That is what you need to prove in court: that it is you who have been occupying and possessing this domain.... If we continue to try to discuss with you which portions of the claim you are willing to give up, for sure you will continue to disagree with each other, especially since [the elder from Balite] is alone... What we should do is look for the places where we can put temporary boundary markers. These will be temporary because you have filed a complaint

in the NCIP court.... Where can we put the boundary markers for the meantime, so that Kabayan's ancestral domain [boundaries] can be closed? Let's go directly to that..."

The above reiteration of what constitutes an ancestral domain was directed against the claim of the Balite elder that the peak of Mt. Pulag belonged to Kayapa. The officer considered this contentious. Given her definition of an ancestral domain, no one could claim the peak of Mt. Pulag for no one has ever lived on, or occupied the peak. However, the Ibaloy consider Pulag to be their spiritual homeland. When their ancestors die, they take up residence on the peak of Pulag. In the Kabayan Ancestral Domain Management Plan, Pulag is referred to as the "heaven" of the Ibaloy. In addition, they claim that the slopes of Pulag were their traditional hunting grounds. On the basis of the IPRA's definition of an ancestral domain, Kabayan's claim to the peak is reasonable. The reason Pulag is much-coveted by the settlements surrounding it is that the park appears to be generating income from fees that are paid by mountaineers or hikers to the area. Since it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest peak in the Philippines it is a destination or peak that every mountain climber would like to visit.

Just as the NCIP officer's statement obliquely refuted the Pulag claim from Balite, one young man from the municipality of Kayapa defended the claim thusly:

"This area is our watershed. Balite's water comes from here. This [area] (pointing to map) is truly a watershed because it is thickly forested. This (pointing to another area on the map) is the grassland of Mt. Pulag. Nobody can claim that as his or hers. But if you say that it belongs to Kabayan, then yes, it belongs to Kabayan. The DENR already approved that. But what [they] said is that Tawangan, Lusod, and all the adjacent areas belong to the Ibaloy. But what about us Kalanguya? It's true... Attorney showed us a map in his office in the capitol... So don't cast us Kalanguya aside. We don't want the Kalanguya in those areas to be displaced or lost. Even if you were to take an ethnographic survey, you would see that this area is not occupied by the Ibaloy. Kalanguya live here..."

The statement of this man emanates in part from his training and experience as a member of the Mt. Pulag Indigenous Tour Guides Association. When he referred to the mossy forests of Mt. Pulag as a "watershed" he used the language of the DENR with whom he worked closely as a guide for mountaineers entering the national park. Similarly his familiarity with "ethnographic surveys" points to the IPRA's regime of proofs and requirements. The mention of "attorney" also points to the linkages that Ili-based indigenous peoples have with a network of indigenous intelligentsia based in urban centers who exert influence on processes taking place in the Ili, albeit from a distance. I will return to these linkages later on. One of the most striking points of this young man's statement was the way in which he invoked the long-standing relationship between the Ibaloy and the Kalanguya, which is characterized by the socio-economic and political dominance of the former (Afable 1989). When he urged the NCIP not to "cast aside" the Kalanguya, he was referring to the marginal, almost invisible, minority status of the Kalanguya in the five contiguous provinces they have spread to.

Anticipating the new turn that the negotiations were taking now that Kalanguya-ness had been brought into the picture, one of the NCIP officers spoke:



Photo 3.2: A resident of Lusod testifies on the location of his land in relation to the boundary being negotiated. Behind him is a map of the contested area that was drawn up by villagers at a previous ancestral domain boundary resolution.

“As far as I know, one of the biggest problems of our office is that when DENR gave out CADCs, they did not do it according to tribe. Instead, they said, ‘This belongs to the Ibaloy, Kalanguya, Kankana-ey tribes of Kabayan’... They identified the municipality... That is what is very confusing for all of us – the political and ancestral domain. But that is done, that has been started by them... Nobody said anything about amending that. We are simply following the law. This problem came up in Tinoc also. They want all Kalanguya to be united. We know that they want all Kalanguyas to come together as one province. No, it’s true, they want to make a province. We all know that, don’t we? That is one of the issues... But now how do we do this when we have this law to follow...? After the [DENR] A.O. 2, we had to follow this requirement they call consent. We got the consent of Tawangan and Lusod. They did not say, ‘No, we don’t want to be part of Kabayan’. They said, ‘Yes, we want to be added’...”

At this point, the negotiations at this ADBR had grown into much more than a matter of temporary settlement of boundaries between two villages. The picture that emerges from the foregoing discussion shows two villages belonging to one people, the Kalanguya, negotiating against each other from two separate domains and across the political boundaries of two adjacent municipalities and provinces. The pressure the NCIP applied to the gathering was confusing because, in effect, they were asking the people to make an immediate, much-needed decision that would be rendered meaningless by a court decision later on. There was confusion over what was at stake and what could be gained in these negotiations, and whether people were going to get titles to their land or lose their land.

The confusion was compounded when the mayor and vice-mayor of the municipality of Kayapa arrived unexpectedly. Immediately, the vice mayor of Kayapa raised a question before the gathered people:

“What puzzles me, and what confuses every one here... is that if [the boundary] were not specified as ‘found in the municipality of Kabayan’, there would be no problem. Why should we prevent this when it’s going to do them good? But the difficulty is..., that term, ‘in the municipality of Kabayan’. Even though we say that it is part of an ancestral domain, and we say that it’s the ancestral domain of the Kalanguya, Ibaloy, and Kankana-ey, as long as that wasn’t specified, then it would be fine! If it said instead, ‘found in the provinces of Benguet and [Nueva] Vizcaya’, there would be no dispute problem.”

The government officials also alleged that there was no “due process” and that the people of Balite and the municipal officials were not properly consulted about the implementation of the IPRA. One of the NCIP staffers remarked that the due process of the new law, IPRA, was that it was the ili-based people who should settle the dispute among themselves.

“It is they who should settle the matter among themselves, through their customary laws. The problem is that their testimonies are all contradicting and so it will be heard as a court case in the NCIP regional office. Now they have to arrive at a preliminary settlement. It is up to them, not us.”<sup>18</sup>

With this statement, the staff implied that they and the local government officials should not interfere in the negotiations, and the decision was not theirs to make. Again, the shifting positionality of indigenous government representatives could be seen in this exchange between the NCIP officers and the local government officials. The NCIP placed themselves and the local government officials in the same category when they said that they should not interfere in the decision-making of the ili-based indigenous peoples. In this case, they invoked their responsibilities (and also restraints) as holders of public office and separated themselves from the ili-based indigenous people. However, this belies the fact that the NCIP was pushing a decision. On the other hand, the mayor and the vice-mayor were trying to delay it.

An elder from Lusod moved forward to speak. He was near tears by the end of his statement.

“Sometimes all these debates we have here are just caused by politics. Now, if we were to speak of ancestral domains... if we were to speak of Huyucto, this is where my grandfather, Ubbang, is buried. His kinnaba (fallowed swidden fields

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<sup>18</sup> The indigenous laws and practices that are now considered “customary” and “traditional” may have been altered by the interference of American administrators, who appropriated customary laws in order to meet their objectives to end inter-village warfare, headhunting, and other forms of conflict that threatened their civilizing mission and the stability of their administration. For historical accounts of the appropriation of customary law by American administrators, see Finin (2001 and 2005), Fry (1983), and Jenista (1987). For a comparative analysis of the practice of customary law in contemporary times, see my paper (2007) Making and Breaking Boundaries: Indigenous Peoples and Natural Resource Management in the Philippines and Indonesia.

or former ubi swiddens) are here in Gisgisan and Pallunan. They did not reach Yutuyot. It makes me sad that people who are far from these places are trying to dictate on me and tell me that what I am saying here is unacceptable. So hopefully, those of us who are living here and who are affected, wherever it is we want this [boundary] to go, that's where it should go."

The Kayapa officials asked to be able to speak with the gathering without the NCIP officers mediating. They took the map with them and laid it on the ground in the middle of a tight circle of standing men and women. The mayor confronted some of the Lusod men that he knew personally, asking them why they should be part of Kabayan's territory, when they pay their land tax declarations to the municipality of Kayapa.

One man from Lusod alluded to the mayor's political motives and concerns when he said:

"As I understand it, according to [NCIP] explanations elections, internal revenue allotments, and land tax declarations will not be affected [by the IPRA]. I too want to have all the properties of my ancestors included in the area that is going to get an ancestral domain title already."

However, the mayor was not content with this seeming assurance. He repeated the ideal of Kalanguya unity:

"Here is my plan: Lusod, Tawangan, and Balite, let us declare them as ancestral domain of the Kalanguya... All we lack is funding! We could have these areas surveyed. Let's just have it funded."

He reasoned further:

"Before it was the DENR... This NCIP was not around yet. The law of the NCIP is new. So this new law of the NCIP is supposed to correct the law of the DENR. According to the law of the DENR, we are all squatters here in the Philippines. What they want is for all these areas [of ours] to be forest portions [sic]. What I would like to say is that that CADT (of Kabayan) cannot be approved because there are people protesting it... So what we should do in this settlement is follow the will of the majority. If we allow them to exclude us, then we Filipinos will be lost again! What that means is that they are withholding our rights from us. Then there may as well be no CADT if that's the way it's going to be!"

Even if the mayor's line of reasoning was rather sketchy, his statements brought up two issues underlying the implementation of the IPRA. First of these is the proliferation of overlapping land tenure instruments and physical boundaries.<sup>19</sup> The IPRA makes provisions for instances where ancestral domain/land claims conflict with land titles and other classifications of land. However, the law itself does not take into account the place of these other, pre-existing land tenure instruments in the lives of ili-based indigenous peoples. Neither does the law take into account the involvement of ili-based indigenous

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<sup>19</sup> I also discuss the proliferation of social and physical boundaries in the discourse of indigenous peoples' rights in Chapters Two and Eight.

peoples in local politics, and the stakes and alliances that they build therein. Consequently, the linkages and relationships between ili-based indigenous peoples, their elected local government officials, and the normative orders in which they operate arise as unanticipated complications in the implementation of the IPRA, which the NCIP officers are forced to contend with.

The second issue that the mayor touched upon was the ongoing negotiation of boundaries around maintaining cultural difference while belonging to a nation-state. Furthermore, the mayor of Kayapa and the NCIP officers find that they must construct and re-construct the boundaries between their indigenous identity, their loyalty to the ili and to their people, and their positions as representatives of the Philippine government – much like the indigenous intelligentsia in the newly independent Philippine Republic. The contemporary need for the legal recognition of indigenous peoples' rights suggests that, aside from their continuing insecurity of tenure, the equal footing among fellow Filipinos so desired by indigenous Cordillerans continues to elude them.<sup>20</sup> The participation of professional indigenous persons in this process can be seen two ways. One, they perform a delicate balancing act between membership in indigenous communities and their embodiment of the nation-state; or, two, they stride with confidence across two planks of power of indigenouness and politics, using this positionality to influence local-level decision-making.<sup>21</sup>

It is also important to note that there is a difference between the ways in which ili-based indigenous persons described the ancestral domain as they knew it, and the ways in which professional indigenous persons spoke of the domain. The latter framed the domain in terms of politics, funding, and the positionalities of different indigenous groups. On the other hand, the ili-based indigenous persons spoke of the domain in terms of their land, their ancestors, and the work and movements of their ancestors in that land and beyond it.

One man from Lusod addressed himself to the mayor:

Mayor, there is something I would like to explain to you, something which hurts me and hurts my heart. Now we have a program for having our land titled... It's in your hands too, Mayor, because you are here as a government official. If for example this (claim to our) territory is not fulfilled, and you do not see what is right, the people that are here on this side will be hurt. And these hard feelings will be planted inside and it will not end. It will be passed on until the next generations. We are here now so we can all understand each other.

At dusk a decision was finally reached. The disputed area was to be excluded from the claims of both Kabayan and Kayapa until the hearing officer of the NCIP would reach a decision. The municipal mayor, a Kalanguya, muttered bitterly that the hearing officer was an Ibaloy, implying that he did not trust the officer to be objective in his decision. Similar exclusions were made in subsequent boundary negotiations between Kabayan and other neighboring municipalities. The pressure of textual discipline also came to bear on

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<sup>20</sup> For further arguments along these lines, see also Bacdayan (2001).

<sup>21</sup> I am indebted to Lala Dasig for this insight in her close reading of an earlier version of this chapter.

this ADBR. The end result of this negotiation was a written document attesting to the sought-after temporary agreement and signed by the indigenous peoples present, including the municipal mayor and other government officials.

The claims to Kalanguya unity bring us back to the question of identity as a key factor in the interface between indigenous government representatives and ili-based indigenous people. When does it count and how is it brought to the fore during interactions? The case of the Kalanguya in Kabayan also brings to the fore the ways in which indigenous government representatives and intelligentsia influence the shape of claims, and how processes unfold at the level of the ili. In this light, I will describe the background and nuances of the Kalanguya claim.

Whither the Kalanguya ancestral domain?

The foregoing discussion on the ADBR concerns the Kalanguya village of Lusod, Kabayan municipality. Like the people of Lusod, the Tawangan Kalanguya have been at the center of a tug-of-war of boundaries, this time between the municipality of Kabayan and the municipality of Tinoc, Ifugao Province. It took many negotiations between Tinoc and Tawangan before the boundaries were settled.

Another event in the process of titling Kabayan's ancestral domain demonstrates the tensions between Kalanguya communities caught up in these negotiations. In August 2004, engineers of the NCIP had traveled to Tawangan to set down the first boundary marker for Kabayan. A contingent from Tinoc walked to Tawangan to protest on the grounds that the people who really mattered, both government officials and certain elders from Tinoc, were not present when a memorandum of agreement had been drafted, thereby allowing the monumenting to proceed. Therefore, by their account, the memorandum was not valid and the monumenting should be stopped.

When they arrived, the engineers and a few Tawangan men had already set out to find the correct spot for the first marker. The Tinoc contingent and the leaders in Tawangan gathered in the house of the barangay chairperson. Time and again, during this meeting, the local government officials from Tinoc warned that the Kalanguyas would be a minority once more in the ancestral domain of the Kabayan Iballoys. One leader from Tinoc asked why Tawangan and Lusod wanted to be part of Kabayan, when on the other hand, they would call for an elder from Tinoc if they needed them to officiate traditional Kalanguya rituals or to mediate in *tongtongan*? Did it not make more sense then for them to be part of the Tinoc ancestral domain, with their fellow Kalanguya? Mt. Pulag was also brought into the discussion again. Local government officials from Tinoc insisted that Mt. Pulag should belong to the Kalanguyas, because they lived closest to it. According to them, whoever could manage Mt. Pulag would become rich. For once Kalanguya could be wealthy in their own territory, they said. As they debated back and forth, the engineers completed the first marker, not knowing of the confrontation that was taking place in the village.

The Kalanguya of Tawangan admit that they are closely related by consanguinity and affinity with the Kalanguya of Tinoc. One barangay official from Tawangan has land and a house in Tinoc, where her children go to school. One of the municipal officers of Tinoc is the son of one of the respected elders of Tawangan. In turn, his father tends his livestock in pasturelands on the boundary between Tinoc and Tawangan. Several such relationships exist between the Kalanguya residents of each place.

However, the Tawangan and Lusod Kalanguya explain that they chose to be part of Kabayan because, according to them, it was the Ibalays from Kabayan that extended basic services and development to them, and not their fellow Kalanguyas from Tinoc. The Kalanguya are known among politicians to be block voters, meaning that they agree among themselves to vote for the same candidate. Because of this reputation, local Ibaloy politicians from Kabayan have nurtured patron-client relationships with the Kalanguya in the outlying villages of their municipality. Therefore, while indigenous identity was a major factor in negotiations, it was politics and matters of governance that played a decisive role and not kinship or common ancestry.



Photo 3.3: The first boundary marker for the Kabayan ancestral domain.

Urban-based Kalanguya indigenous intelligentsia lead the opposition to the inclusion of Tawangan and Lusod in the Kabayan claim. Babette Resurreccion, in a paper that explores the intra-ethnic conflict between the Ikalahan in Imugan, Nueva Vizcaya and the Kalanguya Tribal Organization, “rejects the easy explanation of identity incorporation as the result of all-encompassing elite control within social groups” because it neglects “the phenomenon of sub-altern agency” (1998: 107).<sup>22</sup> I would argue that in the case of the Tawangan Kalanguya and their contested claims, it is necessary to look at both elite influences and local decisions. A focus solely on agency within the ili would present an incomplete account of how Kalanguya unity is configured and contested among different actors, and would obscure the linkages and relationships that exist between the ili and the urban-based elite.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> However, in seeming contradiction of her own arguments, Resurreccion’s paper relies heavily on accounts written by Kalanguya intelligentsia.

<sup>23</sup> Not to mention that there are also elite intelligentsia within the ili, and not just outside it. The ili is not a monolithic, homogenous entity at all.



For example, in the Lusod-Balite ADBR described above, one young man mentioned a conversation with an “attorney”. The attorney referred to here is based in La Trinidad and holds a position in the provincial government. He is part Kankana-ey and part-Kalanguya. According to him, he identifies more closely with the Kalanguya. He is respected in Kalanguya communities because of his educational attainment, his career in the public sector, and his position as a decision-maker in government. When local government officials from distant Kalanguya villages have reason to travel to La Trinidad, or legal cases they have to attend to, they seek his advice, which he gives freely. Occasionally he travels to some Kalanguya ili to visit distant relatives, but also to hold meetings with local Kalanguya politicians. The attorney is one of the leaders who holds on to a dream of a united Kalanguya territory. He said that they came to this vision out of the shared observation among other Kalanguya leaders that, “Wherever they are, Kalanguya are always associated with poverty” and thus they saw a need to create a stronger, more visible Kalanguya constituency and conceived of a territory in which Kalanguya would be the majority, rather than the invisible, silent minority.

The decision of the Tawangan Kalanguya to remain within the ancestral domain of Kabayan is a clear instance of ili-based agency taking precedence over an elite agenda. However, as I mentioned above, the decision was also influenced by past, seemingly innocuous interventions of the politically elite Ibaloy, in the form of the delivery of basic services. In turn the Kalanguya intelligentsia, composed of political leaders and public officials in local and provincial government units continued to push “the dream of a Kalanguya province”, which has now become the dream of a Kalanguya ancestral domain. In 1994, the Kalanguya Tribal Organization sought assistance from the DENR in processing an application for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim, under A.O. No. 2, series of 1993. However, this application was rejected because the DENR found the area being claimed too large to be effectively managed under a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim. In 1996, the officers of the Kalanguya Tribal Organization drafted a resolution requesting the drafting of a bill in Congress for the creation of a Kalanguya sub-province. The resolution was given to five congressmen who represented the five provinces that encompass Kalanguya territories namely, Benguet, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Pangasinan, and Ifugao. This proposal too, was shelved (Resurreccion 1998: 111-112).

When the IPRA was enacted, the Kalanguya elite saw in it another avenue through which they could try to attain their dream of an officially recognized Kalanguya homeland. However, an ancestral domain claim that unifies all Kalanguya territories has not come to fruition. Kalanguya leaders explained that this was partly due to a lack of funding with which to put plans in motion. Furthermore, any attempts to make such a sweeping claim have been precluded by the ancestral land and ancestral domain claims made by municipalities and/or indigenous peoples’ organizations. Thus, the inclusion of Tawangan and Lusod in the claim of Kabayan would effectively undercut the plans for the consolidation of all Kalanguya land. Attempting to counter this, a number of the Kalanguya leaders convinced other prominent, locally-based Kalanguya to block the resolution of boundary conflicts being mediated by the NCIP. This counter-move was

demonstrated at the Lusod-Balite ADBR, when the mayor and vice-mayor of Kayapa addressed themselves to the gathering and to the NCIP officers.<sup>24</sup>

The consolidated Kalanguya ancestral domain is, to a certain degree, consonant with the definition of ancestral domain embedded in the IPRA. However, the expanse of the domain across five contiguous provinces spreads far beyond the ways in which the Kalanguya traditionally conceived of their territory. Only two generations ago, Kalanguya landscapes were dominated by swiddens, which attest to a far less sedentary way of life, and which also suggest shifting, rather than permanent, boundaries.

This dream of a united Kalanguya people living in a territory defined as Kalanguya has affected the ili-based indigenous peoples in unexpected ways. The insistence of the elite leaders and politicians on unification has resulted instead in the exclusion of small communities from other ancestral domains that sought to encompass them. Although these other ancestral domains can be faulted for following administrative boundaries, rather than indigenous ones, ili-based Kalanguya saw their inclusion as a guarantee of legal ownership over their land. Those who ended up excluded as a result of the protestations of the Kalanguya leadership feel as though they have been cast aside or dispensed with. One Kalanguya woman who lives in an area excluded from the Kabayan ancestral domain laughed resignedly: “That’s not good. They just threw us down like playing cards.” Their exclusion from ancestral domains has made them more invisible than ever.

When negotiations have ended and people have returned to their homes in the ili, they talk about how the new process of fixing boundaries is splitting Kalanguya families apart. This is a different view from that taken by the intelligentsia. The latter view the present situation of the Kalanguya as that of a fractured, invisible, and voice-less society. To remedy this, they want to create boundaries that will unify Kalanguya territory. On the other hand, the Kalanguya on the ground experience it in reverse. While they see the IPRA as offering the guarantee of titled land, they also feel that the implementation of the IPRA and the delineation of new boundaries is creating friction and fissures among Kalanguya, where there were no such issues in the past. This is not to say that the conflict arises directly from the new boundaries. Rather, the issues stem from the entanglement of the latter with yet other, previously existing physical and socio-political boundaries. Thus, for the Kalanguya, the IPRA affords both a threat to their sociality as a people as well as a guarantee of their continued and rightful occupation of their lands.

#### NCIP positionality

Having looked at some of the ways in which the IPRA is implemented at the interface, I would now like to return to the positionality of NCIP officers and how they influence the assertion of indigenous rights and claims among ili-based indigenous people. As was observed in the interface, NCIP officers, ili-based indigenous peoples, and other indigenous individuals in government are enmeshed in the implementation process.

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<sup>24</sup> In other ADBRs, it was also elected Kalanguya local government officials that protested the ancestral domain claim of Kabayan. It is interesting to note that protests against the inclusion of Tawangan and Lusod in Kabayan were also voiced by ili-based Kalanguya elite who are known not to be political allies of those leading the Kalanguya Tribal Organization

The negotiations that would come to bear were often those that took place between indigenous politicians and government officials at the municipal and barangay levels. Their involvement both hindered and aided the NCIP in meeting its targets. Local government officials extended assistance to the NCIP by sometimes contributing funds out of municipal budgets for transportation and food for participating elders and community members. However, in many instances negotiations remained at a deadlock precisely because local politicians refused to compromise. The NCIP officers would often remind indigenous government officials that the residents or landholders, led by their elders, should negotiate among themselves. But they soon realized that indigenous politicians in Benguet each had their own set of elders, to whom they would turn for their convincing powers at the local level.<sup>25</sup>

Within local politics, the NCIP officers were by turns praised and maligned by other indigenous intelligentsia holding public office. They were praised for their understanding of indigenous processes and life ways, since they themselves are indigenous. On the other hand, they were also frequently accused of confusing and manipulating ili-based indigenous peoples unfamiliar with the law and the legal processes entailed in the IPRA's implementation.



Photo 3.4: An officer of the NCIP plots out a Tawangan genealogy at a re-validation session.

<sup>25</sup> In a meeting in which all the municipal mayors of Benguet were invited to a forum with the NCIP, a staffer told them explicitly, "Please tell your elders it's alright to compromise. What usually happens at our negotiations is that they refuse to budge until their mayor comes. In fact they are the ones who should be making decisions according to tradition." For a policy discussion on the contemporary role of the council of elders in the implementation of the IPRA, see Cordillera Highland Agrarian Resource Management (CHARM) Project and Cordillera Studies Center (CSC) (2003).

The positionality of the NCIP as an organization has interesting links back to the history of the American colonial period. First, it parallels the functions of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, and thus, second, it perpetuates the reified divide between Christian lowlanders and non-Christian uplanders, except that now the uplanders are also Christian. Furthermore, the NCIP is processing claims that are rooted in the American period, case in point Kabayan. Not only does the NCIP configure the Cordillera region as the natural and rightful territory of the uplanders, just as the Americans did, it is also faced with claims that are based on colonial municipal boundaries.

The IPRA's reification of indigenous ancestry and knowledge does not take into account the fact that the elders of today inherited their knowledge from their own elders who lived during the American period. Seen this way, it is no longer surprising that the elders of Kabayan identified American boundaries when they were asked to delineate Kabayan's territory. Prior to the American administration it was unlikely that boundaries were traditionally conceived of or defined as such.

Sardan (2005: 177) points out that colonization institutionalized the traditional or "pseudo-traditional" roles of indigenous/local intermediaries in political representation. He describes the relationships among various indigenous brokers and intermediaries as cutting "across lines of kinship and social or ethnic affiliation" and adding "a new stratum to the multiple conflicts and local alliances already in place" (ibid).

The positionality of the individual NCIP officers shifts in relation to the actors that they face. Based on the foregoing discussion, we can come to the following conclusions about how individual positionalities affect the IPRA's implementation: First, the officers of the NCIP work under temporal discipline and pressure to meet targets. They have to comply with deadlines, donor policies, and project cycles. Thus, in spite of their primary role as facilitators of a process, they tend to push for decisions on the ground. This influence that they exert on ili-based indigenous peoples is done more with regard to the interests of donors and the NCIP's own deadlines and system goals<sup>26</sup> than with the interests of the peoples whose rights they are meant to protect. The power to exert influence stems in part from their being representatives of the state.

Second, the NCIP officers constantly balance between the "we" of indigenous peoples, and the "us" of government officials. They frequently express pride in their indigenous roots, and in the commonalities shared across indigenous boundaries. For example, at the ADBR described above, they proudly explained to me, the outsider, that five languages were being spoken at the ADBR, and still people understood what was being said in each language. Their own indigenous positionality is a double-edged blade. While it gives them access to relationships within the ili and to a tentative brotherhood/sisterhood, it also places them in an awkward position when they are accused of misunderstanding local contexts. As government officials, it sometimes becomes necessary for them to overlook local contexts in order to meet national goals. Furthermore, their leadership differs greatly from the traditional, ili-based leaders of the past.

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<sup>26</sup> System goals involve the preservation of an organization's rules and procedures, relationships of patronage, and systems of rank and administrative order (Mosse 2005: 104).

Ethnography on the different indigenous groups of the Cordillera show that elders and/or community leaders rarely performed their duties as full-time, remunerated jobs, or made decisions pertaining to community matters and disputes individually. In the past, they tended fields and livestock, went hunting, and did work just like the rest of the community. They responded to community matters as the need arose, and acted as members of a council. Compensation came mainly in the form of meat, butchered and distributed among council and community members according to the occasion and decision at hand. Furthermore, the elite were expected to perform prescribed rituals in order to gain stature in the community. As leaders they were expected to have certain skills and qualities such as the ability to remember people's genealogies, to demonstrate diplomacy, articulacy, and courage.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, indigenous individuals in government are removed from the daily life of the communities they originate from, and the communities they work with. Their work lives are dominated by the temporal and textual disciplines of their positions.

This brings me to my final point about NCIP positionality: the “us” of government officials. The work of implementing the IPRA does not take place in an indigenous world or in an administrative world of its own, separate from other implementation regimes of the national government. It would be interesting to go deeper into how politics reign in ancestral domains and how political alliances or feuds influence funding, implementation, and resistance on regional and national levels, and the relationships that are maintained between the NCIP and the national government. At almost every turn, the NCIP officials contend with conflicting policies, laws, and interests of various government agencies and politicians. It should also be noted that the NCIP is comparatively one of the most underfunded and toothless government agencies. In the following section, I examine briefly three more government entities with a presence in Tawangan.

### **Other Government Agencies in Tawangan**

In this section, I will explore briefly the influence of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the local government unit on the formation of various Kalanguya claims to land and resources. I take these government agencies and their indigenous representatives to be actors who contribute to the transformation of landscapes and timescapes. I will also look into whether indigeneness is an important factor in the interface between the officials of each of these government organizations and the Tawangan Kalanguya, and if it is, then I will describe how. The discussion will be limited to the following: the DAR and the issuance of a “mother” Certificate of Land Ownership Award in Tawangan; the DENR and the inclusion of Tawangan in the boundaries of the Mount Pulag National Park; and local government officials, their views on the abovementioned government programs, and the ways in which they presented themselves to the community during the campaign

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<sup>27</sup> The roles of the elders, recognized leaders, and elite individuals or families have various nuances across the Cordillera region. The ways in which these roles have been taken on and transformed, and the degree to which they shape change in local communities has also varied greatly over time. For examples of these nuances, influences, and transformations, see Barton (1949, 1969), Jefremovas (2001), Lewis (1992), Moss (1980), Prill-Brett (1987, 1992), Tapang (1985).

period for local elections in 2004. In all three instances, the officials that meet with the residents of the ili are themselves indigenous.

#### The Department of Agrarian Reform

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) began its work in Tawangan in the year 1996. They asked the residents of Tawangan to identify their agricultural land so that they could be issued Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (CLOA). Technically, Tawangan does not fall under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), the primary program of the DAR. The entire area of the barangay is officially classified as inalienable and indisposable public land. What is more, it lies within a protected area. However, by arguing that the land was agrarian land prior to the declaration of the protected area, and following the recognition of indigenous rights as provided for in the Philippine Constitution, the regional office of the DAR in the Cordilleras was able to justify the identification of Tawangan as an agrarian reform community. Just like the NCIP, this was done under pressure in the DAR to meet targets.

A memorandum of agreement concerning the creation of agrarian reform communities and the extension of agrarian reform services within the Mt. Pulag National Park was created between the regional offices of the DAR and the DENR. This memorandum of agreement, also known as Operation Highland Wind (Batcagan 2007: 42), was negotiated between the regional directors of the respective government agencies. In an interview, an official of the DAR in Benguet remarked that it was possible to reach such an agreement because both regional directors were indigenous to the region and understood the circumstances of the people in the outlying areas of the Cordillera. According to him, it was anticipated that the establishment of an agrarian reform beneficiary community within a protected area would translate into the recognition of indigenous rights and the delivery of social services to an otherwise “isolated” community. The memorandum of agreement was rescinded in 1998, but the fact remains that a “mother” CLOA exists in Tawangan, within the bounds of the Mt. Pulag National Park and the Kabayan ancestral domain claim. It is a “mother” CLOA because all the agricultural land in Tawangan was issued the certificate as one block with a list of all the owners. There are no individual certificates of ownership, and officials foresee that these will not be forthcoming in the future because of the technicalities surrounding the issue.

Kabayan leaders describe the CLOA as a “deception to people” (Kabayan Ancestral Domain Management Plan, 1996: 7).<sup>28</sup> Officials of the DENR dismiss the CLOA as illegal (Batcagan 2007: 54-55). For the ili-based Kalanguya, the CLOA stands as a guarantee of secure occupation and ownership on their land, negating their being subject to the rules and regulations of the national park, which is felt locally as a threat.

To the Tawangan Kalanguya, the CLOA is also the foundation of their ten-year relationship with a development facilitator of DAR, herself indigenous to another area of Benguet, and who now considers Tawangan to be her home. Over the years, she has helped to build up a cooperative which runs a store, and which has given the community and local farmers access to loans for farm development. She has also organized various

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<sup>28</sup> This statement was written in the context of the DENR Administrative Order No. 2, the IPRA’s direct predecessor in terms of the recognition of ancestral lands and ancestral domains.

seminars and training workshops on livelihood and farming techniques. She did not explicitly frame her successes within her indigenosity, as other officials have done. Instead, she attributed the progress of her work to her long-standing relationship with Tawangan. On the other hand, she speculated on “cultural attitudes” in Tawangan and their effects on development. According to her, some people did not do what was necessary to “develop” out of shyness and an unwillingness to stand out among their neighbors. She attributed this to Kalanguya culture. It is interesting to note that unlike her counterparts in the NCIP, she did not see the need to found her relationships with the Tawangan Kalanguya on the basis of shared indigenosity, or of her membership in a pan-Cordilleran community.

The issuance of the “mother” CLOA, the application for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim under the DENR, and the conversion process from a certified claim to a domain title under the NCIP, all came in close succession in Tawangan. Given the history of tenurial insecurity in Tawangan, it is not that surprising that the Kalanguya have developed relationships of varying degrees of depth and intensity with government officials who, in their capacities as both indigenous individuals and holders of public office, represent the “guarantee” aspect of the state. Mosse points out a parallel argument when he writes, “poor people facing chronic insecurity prioritize the maintenance of relationships with people (patrons or projects) having better access to resources and offering social protection in the short term, even though this limits their capacity for longer-term economic mobility” (2005: 121, referring to Wood 2003). I find this to be the case in Tawangan especially since the overlapping of legal boundaries is likely to result in further confusion, and may have serious implications for the tenurial security and future of the Tawangan Kalanguya. This brings me to the other boundaries that have been laid upon the landscape of Tawangan: those of the Mt. Pulag National Park, as established by the DENR.

#### The Department on Environment and Natural Resources

The DENR has at least two significant roles in the shaping of Kalanguya claims to land in Tawangan. First of these is through the establishment and policing of the Mt. Pulag National Park by Presidential Decree in 1987, and second is through the ancestral domain claim made by Kabayan under DENR A.O. NO. 2 of 1993. I have already discussed the latter briefly, earlier in this paper, so I will now turn my attention to how indigenosity is invoked in the context of the national park.

The National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS), or Republic Act 7586 of 1992, recognizes the right to ancestral domains of indigenous cultural communities within protected areas, provided that the communities abide by the rules and regulations of the DENR concerning the protection of the area they occupy. While this appears to recognize that a people cannot be severed from their environment, the NIPAS also insists that livelihood activities within protected areas remain at subsistence levels thereby assuming that indigenous occupants are frozen in an timeless nature where no socio-economic changes take place. Notably, the identification of indigenous communities within an area is called for after the fact of the delineation of a protected area.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See the NIPAS Implementing Rules and Regulations, Chapter 5.

One DENR official, indigenous to Benguet, observed that the first delineation of the Mt. Pulag park was done on maps, without ground-truthing. Unsurprisingly, this has resulted in the inclusion of entire communities such as Tawangan and Lusod, and the exclusion of expanses of mossy forest. This same DENR official noted that this happened because the delineation took place in Manila, and there were no knowledgeable indigenous officials present to prevent the mistake from being carried out. The same emphasis on indigenosity as a determinant of success or failure on state-sponsored projects was made by a member of the Protected Areas Management Board (the site-based, multi-sectoral body responsible for the management of the park) when he proudly informed me that theirs is one of the most active Boards in the country because of cooperation among indigenous peoples. On the other hand, a DENR official pointed out that violations of park rules and regulations are not reported to the Board because of a tacit agreement among indigenous occupants not to blow the whistle on each other.<sup>30</sup>

Because of the prevailing circumstances in the national park, the Tawangan Kalanguya are forced to straddle a line between legality and illegality. The park is described by ill-based indigenous people as a threat to their existence, and an impediment to their development. Technically, they should not be clearing forested areas for the expansion of their vegetable gardens, but because of a lack of direct police powers on the part of the DENR agricultural expansion proceeds apace in Tawangan. The DAR's focus on supporting the farming of commercial vegetables in Tawangan also contributes to the ongoing transformation of the environment. Thus, some DENR officials see the implementation of the IPRA and the CARP as a threat to the conservation of biodiversity in the park. The awarding of a domain title, they fear, may result in the disestablishment of the park, which would leave no legal measures in place to assure the protection of the forested areas and the ecosystem of Mt. Pulag.

Some of the members of the Protected Areas Management Board are also local government officials in the municipality of Kabayan.

#### The Local Government Unit and local politicians

Local government officials in the municipality of Kabayan are unequivocally against the existence of the Mt. Pulag National Park. They have even put forward a petition to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, requesting for the protected area to be converted into an "ancestral park". They are opposed to what they express as a violation of their prior, indigenous rights to the territories that fall within the boundaries of the national park. The national park becomes a scapegoat for them, one of the primary reasons that development is slow in Kabayan. One member of the local government in Kabayan went as far as to voice suspicion of the motives of certain DENR officers. He claimed that their strategic positions in the DENR were part of an attempt to "grab" Mt. Pulag from the Ibalays of Kabayan and place it under the control of other municipalities, namely Bokod. In contrast to the repeated instances in which indigenosity was invoked as a factor in creating understanding and forging links at the regional and local levels, this example

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<sup>30</sup> See Chapter Seven for an ethnographically-based discussion on how the Protected Areas Management Board of Mt. Pulag operates.



presents the other side of the coin. This time, the combination of indigenusness and public office made certain government officials culpable of hidden agendas in the eyes of others.

This one suspicion is in stark contrast to the way in which political candidates – all of them Ibaloy – presented themselves to the Tawangan Kalanguya during the campaigns for the 2004 elections. The candidates strategically chose to travel with the NCIP. At the time (April 2004), the NCIP was conducting a validation of proofs and documents that were submitted by each barangay as part of the conversion of the ancestral domain claim into a title. It was convenient for the political candidates to travel with them, as the logistics were already in place. The NCIP had sent out letters informing every barangay that they would come. They made arrangements for an assembly of the elders and indigenous leaders, and also provided for snacks and meals. The NCIP graciously invited the candidates to speak when they came to the end of the validation activities in each barangay.

One of the candidates, a re-electionist Ibaloy with a Kalanguya mother, delivered his campaign speech in fluent Kalanguya. This thrilled the Tawangan residents and when the next candidate stepped forward, they teased him, albeit with cautious respect, and asked him to speak in Kalanguya as well. He protested apologetically, explaining with good humor that he would appear to be “trying hard”.<sup>31</sup> In inter-group relations, language switches were made upward, depending on ascribed status (see Afable 1989: 200-220 for an in-depth discussion of this). So a Kalanguya would shift to Ibaloy when speaking to an Ibaloy. On the other hand, an Ibaloy would rarely shift “down” to Kalanguya when speaking to a Kalanguya. The re-electionist’s example may suggest that this has changed with time and that politicians in particular use language to demonstrate their solidarity with the people that they regard as voters. In their campaign speeches they explicitly referred to themselves as representatives of indigenous peoples and staunch protectors of the peoples’ rights. This may have been an offshoot of their riding piggyback with the NCIP activities.

### Discussion

As the foregoing discussions have shown, the IPRA renders visible the ongoing tension in indigenous self-determination in which belonging “becomes both a goal to strive for and one to resist” (Rosaldo 2003: 3). In some instances the professional indigenous persons discussed in this paper pushed for the increased access to entitlements of the indigenous groups they represented on the grounds that they have been treated unfairly in the past because of their ethnic identity (Sardan 2005: 175). However, these same actors also work to promote and/or entrench themselves and their allies (ibid) in the political sphere of government agencies and elections.

I will now return to the questions posed at the beginning of the paper: How is the IPRA transforming the ways in which indigenous peoples make claims to land and resources?

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<sup>31</sup> While making extra efforts to please others is seen as a virtue, when one is described as “trying hard”, then it is implied that your actions are perceived to be pretentious.

What roles do indigenous government representatives from various agencies play in these transformations? Is indigenous identity a key factor in the interface of government representatives and indigenous communities? If it is, when does it count and how is it brought to the fore during interactions?

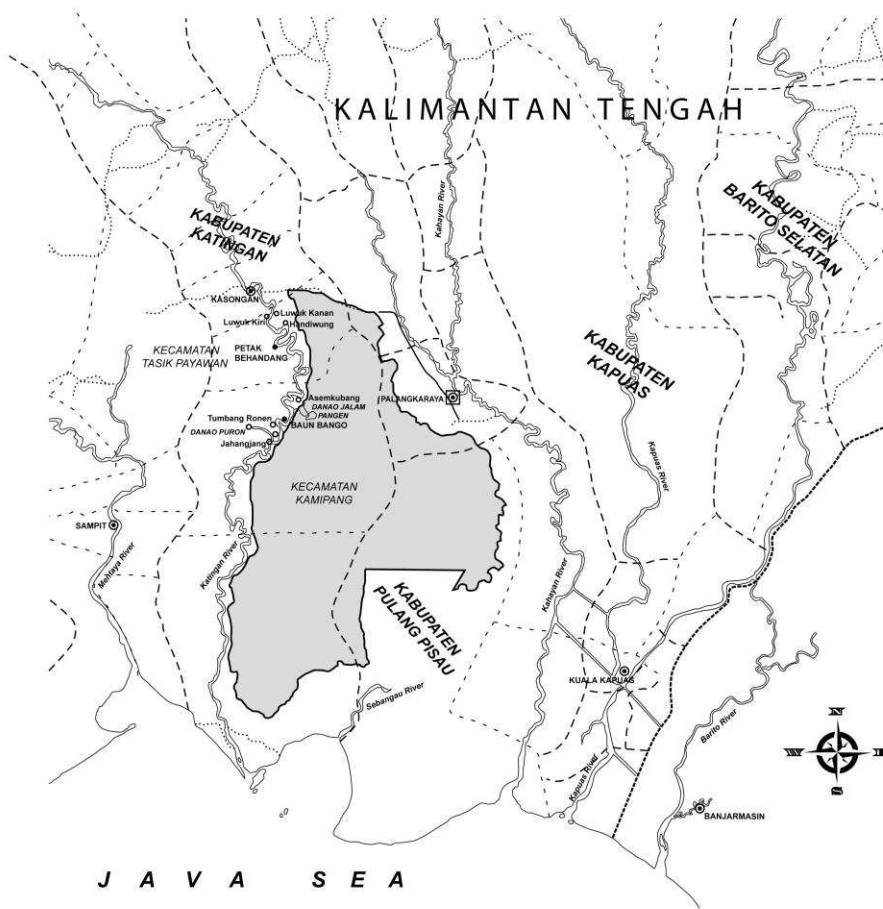
People travel across distances to witness or be part of IPRA's implementation. Not only do the members of the Commission have to travel to implement it but it has the power to summon people because of the guarantee of a land/domain title. The assumption is that the IPRA would give people security by issuing land titles to groups over areas that were formerly classified as public land. However, the proliferation of boundaries that comes with the implementation of IPRA alongside other national laws and policies has also created insecurity and fissures in indigenous groups such as the Kalanguya.

Ili-based indigenous people asserted their knowledge of and rights to boundaries by invoking pathways used by ancestors, burial places of ancestors, inherited farmlands, water sources, forests, former sites of swidden fields, and hunting areas. They expressed their connectedness to their environment, and their entitlements within that environment, in terms of direct, practical action within a continually changing landscape. Even the payment of land taxes falls within the range of practical actions that the ili-based indigenous can opt to take in their landscape. On the other hand, indigenous government officials made statements and claims of a different nature. They spoke of ancestral domains in terms of national law and in the general context of a nation-state. The Kalanguya intelligentsia and public government officials invoked Kalanguya sovereignty and unity as well as national sovereignty and the place of the Kalanguya in the nation. This rhetoric was put forward as a means to protest other claims that they thought to be engulfing Kalanguya territory, and to press for their envisioned Kalanguya domain.

However, indigenous identity in people's daily lives is not exactly concurrent with the IPRA's definition of indigenous peoples, which binds identity to land and homogenous communities. While the connection between land and identity is partly correct, the IPRA fails to deal with the fact that being indigenous is often brought to the fore as something with political meaning, and not just meanings of affinity, consanguinity, or placedness. It is interesting to note however that the emphasis of the NCIP on indigeneity reflects the same reification or divide championed by Spanish and American colonizers, and that indigenous leaders today echo similar essentializing sentiments regarding particular attributes that make interaction among indigenous peoples "different". Again this aspect of NCIP positionality leads back to Sardan's (2005) observation on the colonial roots of the roles of indigenous brokers and intermediaries.

The creation of a class of educated and politically active indigenous elite has positive and negative aspects to it. On the one hand, as I have shown here, the visions of 21<sup>st</sup> century indigenous leaders tend to be divorced from local needs and realities. On the other hand, they are instrumental in the maintenance of local control over vital resources. Furthermore, they have protected the interests of indigenous people in the Cordillera far more effectively than in other parts of the Philippines, where indigenous peoples have virtually no voice in governance. This case of indigenous dominance in their own territories is unique in the Philippines. Professional indigenous persons contribute to the creation and maintenance of a localized version of the nature-culture *imaginaire*, with varying successes and failures. As I have observed it, their emphasis is more often on the aspect of the nature-culture *imaginaire* that pushes for social justice, than on the aspects of sustainable development and environmental protection.

The emergence of an indigenous elite with a stake in governance has given form to a tension between a struggle for indigenous self-determination on the one hand, and a desire for recognition and support from the state on the other. While being indigenous is posed as the reason people understand each other at provincial and local levels of governance, indigenous people themselves frame conflict in terms of their different ethnic identities and places of origin. “Indigenous” as a general category forms part of today’s pan-Cordilleran unified identity. However, indigenesness or ethnic identity as a specific category is itself a shifting social boundary among indigenous intelligentsia who have made a choice to be known as such and to remain as such, and who constantly re-draw the line between insider or outsider, and included or excluded.



**LEGEND:**

- KABUPATEN / DISTRICT
- KECAMATAN / SUB-DISTRICT
- SUNGAI / RIVER
- DANAO / LAKE
- JALAN BERASPAL / PAVED ROAD
- TAMAN NASIONAL SEBANGAU / NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY
- BATAS PROPINSI / PROVINCIAL BOUNDARY

**LOCATION MAP  
KECAMATAN KAMIPANG  
KABUPATEN KATINGAN**

## CHAPTER FOUR



Photo 4.1: A temporary shelter, or pondok, in one of Danao Jalam Pangen's many tributaries.

### **Ngaju Riverscapes and Timescapes: Social and Environmental Change in a Central Kalimantan Village**

"I'm happy when I'm in the forest because that's where my work is. When I'm in the forest, I don't feel uneasy. I always know exactly what to do. I feel one with nature."

The fact that this statement was made by a Ngaju Dayak earning a living from logging in Central Kalimantan poses interesting contradictions when considered from various key actors' points of view. An environmentalist might ask how one could speak of oneness with nature, and yet destroy nature by cutting down trees? One Indonesian government official might euphemistically refer to the logging as *usaha masyarakat*, or the livelihood of the people (literally, "community effort"). Another government official might vehemently speak out against it as illegal logging. For the Ngaju Dayak, the contradictions lay in the transformation of their daily livelihood routines into acts of illegality.

The involvement of Ngaju Dayak in logging also appears to be in contradiction with a Declaration of Central Kalimantan as an Ecological Region that was made by a gathering of adat leaders and community leaders in 2002. The declaration refers to Indonesia's environmental laws and regulations as basis. It also reflects the romantic image of

indigenous peoples living harmoniously with nature. Environmentalists may label certain aspects of the contemporary livelihood repertoire of Ngaju Dayak as destructive but Ngaju Dayak consistently describe their work as interdependent with nature, and assert that this is in continuity and consonance with their ancestors' way of life. In interviews and conversations, individual Ngaju Dayak emphasized this continuing relationship with the environment, attributing it to their traditions, beliefs, and identity. This chapter explores this notion of a continuum of practices and lifeways in terms of timescapes, emphasizing an environment that encapsulates past, present, the future, and the social as much as the natural.

How do these contradictions fit with everyday life, and with the ongoing and anticipated social and environmental changes in a Ngaju village in Central Kalimantan? "Ngajuness", work, and the environment are linked in everyday life in ways that go beyond nature-conservationists' normative assumptions on how indigenous peoples ought to live, or indigenous leaders' claims to the continued practice of ecologically-harmonious beliefs and traditions. In this chapter I aim to show in detail how work, or livelihood, and the environment become constantly negotiated uncertainties when conservation goals and local realities meet.

This ethnographic chapter on livelihood and timescapes derives mainly from data collected through participant-observation, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations with the residents of the village of Baun Bango, which is located along the Katingan River, 138 kilometers from the coast of Central Kalimantan, as the crow flies. The majority of the people of Baun Bango identify themselves as "Ngaju Dayak",<sup>1</sup> but they are also inter-married or co-residents with people from Java, Banjarmasin, and other parts of Indonesian Borneo.

Baun Bango lies on the western bank of the Katingan River. Houses are situated in two rows parallel to the river, bisected by one main path that runs the length of the village.<sup>2</sup> Beyond the immediate vicinity of the village is tropical peat swamp forest. It is in the vast river network, forests, and swamps surrounding the village that much of daily work takes place. In 2005, the village had 735 residents spread out in 174 households.<sup>3</sup> Despite Baun Bango's small population it is the seat of government for Kecamatan Kamipang, which is comprised of 13 other villages. In turn, Kamipang is one of 11 sub-districts belonging to the young regency of Katingan, which was officially created in 2002 along with seven other regencies in Central Kalimantan (U.U. No. 5, 2002). Owing in part to the relative newness of the Katingan regency and the ensuing flurry of government-initiated activity, people had high hopes for kemajuan ("progress" or "modernization") during my fieldwork in 2003 and 2005.

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<sup>1</sup> In the course of countless introductions, people introduced themselves to me as Ngaju. "Ngaju" literally means "upriver". Basa Ngaju is the lingua franca of the province of Central Kalimantan and its speakers are settled along the banks of the province's many waterways and main rivers: the Kapuas, Kahayan, Rungan, Katingan, Mentaya, and Barito. The Ngaju Dayak also live in the cities of Kuala Kapuas, Sampit, and Palangkaraya.

<sup>2</sup> The Ngaju of Baun Bango do not live in the emblematic longhouses of the Dayak.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Laporan Data Penduduk (2005), and Laporan Data Rumah Penduduk (2005), two village records kept by the village head.

Following close on the heels of the establishment of Kabupaten Katingan, the World Wildlife Fund initiated a campaign for the protection of the orangutan and the establishment of the Sebangau Watershed as a protected forest, a vast area contiguous with the districts of Katingan and Pulang Pisau. This internationally supported campaign made visible a tension between conflicting images of the Ngaju Dayak and their interaction with the environment. This tension consisted mainly of the seeming contradiction between the expectations and goals of environmentalists and the words and actions of local people. Were the Ngaju Dayak indeed ecologically harmonious as they claimed to be, and as the environmentalist world expected them to be? Or were they a destructive people fallen from ecological grace? Were environmentalists here to work with the Ngaju? Or were they here to deprive the Ngaju of their vital source of livelihood – the forests and the rivers – in favor of the orangutan? How are green positionalities and the nature-culture imaginaire manifested in this context?

The Ngaju of Baun Bango and other villages were suspicious when WWF first made its entrance in Kabupaten Katingan. Many feared that the campaigns of WWF would lead to a curtailment of their livelihood, much of which is derived from natural resource use. Some went so far as to question the motives of WWF's interventions, given that the organization was internationally backed and not locally rooted. This doubt brought to the surface another tension in Baun Bango: the tension between membership and non-membership in a community, and how this is related to access to natural resources. Becoming a member of the local community could be as simple as taking up residence in Baun Bango. However, for many, membership was thought to entail an adherence to local ways, particularly Dayak ways. Membership could also be hinged on identity: being a Dayak of Borneo in general, or a Ngaju Dayak of Central Kalimantan in particular.

Thus far I have introduced two tensions at play in Ngaju riverscapes: 1) the tension between insiders and outsiders that is embedded in the control over access to natural resources, and 2) a conflicted and shifting green positionality in the nature-culture imaginaire that is registered in the tensions between Ngaju claims to traditions of ecological harmony and their environmental practices that are deemed destructive by agents of conservation. These tensions are interconnected and push and pull against each other in everyday village life and in ongoing changes and transitions. Through ethnographic descriptions I aim to show how these tensions articulate with Ngaju work, tradition, identity, the environment, and change.

### **Baun Bango's ethnohistory**

The oral history of the genesis of Baun Bango is a tale of an ancestor traveling down the Kapuas River, along the coast, and back upriver along the Katingan in search of work. It alludes to an ethnohistory of migration and livelihood that was dependent on the resources available in shifting landscapes and riverscapes. It reveals how the people of Baun Bango have transcended a perceived Ngaju backwardness that shapes their aspirations to modernity, and how this articulates with livelihood.

The re-telling that follows was reconstructed through a series of oral accounts given by village elders, 60 – 70 years of age. As told by these elders, there was a time when there were only ten villages, known as the Lewu Pulu, along the length of the Katingan River. This number of villages grew quickly and it can be surmised that Baun Bango's

formation is part of this swift increase of settlements along the Katingan, as told in both oral and written histories of the area.<sup>4</sup>

A man named Bango, from the upriver village of Tewang Sanggalan Garing, traveled along the Katingan in search of a good place to live and when he saw a spot that suited his needs, he cleared and burned the forest, and tended a swidden field there. After some years living and swiddening here he went on to another place and never returned. With his departure, the place became known as a bahun, or a swidden field that is left to revert to forest. Since then the area has always been called bahun Bango. That is, the former swidden field of Bango, who was the first man to eke out a living on the said spot. Today no one in the village knows where Bango went, or even where he is buried. The place remained without human occupation for many years.

Over time, many new settlements sprouted up along the Katingan River. The family of Miring, a man from the Kapuas River, first settled Baun Bango.<sup>5</sup> Miring spent his youth traveling from village to village, stopping in places where he could find work. He married and had children with Sarin, a woman from one of the upriver villages of Katingan. Even after his marriage he continued to travel in search of work. One day, he stopped in a village where he was invited to a feast. People were drinking, dancing, and singing for two days non-stop. By the second day, Miring was so drunk that he slept without getting up from where he was seated. During this time a child was beheaded in the swidden fields surrounding the village. The parents accused Miring of taking their child's head to use in a tiwah.<sup>6</sup> They asked for his head to replace the life of their child. The actual culprit, the story goes, was a hantuen, a witch, and Miring was falsely accused likely through the machinations of the guilty hantuen.<sup>7</sup> Miring was given the option to pay a fine, singer, to the couple but he did not have enough money. He inscribed on a bamboo tube a message asking for help and sent it to Mahar, a wealthy relative in a village presently known as Tumbang Ronen.

Mahar agreed to help but told Miring that he should become part of Mahar's household in Tumbang Ronen and harvest and dry his rattan for him. Miring effectively became a jipen, or a debt slave. He had to do everything that Mahar asked him to do. Mahar told Miring that his family could join the household. However, Miring did not want his wife and children to live with him as slaves.

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<sup>4</sup> Most Ngaju were occupying the lower and middle sections of the Kapuas and Kahayan rivers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Ngaju began moving westward and upriver to get away from intensified attempts by the Dutch to control their territories, and the Banjarmasin War (1859-1862). Thus it was reported that the population along the upper Kahayan and the Katingan increased substantially in the middle to late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Knapen 2001: 90-92). This in turn led to the establishment of a government center, an Onderdistrictshoofd, in Kasongan in 1880 (Rawing 2005: 1).

<sup>5</sup> The accounts contradicted each other over the actual village of Miring's origins. Some contended that he came from Hadohop, a village close to the coast. Others were certain that Miring came from a distant, upriver village. However, they were all in agreement about his being an olo Kapuas, from the Kapuas River.

<sup>6</sup> The tiwah is the secondary mortuary rite of the Ngaju and is considered by them to be the most important of their rituals. It is said that in former times the tiwah involved the sacrifice of live slaves or offerings of human heads. For in-depth descriptions and discussions on the tiwah, see Schiller 1997a.

<sup>7</sup> Although the false accusation leveled at Miring and suspicions of the dirty work of a hantuen were common elements in the accounts I heard, the details of the murder itself varied in each. Such variations are not unusual in oral histories.



So he told Mahar that he would find them a place to stay. He chose bahun Bango, which was a short distance upriver from Tumbang Ronen.<sup>8</sup>

While Miring served Mahar as a jipen, his family worked hard in bahun Bango. They cleared new swidden fields, went fishing, gathered forest products, wove mats, made baskets, and traded with merchants and other travelers along the Katingan River. The eldest daughter married a Bugis merchant who traded in goods between Java and Kalimantan. Eventually, they were able to accumulate wealth for themselves. They acquired pusaka, or heirlooms such as jars and gongs. These objects gave them status as a family. One day, they sounded their gongs in bahun Bango, and Mahar heard the gongs from Tumbang Ronen. He took a boat and rowed towards the sound. He reached bahun Bango and he saw one of Miring's sons striking a gong to show that he could redeem his father from debt. Mahar then released Miring and Miring joined his family in bahun Bango. Over the years, the population of bahun Bango increased as people from neighboring villages and from further afield settled and married with the children and grandchildren of Miring and Sarin. Eventually the name of the village became Baun Bango. Many of Baun Bango's residents today are the direct descendants of Miring and Sarin.<sup>9</sup> Miring is the dato, the apical ancestor, of the people of Baun Bango.

Ngaju notions of mobility, social hierarchy, wealth, and work can be teased out from this people's history of Baun Bango as told and re-told by the villagers and descendants of Miring. The Ngaju were traditionally swidden horticulturalists, without occupational specialization (Schiller 1997a: 14, Miles 1976: 6). They often moved from place to place in search of livelihood.<sup>10</sup> Schärer (1963: 2) posits that the Ngaju fanned out to other areas of Central Kalimantan from the Kahayan River. Knapen, in his environmental history of Southeast Borneo shows movements up and down the main rivers of Central Kalimantan. Thus the Ngaju did not simply migrate downriver as they moved into a so-called modern era. Rather, they moved up and down the rivers searching for livelihood, following opportunities brought by world commerce, and fleeing violence brought by colonial powers in conflict with local interests.

In Baun Bango those who proudly identify themselves as Ngaju consider themselves to be living downriver from that nebulous or undefined "upriver" point of origin. Thus in Baun Bango "upriver" is spoken of not only as geographically far away from 21<sup>st</sup> century locales, but it is also regarded as temporally distant from present-day lives. "Upriver" is

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<sup>8</sup> One informant posited that Miring may have been a descendant of Bango, which gave him the right to re-open the swidden. However, given that Bango had been gone from the site for long enough so that people lost track of him, then anybody would have had the right to re-open the swidden without seeking permission. According to Miles (1976: 61), "Once the memory of the title holder lapses, a fallowing tract becomes a free good." I will discuss land rights and access in further detail later on.

<sup>9</sup> The children in Baun Bango at the time of my first fieldwork in 2003 corresponded to the seventh generation descended from Miring. By counting 20 years per generation, the arrival of Miring's family in Baun Bango may be placed roughly in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is highly plausible that the establishment of the settlement coincided with the movements of Ngaju westward from Kapuas and Kahayan (see note 3).

<sup>10</sup> It is still common among the young people of Baun Bango to move out of the village in search of work opportunities. During my second phase of fieldwork in Baun Bango in 2005, all but one of my young friends from the 2003 period of fieldwork had left the village and were wage earners in urban centers.

therefore also “before” or the past while to be Ngaju today is to aspire to kemajuan while holding on to pride of place, and tradition.

Miles’ study of the Ngaju Dayak in the 1970’s led him to the observation that “a settlement is as dependent on migration as reproduction for its population” (Miles 1976: 62). The Ngaju way of life and sociality was such that “an individual or household may move from one community, neighborhood or domestic unit at will” (ibid: 73). Miles (1976) and Schiller (1997a) observed that the Ngaju formed kin-centered communities in which distrust of strangers prevailed even as people were highly mobile and membership could easily change. This distrust was due to the fear of witchcraft, and practices of headhunting and slavery that prevailed up until Dutch administrators outlawed them in a landmark gathering of Dayak village leaders in Tumbang Anoi in 1894.<sup>11</sup>

Hierarchy in Ngaju society is demonstrated – yet also obliquely subverted – in the re-telling of Baun Bango’s settlement history. Dato Miring is forced by circumstances to become a debt-slave. Notably, only one elderly woman explicitly stated what this story makes quite plain: “We are descendants of a jipen,” she said. She emphasized however that Miring only became a slave because he was unjustly and falsely accused. Furthermore, she described him as “jipen menjadi kaya”, or a slave who became rich. The access to a wide variety of natural resources in and around Baun Bango was the means available to the ancestors to transcend their lowly beginnings. As one of the elders put it:

“Our ancestors felt at home when they first came here. There was much work that they could do here... Although they could not read or write like we do, they wisely chose a place that could support a whole village. There is the river and a lake to provide for the livelihood of the people. So even if one could say that our ancestors were ignorant because they could not read or write I feel that up until now many of us still benefit from the results of their thinking and their labor. [The work] we do today still imitates them.”

Over time, these same resources would support the people of Baun Bango in gaining access to wider markets and the ability to become traders, as well as access to education and better job opportunities for their children.

## **Timescapes of Ngaju Livelihood**

“Ngaju Dayak can do up to seven different kinds of work in a day. Sometimes it seems to me that people care about the work more than the results! But that is part of being Dayak.” (Personal Communication, Pak Mansur, local leader in Baun Bango)

Although a number of families in Baun Bango are involved in small trade and some individuals are civic workers, the discussion here focuses on tasks or work that relies on natural resources and is engaged in by the majority of the village households. I refer to this delimited category as the livelihood repertoire, i.e. the range of options that can be

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<sup>11</sup> For an example of how this meeting continues to be part of present-day expressions of Ngajuness, see also Chapter Seven.

performed in a locality in terms of skills and locally available resources, providing for the sustenance and income of individuals and households. The livelihood repertoire is similar to Croll's and Parkin's (1992: 12) productive bricolage in that it includes "tasks over which agents see themselves as having some control, as distinct from work controlled by others outside the home." This category includes those forms of work that the people of Baun Bango say they inherited from their ancestors, such as swidden cultivation, hunting, fishing, and the gathering of non-timber forest products. The category also includes sources of income that are relatively "new", such as logging, and those sources of livelihood locals refer to as "experimental", such as the planting of high-yield varieties of rice in the swamplands.

As the man quoted above says, the Ngaju of Baun Bango may divide their time among several tasks, each of which is directed towards harnessing different affordances and forms of livelihood. Most of the livelihood options can be carried out throughout the year, but each has its peak season. Below, I describe the main livelihood options in detail, with an eye to the temporal aspects of each activity, and the objective results of each form of livelihood. By paying close attention to the temporality of work in Baun Bango I aim to show how the livelihood repertoire of the Ngaju of Baun Bango is inextricable from the environment, just as the rhythms of everyday life are intertwined with the rhythms of natural seasons. This, I will argue, is the reason the Ngaju do not see a paradox between their sense of union with the environment and their contemporary livelihoods and aspirations.



Photo 4.2: Pak Mohles and a nephew harvest rice from their "experimental" ladang near Baun Bango. The area was naturally burned and then was later flooded but the household was able to harvest some rice for their own consumption.

#### Malan: the tasks of swiddening

In the memories of Baun Bango elders, and in the peoples' history of Baun Bango, the ladang or swidden field was the main source of food for their ancestors. As it was in the

past, the Ngaju today must be able to anticipate the coming of the dry months and the rainy months for the success and efficiency of their swiddening activities. The following description derives mainly from interviews with household members involved in swidden cultivation.

In the months of July and August, the rains begin to wane and the water level of the Katingan River slowly creeps lower. This is when people decide whether or not they will maintain a ladang for the year, depending on the availability of labor within the household, or whether or not household members will be available to monitor the ladang over the course of six months. Household members also consider whether other sources of livelihood are anticipated to be more lucrative and/or productive for the year.<sup>12</sup> Those households that decide to work on a ladang search for a suitable location and begin clearing the selected area in July or August.

There is a slight difference between starting a new ladang in primary forest, and re-opening a bahun or a former swidden field after a fallow period. A new ladang entails cutting down large trees to make a clearing, which is done quickly with chainsaws. In general, re-opening a bahun is less work, as secondary growth is easier to clear.<sup>13</sup> A fallow period for a bahun used to last at least seven years, according to interviewees. Beginning in the 1960's, shortening fallow periods were recorded among the Ngaju (Knapen 2001: 249, n. 72).<sup>14</sup> At the time of fieldwork, fallow periods were reported to be between zero and three years. Increasing population pressure and economic activity, the effects of logging operations, and the conversion of ladang into rattan plantations have contributed to this change. This is also due to ecological limitations, because much of the area surrounding Baun Bango is tropical peat swamp forest and therefore unsuitable for agriculture.

The dry season is usually in full swing by September or October, and by this time the cut grass (from secondary growth) or trees and foliage are dry enough for burning to begin.<sup>15</sup> The field is burned in small, manageable patches, instead of in one large blaze that is difficult to control. The fire destroys any remaining weeds and the resulting ash helps to fertilize the field.<sup>16</sup>

A few days after the fields have been burned, the villagers gather to assist one another in the work of planting the crops, using exchange labor. The household of the host ladang provides a temporary resting and eating shed, and ample food, refreshments, cigarettes, and baram (local rice brew). Work begins early in the morning. The men proceed in a

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<sup>12</sup> Households that prefer to invest their time and labor in fishing, logging, or other forms of livelihood may opt out of swidden cultivation.

<sup>13</sup> Dayak farmers generally say that a ladang opened in primary forest yields more than a bahun. However, some studies show the opposite to be true (see Knapen 2001: 201).

<sup>14</sup> Han Knapen discusses historical sources on swidden agriculture in Southeast Borneo, including one that pegs fallow periods at 12 years (Beukering 1947: 9 as referred to in Knapen 2001: 249, n. 72).

<sup>15</sup> Although none of the informants mentioned this, it is interesting to note that for some Dayak the time to begin burning was signaled by the direction in which the wind was blowing (Knapen 2001: 191).

<sup>16</sup> Swidden agriculture has often been criticized for contributing to the spread of the immense forest fires in Central Kalimantan, although this is only one part of the equation. Government interventions, sosialisasi, and training workshops have encouraged a systematic method for burning the dried vegetation, which is now practiced in Baun Bango.

line making holes in the ground with a pole. The women follow a step behind dropping seeds into the hole and covering them. This activity is called *manuggal*. As the work proceeds the men and women sing and make jokes. The young ones throw mud at each other and smear ash on each other's faces for fun and also as a form of courtship.

In the days to follow, each exchange group member's fields will be worked in rotation so that the planting is accomplished in a day for each *ladang*. This form of exchange labor is called *handep*. Two individuals or two households can use *handep* for other forms of work such as gathering firewood or boat building. The work and the amount of time to be exchanged must be equivalent.

Once planting is done, the household takes up residence in a dwelling that they build on the border of the *ladang* in order to facilitate weeding and to protect the crops from animals. Such temporary residences are called *pondok*. The *pondok* is an important dwelling for the Ngaju even if it is temporary. During this time household members return to the village only once or twice in the three months it takes for the crops to grow. When the crops are ready for harvest, the household harvests on its own. While these crops are primarily for subsistence, some women sell surplus crops from their field such as cassava leaves, cucumbers, and other vegetables in small quantities.

The Ngaju of Baun Bango say that the work involved in *swidden* agriculture today is exactly the same as when their ancestors first settled here. However, the crops planted, the use of the land, and the involvement of households have not remained constant over time. Ngaju 60 years of age and above who have lived in Baun Bango for most, if not all, of their lives recall that cassava was the predominant crop in their childhood. Sometimes, their families would plant a patch of vegetables in one corner of the *ladang*, and rows of corn and beans in between the cassava, which was the staple. According to Knapen (2001: 223), the relatively low labor inputs for cassava was regarded as an important "scarcity food" for the Dayak and the Banjarese, not because of famines but due to their involvement in various economic activities, such as the collection of forest products.

Historical sources indicate that the cultivation of rice throughout the island of Borneo seems to have gone through periods of setbacks as well as expansion (Knapen 2001: 216-218). The same could be said of rice in Baun Bango in this century alone. In the ancestors' times, reported the elders of Baun Bango, rice was planted in the *swidden* fields but on an irregular basis. Interestingly, Baun Bango residents in their 30s and 40s said that they were planting dry rice in the *swidden* fields for the first time in their lives in 2003. A few households also attempted to plant rice in the peat swamps across the Katingan River, in an area that had been cleared by a fire of natural causes. The rice crop in the peat swamps was referred to among villagers as "experimental".

Because of the involvement of the Ngaju and other resident ethnic groups in fishing and logging, which generated cash for the locals to buy their food and other needs, *malan*, or *swiddening*, was a secondary source of livelihood until 2003. This was attributed to the increased frequency of floods that destroyed the crops. Interestingly, in 2003 the locals predicted a resurgence of *malan* in Baun Bango. Several households had plans to open *swidden* fields side-by-side on dry land just adjacent to the village. The floods were observed to have decreased significantly in the past few years. In addition, logging was becoming less profitable because there were hardly any large trees left and people were already extracting trees only 20-35cm. in diameter.

Although they consider malan to be one of the means of subsistence that they practice in continuity with their ancestors' way of life, swidden agriculture is not a constant aspect of the everyday livelihood repertoire and/or in the environment of the Ngaju of Baun Bango. In summary, the shifting timescape of swidden agriculture is evident in three temporal aspects of the tasks of malan. First, it is clear that the work of malan is attuned to the coming and going of the seasons. Second, time is shared in the exchange of labor. In their practical interactions with the environment, the Ngaju of Baun Bango are attuned to one another's work-related decisions, the rhythms of their respective tasks, and the environmental conditions for the work they do. Thus, the seasonal changes in the environment are intimately intertwined with seasonal changes in the ways in which Baun Bango residents interact with one another. Furthermore, these changes are accompanied by shifts in the amount of time people spend in specific locations. The season for malan entails more time spent in the pondok than in the permanent residence in the village. Third, the prevalence of ladang as a source of subsistence has shifted across the generations. The Ngaju of Baun Bango have chosen to engage in different economic and practical opportunities over time. There is yet another way in which swidden agriculture – and therefore the landscape – is shifting over time in Baun Bango. Swidden fields are no longer being left to fallow and they are being converted into rattan plantations, which also form part of the livelihood repertoire of the Ngaju of Baun Bango.



Photo 4.3: Mami in the depths of a kebon rotan (rattan plantation) during a day of harvest. Mami and her companions will get half the worth of their harvest once it is sold. The other half will go to the owner of the plantation.

#### Menetes rotan: the tasks of harvesting rattan

Rattan harvested in the vicinity of Baun Bango comes from smallholder plantations, or kebon rotan, and not from the forest. At the time of fieldwork, more and more people were opting to plant rattan in their ladang after two or three swidden cycles.

Archival sources studied by Knapen (2001) show that up until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century rattan in the area of Southeast Borneo was collected from the forest.<sup>17</sup> The history of the shift from collection to cultivation is interesting because local motivations for planting rattan at the time continue to be reflected in 21<sup>st</sup> century rattan-related decision-making in Baun Bango.

In the accounts of Schwaner (1853-54, as referred to in Knapen 2001: 359), every inhabitant living along a particular river traditionally had rights to collect rattan in that river basin. Permission had to be sought first from the village head in a given area, simply to prevent two or more people from competing over the same rattan stand. Schwaner also wrote of temporary migrations of groups from one river basin to another to collect rattan in areas where it was more abundant. Occasionally village heads refused such groups from very remote areas, for fear that they might disturb the peace, or to prevent over-exploitation of rattan stands (ibid).<sup>18</sup>

The trade in rattan was inconstant and insignificant in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The rise or fall of rattan collection (and its price) was mainly in response to taxes imposed by the sultan of Banjarmasin, or the risks posed by banditry and headhunting. The Dutch tried in varying degrees to regulate rattan trade and liberalize the market. Knapen (2001: 362-363) notes an increased interest in rattan among outsiders after 1860, and in 1866 the Dutch decided that “strangers” should be allowed to collect rattan along the middle Barito. They gave out written statements of private ownership for forests rich in rattan.<sup>19</sup> This led to a rise in conflicts between traders or collectors coming into the area, and local communities that suddenly lost their rights to their traditional territories. In response to the threats to their communal rights over land, the Dayak took up cultivating rattan.<sup>20</sup> Planting rattan in secondary forests or in their swidden after harvest enabled them to claim ownership over land and get certificates from the Dutch. While this kept outsiders from encroaching on Dayak land, it also made it easier for the Dutch to count and tax indigenous populations. (Knapen 2001: 363-364)

Finally, Knapen (2001: 364) posits that the shift to rattan cultivation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century “stimulated production and trade without the threat of overexploitation. When prices went up, the gardens could be harvested; when prices were low, the gardens were just left as they were. This way a huge potential of rattan was built up, ideally suited for the fluctuating demands of the world market.” Agents of environmentalism today still hold this view, that Central Kalimantan has “a huge potential of rattan.” However, while this situation may be suited to fluctuation of demand, this fluctuation is not exactly favorable for contemporary cultivators of rattan.

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<sup>17</sup> Although Knapen’s study covers the area of the Kahayan and Kapuas rivers, and the coast between them, a connection can be posited between the rattan trade that exists along the Katingan at present and the history drawn up by Knapen for the river basins east of the Katingan.

<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, this protocol persists today but in the arena of logging. See the *membatang* section below.

<sup>19</sup> Certificates of ownership were given to persons who had opened a forest by building canals or roads leading to rattan in the forest (Knapen 2001: 362)

<sup>20</sup> Encouraged by the colonial government, the German missionaries had begun the first experiments in cultivating rattan in the 1850’s. Over the next three decades the practice became more common (Knapen 2001: 362-363).

Rattan plantations in Baun Bango originated in at least four different ways at the time of fieldwork: 1) plantations were inherited from previous generations; 2) in some instances informants planted rattan on land inherited from their parents; 3) plantations could also be purchased from other villagers (the decision to sell a rattan plantation usually stems from a need for immediate cash); and 4) in 2003 and 2005 people were converting their ladang into rattan plantations. Parallel to the strategies of the Dayak in the 1860's, the latter decision is now a means to establish ownership of land, but also to secure a future source of income.

The first harvest of cultivated rattan comes seven to ten years after planting (Arifin and Mitlohner 2003). After that, informants in Baun Bango said that they could harvest rattan from their plantations every three to five years. More than this would kill the plants. According to those that owned rattan plantations, when they have reached this stage there is no need to do much maintenance work, except to ensure that the trees and bushes in the plantation do not grow too tall and compete with the rattan for light. There are two commercial species of rattan grown in the gardens of Baun Bango. These are rotan irit (*Calamus trachycoleus*) and rotan sigi (*Calamus caesius*). Rotan sigi fetches a higher price because it is wider in diameter and its color is paler or whiter than that of irit, which tends to be yellowish.<sup>21</sup> Rattan farmers are able to devote their time to other sources of livelihood and income when there is no harvest.

Both men and women do the work of harvesting rattan. Usually, wealthier households that own three or more plantations<sup>22</sup> invite their neighbors and friends to help with the harvest. Poorer households that own a rattan plantation will rely only on household members to get the work done. Depending on the size of the plantation, they might work several days from early morning until late afternoon. Harvest time may last for up to a month for some plantation owners. The thorny rattan vines are pulled down and stripped. The stripped vines are measured, cut, and tied together in bundles of 100 pieces each. Then the men make several trips carrying the bundles to the riverside where the rattan is tied down in the water to soak. The wet, unprocessed rattan is sold in units of 100 kilograms, or pikul. A densely cultivated rattan plantation measuring two hectares reportedly yielded up to six tons of rattan in one harvest. The income from the harvest is split evenly between each harvester and the owner of the plantation – satu banding satu, as they say. For example, if an individual or even a team of two harvested 300 kilograms of rattan and sold this for Rp. 300,000, then the harvesters would keep Rp. 150,000 and give the other half to the owner of the plantation.

Buyers usually come by boat from Kasongan or other villages close to Kasongan, such as Luwuk. The buyer transports the rattan by boat to his own village where it is smoked and treated with sulfur to make it whiter. Afterwards the rattan is soaked, stripped, and cleaned in the river again. Then it is dried in the sun after which is tied in bundles and transported to be sold to yet another middle man working at the district level. The district-level middleman then sells it at a higher price to factories, usually in Java. There

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<sup>21</sup> In June 2005 rotan irit was selling in Baun Bango at Rp. 70,000 for 1 pikul, or 100 kilograms and rotan sigi was selling for Rp. 100,000 per pikul. (Interview with rattan buyer, 2005)

<sup>22</sup> The members of one particular household in Baun Bango held eight plantations between them.



the rattan is made into furniture and other products ready for export.<sup>23</sup> A kilo of rattan costs ten times its village price once it is sold to factories (WWF Indonesia Kalimantan Tengah and University of Palangkaraya, n.d.).

The tasks and time devoted to rattan are, like malan, also part of a shifting Baun Bango timescape. A primary aspect of this timescape is the gap of two or more years between harvests in each plantation. This is intertwined with the preference of villagers to harvest rattan in the dry season, which in turn depends on people's commitment to other forms of livelihood. Between harvests, the people of Baun Bango rely on other sources of income and sustenance in their livelihood repertoire, such as fishing.



Photo 4.4: Ibu Sukarsih laying out salted fish to dry in the sun.

#### Melauk: the tasks of fishing

In a manuscript written at the request of Scharer circa 1935, Numun Kunum, a Ngaju Dayak teacher, enumerates at least 42 Ngaju fishing methods; each method with two or three other fishing techniques described under its category. Some of these methods were further classified as “a new type of fishing” (Klokke 2004).<sup>24</sup> In Baun Bango, eleven different fishing techniques were observed during fieldwork, some of them “new” by Kunum's estimation. While all households eat fish that they catch, fishing activities in

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<sup>23</sup> Raw rattan cannot be exported from Indonesia, as per national law. (Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 274/Kpts/VIII/1988)

<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, Kunum's manuscript does not elaborate on what constitutes a “new” fishing technique. It can only be assumed that by this he means fishing methods that do not belong to an emic category of traditional Ngaju fishing practices.

Baun Bango can be grouped according to purpose: fishing for household sustenance, and fishing for commercial purposes.

The simplest techniques for fishing for sustenance are angling and the use of small nets and fykes. Sometimes nets are strung out in a flooded area or a portion of the swamps for a day. In flooded land around the villages people set out hooks and bait attached to sticks that serve as floats. People also set up small fykes close to the river-bottom along tributaries and rivers. These methods are usually set up in the mornings and when the owners return in the afternoon they take whatever fish has been caught. The simplicity of these activities and the assurance that there is always a catch, no matter how small, gives the impression of an abundant supply of fish around Baun Bango.

Villagers set out in boats for the main river, or make their way into the maze of tributaries, canals, and lakes that surround Baun Bango. Household members work together when fishing. Households that engage in fishing for commercial purposes build pondok, or temporary houses, in fishing locations that are far from the village, usually at the mouths of tributaries and fishing canals, or on the banks of tributaries leading to the lakes. Sometimes two nuclear families that are related to each other but belonging to separate households may join together in fishing and share one pondok, or temporary shelter. Household members may spend up to two months in the pondok, only going back to the village to replenish basic supplies such as sugar, coffee, rice, and fuel.

Fishing activity peaks during long summers, when the water subsides drastically.<sup>25</sup> People in Baun Bango usually began fishing activities in June or July. According to the villagers the lake dries up completely when there is a drought. Villagers congregate at the lake and tributaries before all the water dries up. At this time, all the fish have grouped in areas where little water remains, and people claim that they can simply harvest the fish with their hands. Kunum describes this process, called mangarohi (Klokke 2004: 61). Taking baskets with them, people seek out holes filled with water where the fish might be and frighten them out of the hole, into a waiting basket, with their bare hands. When this happens, there is such an abundance of fish that they simply rot in the drying mud if the villagers do not collect them.

The most common techniques used for commercial fishing involved closing privately-owned tributaries or human-made canals with fish nets and bamboo fences (*rengge*, *hempeng*). *Rengge* is classified by Kunum as a new technique (Klokke 2004: 91). The *rengge* is a long net made of nylon, stretching up to 21 meters (*ibid.*)<sup>26</sup> Its holes are made for small fish. This net is set up such that fish swimming downstream become trapped or caught in the holes of the net. The nets are set up early in the morning and gathered in the afternoon. On a good day, the nets would be filled with small fish whose heads have been trapped in almost every hole of the nets. The *hempeng* is a fence made out of split-bamboo that is set out to completely block the mouth of a tributary or canal so that fish

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<sup>25</sup> One informant said that his household fished for business all year round. During the time of year when the catch was small, they would supplement their income with other activities, such as harvesting from their rattan plantation, or running their dry goods store in the village.

<sup>26</sup> Although Kunum says that the *rengge* is usually made from the fibers of thick creeper or thick yarn, most of the *rengge* in use in Baun Bango are made from very fine nylon, and used to catch small to medium fish (Klokke 2004: 91).

swimming downstream are trapped in the tributary. As the fish accumulate behind the hempeng, they are gathered with nets.

Some types of fish, such as the tahuman (*Ophiocephalus micropeltes*), are transferred to fish cages that are floated in the tributaries or along the Katingan. These fish are bred, raised, and then sold live. Other fish are also sold in “wet weight” to buyers that come in boats from Kasongan and Luwuk. Most of the fish though is salted and dried before it is sold to buyers. While men and women work together setting up nets and gathering fish, it is usually the women who take charge of drying fish.

In 2003, a kilogram of fresh fish would fetch Rp.5,000 at the peak of the fishing season. In the wet season, fresh fish could sell for up to Rp. 7,000 per kilogram. Dried fish would sell at Rp. 10,000 per kilogram in Baun Bango, and further upstream (closer to Kasongan), a kilogram of dried fish could reach Rp. 15,000. One household that relied mainly on fishing for income and sustenance would bring the dried fish upstream so that they could sell it themselves. They would also buy fish from the other villagers so that they could bring up to four pikul (400 kilograms) in one trip.<sup>27</sup>

Fishing was not always done on this scale in Baun Bango. Villagers recall a time when, if one household caught too many fish, they would call their family and neighbors together and distribute the fish. Something of this practice of sharing continues in Baun Bango. If one happens to stop by the pondok of a household that has just pulled in a large catch, one is sure to leave with gifts of fish. According to the villagers, when they have a good catch it is taboo to refuse any requests for fish from fellow villagers.

In his environmental history of Southeast Borneo, Knapen notes that fish was the primary source of animal protein before it became commercially valuable. Nevertheless, as early as 1598 it was reported that large quantities of dried fish were being imported from the port of Banjarmasin to Java (Knapen 2001: 328). Dutch colonists already expressed worries about the possible overfishing of the waters of Southeast Borneo at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main perceived threat back then was the use of tuba, a plant-based poison, to catch large amounts of fish in the rivers.

It is interesting that in reaching far back into the timescapes of fishing in Central Kalimantan, we already find concern over the depletion of natural resources such as fish. Knapen posits that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the most likely threats to the fish stock are environmental: fire, pollution, sedimentation, the use of agricultural pesticides and fertilizers, and the progressive depletion of the swamp zone in which the fish dwell and reproduce. In Baun Bango another threat exists and that is the use of setrum or electricity to kill and/or shock fish in the immediate vicinity of the equipment. This kills even the small fish and destroys the reproductive capacities of those that are not killed, thus seriously threatening the fish stock. Local government officials, from the village head to the district head try to police the use of electricity, as do other villagers when they come

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<sup>27</sup> This data is taken from interviews conducted in 2003.

across people using setrum.<sup>28</sup> Villagers point out that this method jeopardizes the future of fishing in Baun Bango.

The timescape of fishing is intertwined with the seasons and the other forms of work described above. Already an image is emerging of the Ngaju Dayak of Baun Bango as being immersed in their environments through their work and in their everyday lives.

The tasks of hunting and other sources of livelihood

Historically, hunting was an important part of Dayak life in the area of Southeast Borneo (Knapen 2001: 311).<sup>29</sup> There are very few hunters left in Kamipang as most people have converted to Islam and may not touch or eat the meat of wild pig, which is the game that is common to the area. The hunters of Baun Bango are Protestants and/or adherents of Hindu Kaharingan. Hunters reported that there is no shortage of wild boar, because they reproduce quickly. It is rare however to find deer.<sup>30</sup> At the time of fieldwork, male members of Christian and Hindu Kaharingan households hunted occasionally. They would hunt alone, or in twos, accompanied by up to four dogs that chase the pigs to the river where the hunter waits on a boat and spears it.

When the hunters set out traps, they must give offerings of eggs and cigarettes to the guardian spirits in the forest. This rite is called ngariaw. According to the hunters the offering serves both to ask permission from the guardian spirits, as well as to summon the wild pigs to the trap. As shall be discussed further later on, the ngariaw is also performed for the small-scale extraction of other resources from the forest.

When a boar is caught, it is brought back to Baun Bango where it is washed and cleaned on the batang (the landing raft that each household has along the river) of the hunter. Word of the catch soon spreads through the village and people come to wait for the meat to be cut into different portions. The meat is sold very cheaply, at Rp.10,000 per kilogram. The hunters usually limit themselves to one pig a week in order to be able to dispose of the meat. The excess meat is salted and air-dried or smoked. Dried meat is taken upriver to Petak Bahandang, or Kasongan where there are allegedly many Christians and Hindu Kaharingan that buy meat from them. Sometimes a hunter will take as much as one pikul (100 kilograms) upriver and dispose of it in Kasongan. Although the men of Baun Bango may opt to engage in hunting throughout the year, wild pigs are most plentiful when trees such as durian bear fruit in the forest and around the villages, in the months of November and December.

The hunters of Baun Bango are often called upon through amateur radios to hunt down boars that have been raiding ladang in other villages. Thus there are no specific territories or boundaries for hunting. Baun Bango villagers boast that their hunters are famed for their skills throughout the Kamipang sub-district.

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<sup>28</sup> For more details on the policing of setrum, please see Chapter Six.

<sup>29</sup> According to Knapen, hunting continues to be an important part of the lives of many Dayak groups. However in Baun Bango hunting was an episodic activity engaged in by few households.

<sup>30</sup> According to informants (60 and above) deer was once abundant in the forest surrounding Baun Bango. Judging from the sets of at least one set of deer horns adorning the walls of almost every house in Baun Bango, it was hunted quite heavily. In 2003, it had been several years since a deer was sighted or hunted down in the area.

The women of Baun Bango have other reasons to go into the forest or out into the lakes. If not to go fishing with their families or to go to their swidden fields, women would row out to the swamps and the lakes to collect long, thorny pandan leaves (*Pandanus* sp.). The women dry, de-thorn, soften and cut these leaves to weave mats. Some women sell their mats to traders that come selling basic amenities, but more often the mats are for the weavers' use at home. The mats are for sleeping and also for drying rice in the sun. There is one woman in Baun Bango who makes it her business to weave and sell baskets, especially the work basket that is worn like a backpack, called *luntung*. This basket is made with either rattan gathered from the forest (not from plantations), plastic, or a combination of both.

The men and women of Baun Bango also deploy their skills gathering non-timber forest products such as the bark of *gemor* (*Alseodaphne* sp), and the resin of *jelutung* (*Dyera costulata*). *Gemor* bark is used to manufacture anti-mosquito coils and glue. The collection of *gemor* in Baun Bango was infrequent in 2003 and 2005. As with other forest products, collection depends on demand, as well as on the season. *Menggemor* is usually done when the waters are high and the forest is flooded, from May to July. People who go in search of *gemor* use the canals built by loggers to find *gemor* trees. They cut the trees down and remove the bark, which is brought back to the village and sun-dried.<sup>31</sup> In 1998-1999 Central Kalimantan produced 318.24 tons of dried *gemor* bark.<sup>32</sup>

However, in 2003 and 2005 informants in Baun Bango reported that buyers for *gemor* were few and far between. They said they were waiting for *gemor* to open up again. Also, they said that there were less *gemor* trees left standing in the forest and they had to go farther away from the village to find them. On a positive note, the Central Kalimantan Peatlands Project reports that in the village of Keruing, sub-district Kamipang, people have discovered that *gemor* can be cultivated and they started a nursery in 2008 (Central Kalimantan Peatlands Project 2008: 5).

Latex from *jelutung* is used for making chewing gum. It is also used in paints and priming cement.<sup>33</sup> In 1987, Indonesia allegedly exported USD 2,163,462 worth of *jelutung* (*ibid*). From 1998-1999, Central Kalimantan produced 19 tons of *jelutung* resin.<sup>34</sup>

These numbers become more interesting when looked at in the context of *jelutung* tapping, or *mamantung*, in Baun Bango. To gather resin a team of collectors goes into the forest to find a stand of *jelutung* trees. One path or one canal per person is made through the trees. Then individuals work alone tapping the trees along their path. In one day, a person can set up tapping for up to 60 trees, which can yield up to 60 kilograms a week

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<sup>31</sup> Rp. 4,000 per kilogram of dried *gemor* bark. WWF Indonesia Kalimantan Tengah (n.d.) reports that middlemen obtained between 40-50 kilograms of *gemor* bark on buying trips to Baun Bango.

<sup>32</sup> ([http://www.indonesia.go.id/id/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=3684&Itemid=1559](http://www.indonesia.go.id/id/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3684&Itemid=1559) accessed 28 June 2009).

<sup>33</sup> ([http://www.unep-wcmc.org/trees/trade/dye\\_cos.htm](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/trees/trade/dye_cos.htm) accessed 27 June 2009).

<sup>34</sup> ([http://www.indonesia.go.id/id/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=3684&Itemid=1559](http://www.indonesia.go.id/id/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3684&Itemid=1559) accessed 27 June 2009).

(Interviews 2003 and 2005).<sup>35</sup> It takes a long time to accumulate enough jelutung to make the work and the whole enterprise worthwhile. At the time of fieldwork, nobody was going into the forest to mamantung. According to the villagers, there were not much traders or middlemen coming downriver to buy the resin. The large amounts of capital needed to pay the collectors, and the length of time it would take to recoup the investment were also deterrents. Finally, the stands of jelutung decreased as logging increased around Baun Bango (WWF Indonesia Kalimantan Tengah, n.d.).

#### Membatang: the tasks of logging<sup>36</sup>

Fishers, swiddeners, and rattan harvesters become loggers when the floods come in, beginning in the month of January. When loggers go into the forest they bring with them a chainsaw, axes, crosscut saw, and gancu, or large steel hooks with which to haul or drag the logs. They also bring basic provisions like food, coffee, cigarettes, and fuel. Their work in the forest can stretch from a week to two whole months, depending on the location's distance from the village. The loggers set out from the village by klotok (a long, motorized boat that is the main form of transport along Central Kalimantan's rivers) and head for their location through a maze of river tributaries and human-made canals in the peat swamp forest.

The smaller canals were built for fishing but may be used as passageways if the owner has not set up nets, fykes, or hampeng (see melauk section, above). Logging canals serve a dual purpose of providing access to the trees, and getting the logs to the river by floating and dragging them through the canals. Canals are the private property of the persons that invested in having them built. The trees that the canals lead to also become the property of the investor. However, once the trees have been cleared, the land around the canal reverts to tanah kosong, land that belongs to no one. The building of canals is done entirely through manual labor. I will discuss canals at greater length in the section on access to natural resources.

To build a canal as well as to cut down trees, the loggers spend up to six hours a day waist deep in swamp water and mud, with mosquitoes constantly swarming around them. When the trees have been felled their branches are removed with axes and chainsaws. Two to three men haul the logs and the branches to separate piles or pools in the swamp. During this work not only do they run the risk of falling ill or contracting malaria, they also risk crushing their limbs or losing their fingers under the weight of the logs that they cut and move through the forest, towards the Katingan River.

The loggers must work fast to get the wood to the buyer, before the timber rots from soaking in the water. Using the gancu, the loggers push and pull the logs out one by one. If the canals are wide enough, two or three logs can be strapped and hauled together. In areas where the water is shallow, the loggers build a miniature dam using tarpaulin and poles from the branches they cut. When the water rises they can take the logs as far as the dam, which is then dismantled and rebuilt further along the route as needed. In some

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<sup>35</sup> Fifty kilograms of jelutung resin was worth Rp. 400,000.

<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that my writing about logging was a highly negotiated aspect of my fieldwork in Baun Bango. For an account of the debate surrounding the association of logging with Baun Bango residents in my research, please see the appended DVD.

areas they build a rudimentary elevated track made of poles and branches. Over this track the logs are dragged one by one on a cart called a koda. The tracks and the bottom of the koda are rubbed with soap so that there is less friction. Once the loggers reach the main body of the Katingan River with the logs, the logs are lashed together into long rafts, which are then floated to sawmills downstream, guided by klotok.

Occasionally women have been known to participate in logging. One woman, a single mother abandoned by her husband, finds work pulling logs through the canals to the river. This is what enables her to support her two children and her father.<sup>37</sup> In another case, three women decided to try their luck in their own logging venture. They claimed that together they cut down a total of 200 trees averaging 20 cm. in diameter, in two to three weeks and they made Rp. 450,000 each. They said they used this money to buy themselves clothes and food for their families. They cut trees that were located along a canal owned by one of the women's husbands.

It is usually men in their twenties that dominate the logging scene, having the advantage of youthful strength and stamina. According to the men aged 20-25 years that were interviewed, logging takes up one to three months of work in a year. Invariably, the men we interviewed said they shared their income with their families. Some said they turned over all their earnings from logging to their parents or wives, while others kept a fourth or half their earnings for themselves. The young men point out that through logging they are able to set aside savings for the future. For them, logging has always been part of the livelihood repertoire of Baun Bango. Asked about their knowledge of the origins of commercial logging in their village, one young woman said, "When I was born, the world was already like this."

While it is true that since its establishment in Baun Bango commercial logging has mostly benefitted wealthy outsiders who finance several operations throughout the province, or logging companies that are based in Java, it is also true that logging is the most lucrative source of cash ever experienced by local people, hard labor notwithstanding. It is the one livelihood that has enabled some Baun Bango residents to build houses in the span of a few seasons' work, as opposed to many years of fishing. In 2005, timber was being bought from out of Baun Bango at Rp. 100,000 – 120,000 per cubic meter. It is possible for a local who finances his/her own logging operation to net more than Rp. 3,000,000 in one logging season. An individual who is hired to work on a logging team is paid Rp. 30,000 to 45,000 per day. A hired hand can earn up to Rp. 800,000 in one logging season. Logging is less of a gamble than planting crops in the ladang, for example, because negotiations for loans, or advance payments for timber take place before any trees are actually cut.

Logging first made its entry as a large-scale commercial enterprise in Baun Bango with the arrival of Nusantara Plywood, in 1968.<sup>38</sup> Its area stretched from the village of Jahangjang, up to the village of Handiwung. There was a one-kilometer radius around

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<sup>37</sup> This is supplemented by fishing, harvesting rattan, and in small part by her ladang, which supplies the family's rice for two months of the year.

<sup>38</sup> The following account of the history of commercial logging in Baun Bango is drawn from interviews, unless otherwise stated.

Baun Bango that the company was not allowed to touch. Prior to the opening of Nusantara Plywood,<sup>39</sup> residents of Baun Bango were cutting wood for local, household use only. According to elders, there were no buyers for wood coming to Baun Bango until the logging company arrived. Shortly after the company established itself, people followed from West Kalimantan and further afield, looking to buy ramin (*Gonystylus* sp.).<sup>40</sup>

Initially, villagers accepted the logging company. People were feeling prosperous and there were still many trees such as ramin, meranti (*Shorea* spp.), keruing (*Dipterocarpus* spp.), and agatis (*Agathis borneensis*), which they soon learned were highly-valued timber species. Elders who claim that they were generally better off before logging began in Baun Bango expressed this feeling of past prosperity repeatedly. On this note, these same informants were not worried about the possibility of a logging ban since they had managed to provide for themselves without logging in the past.

There was at least one instance of direct conflict between the villagers of Baun Bango and Nusantara Plywood in 1995 or 1996, and several instances of passive resistance. This incident is indicative of local attitudes towards the company in particular, and logging in general. The company accused villagers of stealing from their tree stands. The company called in the Mobile Brigade (BRIMOB) of the Indonesian police force from Banjarmasin and sent them to the village where much tension and anger was felt. One Baun Bango resident who recounted the story asked,

“What were the villagers supposed to do? They were only logging during the flooding season and taking out logs from submerged areas. They only wanted to make a living and to buy food. The intention was not to steal from the company. They didn’t even go deep into the area of the company, only 2.5kms from the edge of Danao Jalam Pangen, just where the floods were.”

Prior to this, however, the company had already been buying logs from villagers. Informants recall selling ramin to the company for Rp. 1,000 per cubic meter, beginning in the 1970’s. At the time, villagers also began cutting trees to sell to other buyers and middlemen. Back then it was possible to come across ramin just 500 meters from the edge of Danao Jalam Pangen, or one kilometer and a half from the village of Baun Bango. Some villagers expressed the sentiment that in fact it was the company that was stealing from Baun Bango. In their view, the concession that was granted to the company encroached on territories that belonged to the Ngaju Dayak of the area. Locals claim they had no choice but to compete with the company behind its back. This question of who was stealing from whom, leads me to the tension between insiders and outsiders in accessing natural resources in and around Baun Bango. This tension implicates not only

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<sup>39</sup> Other logging companies came after Nusantara Plywood such as the Jayanti Group. It is the coming of the former that is etched in people’s minds as the one company that did the most to change life and livelihood in Baun Bango.

<sup>40</sup> Ramin is a protected species and was placed by Indonesia in Appendix III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in August 2001.

([http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2002/timber\\_mafia/resources/resources\\_ramin.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2002/timber_mafia/resources/resources_ramin.htm) accessed 30 June 2009.) However, the logging of ramin was still sighted in field observations in 2002 (Persoon and Aliyub 2002: 11).



logging companies and non-residents of the village of Baun Bango, but also agents of environmentalism.

## **Tensions in Ngaju Riverscapes**

Affordances and access: insider-outsider tensions

In the past the territories of Baun Bango were said to reach as far as the sound of a gong being struck at the center of the village. In the knowledge of the people of Baun Bango, the territory of their village stretches five kilometers<sup>41</sup> from the riverside, on both sides of the river Katingan. Within the five kilometers, land can either be private property, or open to all people of Baun Bango. The principle of *primi occupantes*, or first user, is applied in the establishment of private property. Few people have formal land titles. The villagers of Baun Bango continue to rely upon what they call “living memory” to uphold their rights of ownership or usufruct over land or bodies of water, as their ancestors did before them. According to the elders and to village officials, land disputes are rare in Baun Bango.

Non-members of the Baun Bango community cannot become owners of spaces and sources of livelihood within Baun Bango, but they can trade for resources and products extracted by Baun Bango residents. They can also ask permission to make temporary use of resources found within Baun Bango, as is the case with logging. There is a clear division between insiders and outsiders. One is recognized as a community member if one has built a house and works in Baun Bango, has married into Baun Bango, or was born in Baun Bango. In the dynastic and mythological narratives of Austronesian societies, marriage into autochthonous communities is what makes resources available to migrants (Scheffold 2002). This is evident in the ethnohistory of Baun Bango, in ethnographies on the Ngaju Dayak, and in the present population of the village, which includes individuals from Java and from other parts of Kalimantan, who have married and settled there.

The exclusive rights to use land can lapse. This is the case for *swidden* fields, which are held in usufruct rather than private ownership. A *swidden* field can be cultivated for three to seven consecutive years. When it is left idle and reverts to forest it becomes known to people as a *bahun*. People can distinguish between forest growth and *bahun* by inspecting the vegetation in any given area. Re-opening a *bahun* means that one holds use-rights for the area in question, or has negotiated the use of the *bahun* with its former users. Should another individual or family wish to make use of the *bahun*, they must first ask permission from the people who cultivated the field previously. If a family plants rattan, fruit trees, or occasionally rubber trees in a new *swidden* it becomes their private property. On the other hand, if all members of the family that first cultivated a *bahun* have moved away from Baun Bango or are deceased, or if the memory of their occupation of a *malan* has faded from the minds of people, then it becomes available

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<sup>41</sup> I could not find the origin or a reference for this five kilometer radius but all my informants mentioned it when asked about the bounds of the village. It may have been written up in relation to the arrival of logging concessions, or in the formation of politico-administrative units in the past, and then it eventually became common knowledge.

again to any resident of Baun Bango. The land reverts back to the tanah ulayat (or land which is within the known territory) of Baun Bango.<sup>42</sup>

There are two large lakes that are considered part of the territory or tanah ulayat of Baun Bango: Danao Jalam Pangen and Danao Puron. Danao Jalam Pangen is across the Katingan River from Baun Bango. To reach this lake, the villagers of Baun Bango take a boat across the Katingan river and enter the mouth of the tributary Sungai Jalam Pangen. This lake is a hub of activity in the fishing season. Only residents of Baun Bango can harvest fish from this lake. Conversely, they do not fish from Danao Puron, although it is within their territory. In the living memory of the elders of Baun Bango, Danao Puron has always been for the exclusive use of the villagers of Tumbang Ronen, which is south of Baun Bango.

A majority of the 39 river tributaries named by Baun Bango villagers are connected to the Sungai and Danao Jalam Pangen. If a Baun Bango resident builds a fishing canal in this area, the canal itself automatically belongs to the individual who invested in its creation. If some one builds a pondok, a shelter or a temporary hut, and plants some trees and cassava beside a river-tributary, then one is establishing ownership over that tributary and the right to place one's fishing nets in the same tributary every year. Tributaries, like human-made canals, can be privately owned with the exception of tributaries along the Katingan, and those that are commonly used as "roads" or access to other bodies of water and various parts of the forest. It is common knowledge among the Ngaju of Baun Bango that the fish enter these tributaries and canals to spawn. Of the 39 tributaries around Baun Bango, 15 are recognized as private property. The other 24 tributaries are considered to be open to every one from Baun Bango. The network of river tributaries that are privately owned have been passed down by previous generations, or changed hands through sale.

Beyond the five kilometer radius of Baun Bango is tanah or hutan kosong. From the perspective of the local people, there is no need to seek permission from anyone to work in tanah or hutan kosong because "nobody owns it." However, a protocol exists in which outsiders who wish to work in areas adjacent to Baun Bango ask for permission from the village head, especially if the intended work is logging. Money changes hands during these courtesy calls. This is an unwritten rule that appears to be followed across Kalimantan (see for example Tsing 2005: 34, Wadley and Eilenberg 2005). Interestingly, the practice may be rooted in the history of the rattan trade in Kalimantan.

As was described in the menetes rotan section above, it was once common practice for outsiders to seek the permission of village heads to harvest rattan in their territories. Locals also sought permission from their village head to prevent conflict among two people collecting rattan from the same site. In 1836, Muller described how outsider traders collaborated with the head of Kuala Patai to have a canal dug into the forest, in order to open up and claim areas rich in rattan (Muller 1857: 175 as referenced in Knapen

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<sup>42</sup> Curiously, when first asked whether Baun Bango had hak ulayat or tanah ulayat, people said no. Officially, they did not have hak ulayat under a government certificate. However, this does not mean that people were not cognizant of the scope of their hak ulayat/ancestral domain territory. They were very much aware of the territorial boundaries of their village and they applied the concept of tanah ulayat when asserting their rights to resources and development within the bounds of Baun Bango.

2001: 360). The labor was presumably supplied by debt-slaves. Knapen (ibid) notes that the digging of a canal, or the construction of a path leading to rattan stands enabled people to claim private property rights to land and the rattan in it.<sup>43</sup>

As outsider interest in rattan stands rose, so did the conflict and disputes. The Dutch responded to this by redefining the boundaries between occupied lands and free lands or wastelands, allowing free collection in the so-called wastelands. In one case recorded by Schulte (1917: 391, as referred to in Knapen 2001: 363), the Dutch allocated the left bank of the Lahei River to the Dayak. The right bank was declared open to the Bekumpai and Banjarese for the collection of rattan. This demarcation only led to more hostility. (Knapen 2001: 363)

The parallels to be found in the context of contemporary illegal logging are striking. The first of these is the building of a canal as a way to open and establish a stake in an area. The building of a canal does not entail any purchase of land. However, it results in the private ownership of the canal itself and the trees around it. Both outsiders and community members may build such canals in tanah or hutan kosong. Even in tanah kosong, outsiders are expected to inform nearby villages of their intentions to build logging canals.<sup>44</sup>

Another similarity between the history of protocols for rattan and logging is seen in the continuing role of village heads and other local government authorities in dispensing permission or clearance. Occasionally, this process goes up beyond the village head to other local government officials, police, or military present in the area.<sup>45</sup> These processes of dispensing permissions and rights to the forest almost never pass on down to a consultation with villagers. However, in one case in Baun Bango locals felt threatened by an outsider-led logging operation that allegedly brought 60 orang Negara<sup>46</sup> into the forests around Baun Bango. They were so incensed they threatened to stage a “demo”. Village officials, police, and military were forced to arrange negotiations and ask the financier of the operation to withdraw from the area so as to circumvent any threats of violence.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, there is the creation of new boundaries by government authorities as a means to manage or moderate the way locals interact with their environment and with outsiders.

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<sup>43</sup> Although it was probably not new at the time, the practice is first mentioned in the archives in 1825 (Knapen 2001: 360, n. 143).

<sup>44</sup> Occasionally the tree stands that these canals lead to are found by locals for outsiders. Depending on how many trees are in the surveyed area, their size, number, and marketability, the tree-finder’s fee may range from Rp. five million to 10 million.

<sup>45</sup> Another process for acquiring logging rights has entered the landscape of affordances through Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 6/1999 and Keputusan Menteri Kehutanan dan Perkebunan Nomor 310/KPTS-11/99. Based on the law on regional autonomy (Undang-Undang Nomor 22/1999), the bupati (regent or district-head) may use discretionary allowance to give established Indonesian institutions such as village cooperatives the right to extract logs of a specified tree species from a maximum area of 100 hectares, by non-mechanical means, for a period of one year (Visser 2001: 79). However, at the time of research no such rights to harvest the forest, or Hak Pemungutan Hasil Hutan (HPHH), were issued in/for Baun Bango. For a case study on this in another area of Central Kalimantan, see McCarthy 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Negara is a city lying northwest of Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan.

<sup>47</sup> For a more nuanced discussion of this event, see Chapter Seven.

The logging concessions granted by central government parallel the Dutch attempt to identify “wastelands” and declare these open to outsiders for rattan collectors. Logging companies are given areas of forests classified for production, which then become off-limits to indigenous populations that may have frequented the area for all sorts of work. In the delineation of the Taman Nasional Sebangau, it was assumed that the villages along the section of the Katingan that bordered on the park would be unaffected by park boundaries since they were on the other side of the river. This, however, made locals suspicious of the WWF. Villagers of Baun Bango were surprised and dismayed to learn that their river tributaries had become part of the Taman Nasional Sebangau.

The discordance between local notions of insider-outsider rights of access to resources, and political-administrative reconfigurations of the same has led to confusion and ill-will between residents of Baun Bango and key actors that they consider to be outsiders. They perceive both logging companies and the WWF to have benefitted from the demarcation of territories for extraction and conservation respectively, at the expense of local people’s forms of livelihood.<sup>48</sup>

#### Conflicted and shifting positionalities

It is clear that the daily lives of the Ngaju of Baun Bango are deeply intertwined with the environment. In interviews, the members of the WWF team working in Central Kalimantan described the Ngaju of Baun Bango as “highly dependent on the sustainability of Sebangau.” However, the actions of local people carried out in the context of livelihood do not correspond with the romantic image of Ngaju Dayak lifeways and beliefs on sacred nature. It is the involvement of many Dayak men in logging that strikes a heavy blow to this vision. In Central Kalimantan this has led disenchanting agents of environmentalism to remark that the lifeways of the Ngaju today are so far gone from their traditions that they no longer live in harmony with nature. These agents’ perception of indigenous peoples’ lives and traditions as being aligned with the objectives of nature-conservation and sustainable development are part of the nature-culture imaginaire, “a space in which local needs and visions of a just regional political economy meet with the trajectories of internationally funded conservation missions, intersecting in multiple configurations” (Zerner 2003: n. 18). This brings me to the tension between Ngaju claims to traditions of ecological harmony and their livelihood practices that are deemed destructive by agents of conservation.

In the Declaration of Central Kalimantan as an Ecological Region made by adat leaders and other community leaders in 2002, it is claimed that:

“By adopting and ratifying this declaration of the right to dignity, integrity and harmony of humankind and Nature, we and the people, the Legislative Assemblies, the governments of the village, city and district as well as the province of Central Kalimantan make the commitment herein official, enduring and ir-revocable [sic] provincial policy within the framework of the national philosophy of Pancasila and the ‘longhouse culture’...” (2002: 38)

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<sup>48</sup> Although the WWF has been careful to emphasize their role as facilitators in the establishment of the Taman Nasional Sebangau, a lack of communication has led locals to perceive WWF as owners or the “boss” of the national park. Nevertheless, by 2005 the WWF had made some headway in creating a more positive image of themselves as partners of local people. For more on this see Chapter Six.

Writing mainly about how Ngajuness articulates with religion in Central Kalimantan, Schiller points out a tendency amongst Ngaju elites to objectify tradition as culture. This objectification entails “seeing culture as a thing: (a natural object) made up of objects and entities (‘traits’)” (Handler 1988: 14, as quoted in Schiller 1997a: 8). When culture is objectified in this manner, it can be manipulated and “pressed into service by interested parties” (ibid). This is apparent not only for the religious leaders that Schiller writes about, but also in the activities and strategies employed by Ngaju elite in relation to environmental conservation.

It is actions and statements such as these that lend themselves easily to the image of Ngaju Dayak living in harmony with nature. Moreover, the followers of Kaharingan believe that all things on earth have spirit or soul: “trees, bananas, fish, gold, diamonds, grass, soil, water,” as Pak Gasan, the local pisur or Kaharingan priest expounded.<sup>49</sup> In everyday life, small gestures are made to the spirits that live in the environment. When entering the mouth of a river for the first time or after a long absence, the Ngaju scoop water in one hand and rinse their faces as a way of greeting the spirits and warding off any danger of illness. On some occasions and in rivers where the spirits are believed to be particularly powerful, visiting Ngaju will drop offerings of eggs in the mouth of the river and rinse their faces. Along riverbanks in Central Kalimantan it is common to see white or yellow flags waving in the wind, sometimes near villages, river mouths, or sometimes in seemingly isolated spots. These flags are a form of thanksgiving, erected by Ngaju who reaped good benefits from work done in the area, or within the network of river tributaries.

The same space in which people work and move is occupied by spirits. Before beginning a new swidden field or gathering forest products, Ngaju will usually ask permission from the spirits before they begin working. Failure to ask for permission has its repercussions. When the logging company, PT. Nusantara, began working downstream from Baun Bango in the 1970’s, Pak Gasan tried to inform them that they should ask permission from the spirits. He recalled that they thought this was laughable and refused to comply. He did not push the issue further. Some weeks later, he said,

“The spirits came and used the camp cook to tell of their anger. The cook was from Java and could only speak Bahasa Indonesia [with the local people] then she was suddenly speaking Basa Ngaju very fluently! The spirit inside her was angry because his house was broken in half, because of the people who opened the Nusantara camp. To speak with the spirit, they had to call me. Finally we made a deal that Nusantara Camp would offer two cows and one pig to the spirit within three months’ time. As proof of their promise Nusantara Camp gave glutinous rice, cigarettes, eggs, and baram the very next day. If Nusantara camp didn’t keep their promise, the spirit would take away the woman, or make her crazy. After the deal between Nusantara and the spirit was settled, the woman fell asleep. In the morning when she woke up it was like nothing happened. So it is important to ask permission first before doing something.”

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<sup>49</sup> The Ngaju of the Katingan and Kahayan rivers call their Kaharingan priests pisur and basir respectively. The difference between the two is discussed in Schiller 1997a. Pak Gasan passed away in 2005 and was replaced as pisur by his son, who was also a council leader for Kaharingan Hindu.

Nusantara's initial refusal to comply with the requirements of Kaharingan was also a refusal to acknowledge local dynamics. It was a power struggle in which the pisur gained some success in asserting his authority over the company through the affordance that arose in the inexplicable spirit possession of the Javanese cook. This was his area of expertise, after all. Other villagers dealt with the presence of Nusantara differently. They began their own, small-scale logging operations and ventured covertly into the boundaries of the concession to harvest logs.

The traditions that agents of environmentalism interpret as ecologically harmonious still exist in Baun Bango. The ngariaw described in the hunting section of this chapter is another example. However, these beliefs and practices do not work in the way that agents of environmentalism imagine, as was demonstrated by the anecdote above and the actions of one household that claimed a lokasi for logging. The husband, Pak Joni had begun building a canal in his lokasi. While he was away working in the forest, his wife, Ibu Dindi dreamed that a little girl dressed in white clothes visited her. The little girl asked Ibu Dindi to follow her into the forest where they came upon a large house among the trees. In her dream Ibu Dindi was told that this was the house of the little girl's grandparents and it would be destroyed by Pak Joni's work. The little girl instructed Ibu Dindi to seek the grandparents' permission and to offer them a white chicken. Furthermore, she said that Ibu Dindi should perform a Kaharingan ritual for two kilometers of the canal, and make a Muslim offering for the next five kilometers of the canal. Afraid to ignore this dream, Ibu Dindi told her husband about it and they decided to do as the little girl instructed. After the ritual offerings were completed, Pak Dindi continued with his logging operation and successfully sold the logs to a sawmill downstream.

Schärer (1963) and Schiller (1997a) discuss Hindu Kaharingan and hadat respectively as ensuring order and harmony in the cosmos, in the context of ritual. Schefold (2002) shows how the relations between a people and their environment range from partnership to subjection of nature to immigrant settlers, as seen in everyday life as well as interactions with and perceptions of the otherworldly in the environment. However, the contemporary practice of Ngaju traditions in the context of livelihood provide neither a blueprint for ecological conservation, nor explicit taboos on ecological destruction. Instead, they provide a means through which the use of space and actions in the environment can be negotiated with potentially malevolent spirits.<sup>50</sup>

In the manyanggar ritual, which is a Kaharingan ritual similar to the ngariaw, permission is secured from the spirits for large-scale extractions. Practitioners mention to the spirits the type of tree that will be cut down, the trees that will be left standing, and the size of the area that will be affected. The spirits are asked to "please move a little, we need to use this place, so please move out and do not disturb us, we're just doing our job." The animals that are offered are meant as a meal for the spirits. The current pisur of Baun Bango suggested that a manyanggar be performed for the Taman Nasional Sebangau. He said the borders of the national park should be communicated to the spirits so that they may decide whether they want to move out or stay without disturbing the activities in the park. He went on to say,

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<sup>50</sup> This parallels my findings among the Kalanguya in the Philippine case study. See Chapter Two.

“We believe that the forest exists for the good of humanity. Man cannot live without the forest... The national park could be a large scale protected area, and Kaharingan culture could protect smaller areas within the scope of the park.”

This statement made by the pisur attests to the emergence of green positionalities among the Ngaju of Baun Bango. However, it also obfuscates the conflict between Ngaju thoughts, statements, and actions in their environment, and that is where the tension lies.

## Discussion

For the Ngaju of Baun Bango the environment is a constant domain of action. They depend on the environment for the resources that enable them to survive and earn an income, and they move through the rivers and forests on a regular basis. The creation of the Taman Nasional Sebangau is experienced by the Ngaju of Baun Bango as a new technology of government, or environmentalism, although they quite often confuse it for a WWF project due to the high visibility of the organization. The national park brings with it a bundle of new regulations, which, if policed and implemented fully will profoundly transform the dynamic of work and interaction in the environment. This will necessitate changes in the livelihood repertoire of Baun Bango, and the ways in which agents of environmentalism go about building constituencies (Eghenter 2008) or green positionalities among the Ngaju Dayak. This is the issue upon which the expectations of the Ngaju of Baun Bango come to a head with those of agents of conservation. The latter misconstrue the Ngaju pursuit of *kemajuan* as evidence of their lack of concern for the environment, while the Ngaju misinterpret environmentalist objectives as threatening their access to their bases of existence.

These perceptions stem from differently constituted positionalities. The green positionality taken up by the environmentalists places their work and lives outside of the natural space they aim to conserve. They work for the environment, but cannot work within it. They move in aseasonal timescapes that revolve around targets and the perceived urgency of saving the environment from impending destruction. By contrast, the Ngaju positionality I examine in this paper (by no means the only positionality taken up by Ngaju men and women) is deeply entrenched within a landscape continually shaped by generations of work. Their work, their lives, and their life-ways are regenerated and transformed within, and in direct interactions with, the environment. Their timescapes involve work and social relations that change with the seasons, as well as with shifts in the political sphere and the global economy.

By intertwining ethnographic data with the articulations of Ngaju Dayak about their history and their way of life, it becomes clear that the declaration of oneness with nature made by a logger, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, is tenable in the context of Ngaju interaction with the Baun Bango environment. Ngaju connect with the environment through their work. In turn, their work or their livelihood repertoire is considered by them to be part of their identity. Their present forms of natural resource utilization and their interactions with the environment – even though some aspects of their livelihood repertoire are relatively new – are part of a continuum of environmental practices stretching from their traditional heritage and history through the present and on to the future.

The latter's feeling of connectedness with nature comes not from standing outside of nature and seeing it as a bounded space. Their relationships with the environment are not fully enclosed by the frame of government regulations and questions of legality/illegality. For the Ngaju of Baun Bango, the environment is imbued with local meanings and is an inextricable part of their array of daily activities, from bathing on the riverbanks to logging in the forest. It is the persistence of agents of environmentalism in separating sociality and human productive activity from the environment that leads to the disjunctions and tensions discussed here. However, the destructive effects of illegal logging in particular remain unjustifiable by this argument, and there lies the crux of the Ngaju's conflicted experience of the nature-culture imaginaire.



## CHAPTER FIVE



Photo 5.1: Fishing is not only a vital part of the Ngaju livelihood repertoire, it is also a favorite pastime for young and old alike.

### **Contemporary Ngaju Futures: Environmental Consequences of Images of the Future<sup>1</sup>**

The Taman Nasional Sebangau in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, was established in 2004 through the efforts of agents of environmentalism from international non-government organizations working in partnership with the government and local communities. Prior to this declaration, the area was classified as production forest. Logging companies held large concessions therein. The deforestation brought about by their operations was, and continues to be, compounded by widespread illegal logging, forest fires, and the opening up of oil palm plantations. With the establishment of the 568,700-hectare national park, agents of environmentalism envisioned a future shaped and sheltered by the ideals of nature-conservation and hoped that the destruction of the forest would come to an end. In this chapter I engage with various images of the future within the context of the large-scale conservation project that is the Taman Nasional Sebangau.

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<sup>1</sup> Previously co-written and published as Persoon, G. and P. Perez (2008) 'The Relevant Context: Environmental consequences of images of the future,' in Walters, B. et al. (eds.) *Against the Grain: The Vayda tradition in human ecology and ecological anthropology*, pp. 287-306. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

While this chapter focuses on people's images of the future, I am not interested in futuristics, or skills and methods for accurately predicting the future. What is more urgently needed in anthropology is to understand how views of the future – including utopian world views – function in present day life, how they influence and direct human behaviour one way or another. Sandra Wallman refers to this as contemporary futures: causes and consequences of images of the future in specific contexts of time and place. How do we picture the future now? What are the consequences of our picturing it as we/they do? (Wallman 1992:2). The idea of contemporary futures is consonant with Ingold's (2000) conception of the environment as work-in-progress, with the future forms that it may take already implicit within it.

The Sebangau Watershed Area is mostly peatland, with approximately 73% of it still remaining under peat swamp forest cover (Husson and Morrogh-Bernard 2003: 19). Different actors within the area speak of very different images of how the Taman Nasional Sebangau in particular, and the forests and rivers in general, will change over time and how they are to deal with these changes. In this chapter I will describe some of the ways in which the Ngaju of Baun Bango, agents of environmentalism and scientists, government officials and numerous others are engaged in imagining and determining the future of the area and the preservation or depletion of its biodiversity. Each of these actors perceives the environment differently, according to the ways in which they moved and dwell through it. Since actors have different experiences in the environment, so to each as well his/her own images of the future of the environment and the affordances that might be activated therein. In turn, this links back to the idea of contextual timescapes relative to different actors.

The analytical key here is not forecasting, but rather, backcasting: examining the effects of an image of the future on present day behaviour. From this vantage point, the future does not simply come about, but is created. It is brought about as the outcome of the things we individually or collectively undertake (see also Godet 1994). This is a reversal of Vayda's progressive contextualization, which involves "focusing on significant... people-environment interactions and then explaining these interactions by placing them in progressively wider and denser contexts" (Vayda 1983: 265). This entails examining "who is doing what, why, and to what effect" (McCay 2008: 15) and progressively contextualizing backwards in time and outwards in space, or even inwards and upwards in levels of society and governance (ibid). Backcasting, on the other hand, involves projecting backwards in time from an image of a possible future towards present-day actions and decision-making. Here I link different actors' imagined futures with the lived realities and aspirations of the Ngaju of Baun Bango, creating an initial exercise in backcasting as a means to studying the future in the field.

### **The Sebangau Watershed Area**

As of the year 2001, government estimates held that approximately 126,200 km<sup>2</sup> of the province of Central Kalimantan lay under forest cover (BAPPEDA 2001). This is about 80% of the entire province. Based on previous official figures for extraction from production and conversion forests, one particular estimate places the rate of deforestation for the whole area of Kalimantan at 1,000 ha of forest per day (MacKinnon et al. 1996: 400). This is a conservative estimate, as it does not include the ongoing contributions of illegal logging, drainage of the catchment area, forest fires, and other forms of forest-clearing. Scientific studies continue to work towards identifying the rate at which peat

swamp forest is diminishing in Sebangau. Nevertheless, the figures given here suggest that it is all happening very quickly.

The last stand of primary growth forest is located within the core area of the Sebangau catchment. This peat swamp forest is regarded by ecologists to be rich in biodiversity. Peat swamps are also generally considered to be highly valuable for their hydrological functions (MacKinnon et al. 1996; Husson and Morrogh-Bernard 2003). Peat layers act like sponges, holding in and storing water by slowing down its velocity, and improving water quality by filtering it and draining it slowly. Peat layers also prevent erosion and siltation downriver.<sup>2</sup> In economic terms, the government of Indonesia has generally valued its forests for their timber, this being the second highest export earner of the country. Within the Sebangau area, the commercially valuable trees are primarily ramin (*Gonystylus bancanus*) and meranti (*Shorea* spp.). A few large logging concessions and countless illegal local and migrant loggers have benefited economically from the extraction of ramin, meranti, other timber species, as well as non-timber forest products such as jelutung (*Dyera costulata*, from which a latex is extracted) and gemor (*Alseodaphne* spp., the bark of this is used for the manufacture of anti-mosquito coils).

Apart from their important roles in the hydrology of Central Kalimantan, the swamps and especially the rivers form an integral part of the economic and/or livelihood activities and daily life of the people. Sitting on the banks of a village along a main river such as the Katingan on any given day, one can observe families bathing in the river, women washing their laundry, men cleaning their boats and mending their nets, as well as long rafts of several hundred tree stems, guided downstream by small boats.

The villages themselves range in size from 50 to 400 households, with a core indigenous population of Ngaju Dayak, living and working with Javanese and Banjarese who have moved into the area for various reasons. To the villagers, the peat swamp forest is like a valuable storehouse of resources. Indeed, the forest is often spoken of in terms of the work that can be done there, and the results or products that can be extracted from it. People living along the river Katingan enter the identified area of the Sebangau catchment almost on a daily basis, to fish, gather jelutung or gemor, or to kerja batang, 'work the trees' – that is, for illegal logging activities.<sup>3</sup> This daily interaction with the environment was clear in the village of Baun Bango. Although the economic gain for local people from the peat swamp forest of Sebangau is clear, the effect of the ongoing extraction activities is ecologically detrimental, as has been shown in studies conducted by the Orangutan Tropical Peatland Project and others (Husson and Morrogh-Bernard 2003).

Illegal logging activities in the peat swamp forest are aided by the digging of canals. These canals range from widths of one meter to as much as three or five meters, and reach lengths of up to 20 km from the riverside to the core of the peat swamp forest. Field

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<sup>2</sup> Peat swamps are also increasingly respected for their roles as carbon sinks, viz. the great peat swamps of northern Siberia, which are drying up with global warming and threaten to release huge quantities of carbon dioxide, methane, etc. (Sabiham 2004)

<sup>3</sup> For ethnographic descriptions of each of these livelihood options, see Chapter Four.

observations as well as satellite images show that a vast network of canals is spread throughout the forest (Persoon and Aliyub 2002, WWF 2002).

The effect of these canals is an unnaturally speedy drainage of the peat, with flow-rates of water at 100 – 3000 times faster than the normal rate (Husson and Morrogh-Bernard 2003: 25). The peat then becomes dry and so the swamp loses its ability to act as a filter, to prevent erosion and siltation, and to provide feeding grounds and shelter for small fry during the dry season (MacKinnon et al. 1996). The greatest danger of dried peat is its susceptibility to fire. Agents of environmentalism are working to prevent a repetition of the large-scale forest fires of 1997-1998.

The peat swamp forest of Sebangau was found to have a high population density of orangutans (Rijksen and Meijaard 1999, Husson and Morrogh-Bernard 2003). The World Wildlife Fund identified the orangutan as a flagship species for the organization's campaign to protect and conserve the Sebangau Watershed Area. One of the steps the WWF took towards this goal was to lobby in government for the area to be officially classified protected forest. Several large logging concessions had been granted in the area in the past and illegal logging followed in the wake of these legitimate timber concessions. The area identified by WWF for protection encompassed 41 villages (Persoon and Aliyub 2002).

Political jurisdiction over the area comes from the provincial government of Central Kalimantan, Kabupaten (district) Katingan, Kabupaten Pulang Pisau, and the Municipality of Palangkaraya, which is the capital city of the province. The aforementioned districts are two of many geo-political units established in the light of new government policies on decentralisation and regional autonomy. At the time of our first fieldwork (4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2002 and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2003) these districts were not even one year old, and still in the formative stages. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2003, the parliament for Kabupaten Katingan was as yet incomplete. These changes in geo-political structure have also brought about changes as to when, where, how and by whom decisions are made with regard to forest management (see Casson 2001:10-17). At the moment it is possible for government officials at the village level to make decisions regarding extraction of resources in their area. When interviewed about their consent to what they call "community logging", village-level government leaders spoke of the immediate returns from logging, which benefited village members. Their emphasis on the relatively quick returns hint at an underlying context of temporality.

### **Envisioned Futures for Sebangau and Their Consequences**

*"Time is not on the forest's side..."* (Husson and Morrogh-Bernard 2003)

During our research in the district of Katingan, we asked local people to describe what they imagined the forests and the rivers around them would look like in the future. This was done through semi-structured interviews in Baun Bango and other villages along the Katingan River with local residents whose livelihoods depended directly on forest and river resources in the Sebangau Watershed Area.

In the semi-structured interviews, we decided to specify a future that lay only ten years ahead of the present, in order to keep a handle on the time horizons people were talking about. This was also decided in order to be able to place the envisioned futures of locals

alongside official government and World Bank estimates (another image of the future), stating that lowland forest cover in Kalimantan would disappear by the year 2010 (Forest Watch Indonesia 2002). This can also be compared with what NGOs and other environmentalists have declared: that this disappearance will actually happen much sooner without effective fire prevention measures and stricter policing of illegal logging.

Different actors described the future of the forest through different means. In the World Bank study, by remote-sensing; for local environmentalists and NGOs, through counting the quantity of cubic meters of timber leaving the area, alongside the rate at which the timber was being brought down to the coast; for scientists, through field studies and land transects, in combination with satellite imaging, ground-truthing, and other methods. In contrast to these packages of methods, the local people we interviewed derived their descriptions of the possible future of the forest from their experiences of working there on a daily basis over a long period of time, and across generations.

Local responses on the possible future of the forest were both hopeful and pessimistic. The forest would either still be there, or would be completely gone. What was striking was the way in which people formulated their answers to the question, What will the condition of the forest be in ten years' time? Almost all respondents began by saying that there was no way of ascertaining the future. Nevertheless, this disclaimer was followed by a description of a possible future based on what was happening in the present, particularly in terms of the interactions of people with the forest. We often heard statements such as, "If people continue to cut the trees, then the forest will definitely be gone". Even people who were themselves involved in illegal logging expressed this point of view.

The possible disappearance of the forest was repeatedly framed in terms of the forest being "all sold out". This response was also articulated by local people with regard to the international markets for timber: "If people still buy trees, the forest will be completely destroyed". The envisioned complete destruction or disappearance of the forest was also described as a future in which the people would no longer be able to work in the forest.

In addition, informants attributed swift deforestation to the marketability of smaller and smaller trees (some said trees with less than 15 cm diameter were being cut and sold on the market). Furthermore, Husson and Morrogh-Bernard (2003: 30) reported that "Conversations with illegal loggers on the Sebangau River revealed the belief that logging had only 1-2 years left to run before timber stocks fell to non-profitable levels." A few respondents stated that hopefully the small trees today would be big trees in ten years' time. And if they were not? Then there was always the possibility of finding other kinds of work. Some people imagined that rattan plantations might take the place of the forest, and others, unrealistically, hoped to turn to agriculture as a main source of livelihood. While a study commissioned by WWF points to a promising future with rattan, the soil in Central Kalimantan – especially in the swampy areas, is not conducive to intensive agriculture.

Given the ecological relationship between forest, swamp, and river, and the daily interaction of the locals with the environment, we also tried to link the envisioned future of the forest with the envisioned future of the river. People showed much more certainty when talking about the future of the river. Many were convinced that the river would continue to be useful for transportation, and would continue to support their livelihood through fishing. A few expressed worry about depleting fish, citing the marked decrease

in their catch of some species. One informant noted that the riverbanks were slowly receding and feared that eventually the houses along the riverbank would have to be moved back. Siltation was also mentioned as a threat to life and fishing as local people knew it. The illegal canals built for logging were blamed for this siltation. In spite of this observed relationship between logging, canals, and the river, few people seemed to realise that because of the drainage and the peat fires, the land composed of peat soil would continue to shrink substantially and result in greater risks of extensive flooding and decreasing fish harvests. People also pointed out that if the current illegal fishing practices of using dynamo or setrum were to continue unabated, then their catch would continue to decrease and the future would be bleak. However, respondents were convinced that even if the forest would be completely destroyed, the river would remain as it is, and would still be a part of their daily lives.

In contrast with the hesitance of local respondents, we found that conservation workers, scientists, and NGO workers respond to the prompt to envision the future with relative ease. The language of the NGO world can be said to be future-oriented. This is evident in the standard exercise of “visioning” as a means of establishing common goals. This is often done internally, within organizations, but it is also becoming common practice to do this with other actors who are within the scope of the organisations’ projects. For example, in March 2003, the WWF Indonesia team based in Palangkaraya organised the ‘Sebangau Vision Workshop’. The objective of the workshop was for community leaders, government officials, non-government advocates, scientists and other stakeholders to come to a consensus on a future vision for Sebangau, and to foster an atmosphere of cooperation in approaching that vision. A document which was distributed during the workshop stated: “Sebangau Lestari Masa Depan Kita Berseri,” (roughly translated: ‘A protected Sebangau is our shining future’).

Conservation-minded ecologists are by definition very much future oriented. One of the tenets of nature conservationists is that ‘extinction is forever’. From their positionality, protection of threatened species or ecosystems should therefore be a continuous effort. Preservation of nature is urgent now, and is bound to remain crucial in the future. There is no time-limit to these efforts until a desired paradise is regained. The aim is to conserve plant and animal species, or even entire ecosystems and landscapes. Plans of action are based on lessons learned from the past. In their writings, two very different kinds of images of the future prevail: catastrophic ones, and hopeful ones.

“The future for Borneo’s forests is clear; exploitation will continue.” wrote MacKinnon et al. (1996: 681) in their important volume on the ecology of Kalimantan. However, they also set forth two “visions for the future of Indonesia”, one shaped by “unbridled resource exploitation”, and the other shaped by “sound resource management” (ibid.: 268). As the authors themselves state, it does not take much ecological knowledge to ascertain which is the catastrophic scenario, and which is the hopeful one.

Husson and Morrogh-Bernard (2003:31-33) also set forth two possible scenarios for the future of the Sebangau watershed area. Both are catastrophic, based on their observations of the ongoing forest clearance and swamp drainage. They emphasise that “These scenarios are very plausible and should be stressed during presentations to all relevant stakeholders”(ibid). In both instances, “The end product will be a wasteland with contaminated water, no fish, no viable economic activities, no possibility of farming and regular flooding”(ibid.). As a parting note, the authors also point out the value and the potentials of a conserved forest for providing healthy environs and for economic gain

through Debt for Nature Swaps, Carbon Offset Agreements and tourism, as well as non-timber forest products.

Trends over the past few decades indicate that areas covered with natural habitats are rapidly decreasing, that the number of species that has become extinct is rising and that factors contributing to environmental degradation (such as population growth and increase in volume of consumption) are increasing. These trends lead to pessimistic, calamitous or even apocalyptic projections for the future. These images, often supported by powerful symbols or metaphors, serve as negative points of reference, to be avoided at all costs. An alternative vision for the future, a world in which things can change for the better is seen in terms of the maintenance of biodiversity and protected areas and the sustainable use of available natural resources. The benefits are intended for unspecified 'future generations'. In order to generate sufficient support for these alternative visions, a variety of policy instruments (varying from economic incentives to environmental master plans) are being developed to turn these alternatives into reality.

Conservation is seen by some agents of environmentalism as a means to securing a good future for local people, and also for the rest of the world. Some NGOs working on sustainable development issues are faced with the quandary of local people's desired future of *kemajuan* ("modernity" and "advancement") and security versus the NGO's own perceptions on the dangers/costs of development. For example, in the Vision Sebangau Workshop, community leaders who aired their views were clearly concerned with how conservation might affect their land tenure rights. In another observed instance, NGO-workers pointed out to local people that a road would not necessarily make life easier. It would only bring in more outsiders to cut down more trees. Local people felt frustrated with this explanation.

Other options that are often mentioned by planning agencies, private investors, and land use planners and which were sometimes echoed by the residents of Baun Bango, refer to conversions in radically different land use types such as irrigated rice, palm oil plantations and shrimp ponds. These options are considered to be economically more profitable and will bring more development into the area. To a large extent, however, many of these alternatives do not seem to take into serious consideration the ecological conditions of the area, in particular the soil conditions. The lessons of the disaster of the one-million hectare mega-rice project in the area adjacent to the Sebangau watershed have not been learned yet (Sabiham 2004). Similar kinds of well-intentioned but potentially disastrous future projections are still being made.

In our discussions with the Ngaju residents of Baun Bango, we linked the above future forest and river scenarios of both locals and agents of environmentalism with the envisioned and/or desired futures that the people held for themselves and their village. Talking about the socio-economic future, the word *maju* has an almost magical power: everybody wants to be or to become *maju*. Literally it means modern and progressive. In practical terms *kemajuan* implies various material possessions like a modern house, modern furniture, and all kinds of electric equipment. At the village level it implies good educational facilities, a road, and employment outside the forestry and agricultural sector. A big aspiration for many people is also to gain enough money to make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Given that *kemajuan* and a devastated environment are at the forefront of the contemporary futures and timescapes of local people and agents of environmentalism,

how does this link back to the current actions of both actors? In the case of the Ngaju of Baun Bango discussed in the previous chapter, decisions on investments of time and labor in livelihood and particular interactions with the environment often related directly to an image of the future, either in terms of the desired *kemajuan* or the feared loss of particular sources of livelihood. For example, decisions to convert swidden fields into rattan plantations were future-oriented in the sense that the conversion was aimed at securing land tenure. This was also done in anticipation of a new source of income, given the projections of agents of environmentalism about rattan as the alternative livelihood of the future. Destructive fishing methods were described as threats to the future of fishing in Baun Bango. Thus local government officials took on a campaign to discourage fishing using electricity. Young men involved in logging saved their cash earnings for their future aspirations, even as they anticipated the eventual demise of logging as a lucrative source of income. Women spoke of a future in which they might turn more attention to their swidden fields as their most valuable source of sustenance, which has and will see them through periods of hardship.

With these future possibilities in view – *kemajuan* and environmental destruction – agents of environmentalism acted to stem the tide of devastation, as was discussed above. Local people took action in the present to shore up against the feared loss or anticipated decline of certain forms of livelihood and sources of income such as illegal logging. Notably, these kinds of transitions are not new to the Ngaju and it deepens our understanding of the relationship between past, present, and these images of the future, to look into the ethnohistory of Baun Bango. We can perceive the history of Baun Bango as a progression towards contemporary futures, or we can think of these images of the future as part of an ethos of progress that is rooted in Baun Bango's history of inter-generational interactions with the environment.

By following these links and people's articulations of identity and local history with *kemajuan*, we make an initial attempt at backcasting in this chapter. Taking an image of the future as a starting point we have so far worked backwards in time to present circumstances, actions, and decisions. In the next section we push farther back in time to the past. On the village level in Baun Bango, images of a *maju* future were often shared or talked about in the context of people's perceptions of themselves as having lowly origins. On a more generalized level of collective Ngaju aspirations, the idea of *kemajuan* holds power and analytical promise when seen within the context of Ngaju identity-formation and political changes in Kalimantan from the early 1900's onwards.

### **Backcasting in Baun Bango: the view from *kemajuan***

In Baun Bango and in the provincial capital of Palangkaraya, talk of *kemajuan* was often couched in stories of the past and assertions on Ngaju Dayak identity. Stories about the past seemed to travel not only back in time but also across space to a distant, nebulous or undefined point of origin: *upriver*. According to the literature, the wide acceptance of Ngaju as a form of self-identification is a recent development that coincides with the history of the province of Central Kalimantan. Informal discussions, encounters, as well as scheduled meetings on development and governance brought to light a present-day tension between visions of a savage Ngaju Dayak from a primitive, *upriver* past and visions of a bright Dayak future in downriver towns and cities.





Photo 5.2: Children walk to school on the path that bisects Baun Bango.

The narrative of the settling of Baun Bango tells of a progression from the stigma of being descendants of a debt-slave, Miring, towards a prosperous life achieved through hard work and reliance on a bountiful environment.<sup>4</sup> This progression continues to be reflected in villagers' aspirations for a maju future. The idea of prosperity and status that persists in Baun Bango today differs greatly from that described by Schärer, who suggested that wealth and status were birthrights (Schärer 1963: 42-43). On the other hand, for the people of Baun Bango, poverty, backwardness, and a past linked to enslavement could be transcended through labor, time, and investments in rituals and pusaka (heirlooms). The oral history of the village of Baun Bango is the success story behind this firmly held attitude. However, the people of Baun Bango today continue to describe themselves as poor and existence in Baun Bango as sad and unsatisfactory.<sup>5</sup>

The rhetoric of poverty was very much present in people's everyday lives and was explained in terms of the size and bareness of homes, the lack of modern appliances and amenities, and the dearth of basic services from government. Families that possessed large houses, televisions, small stores, speedboats, and klotok (a long, engine-powered boat) were described as rich, orang kaya.

Nevertheless the industriousness and hard work that freed Miring and enabled them to acquire pusaka is clearly a point of pride among the villagers of Baun Bango. To hear the elders tell the story, one comes to the conclusion that for them Miring's status as a debt-slave is beside the point. Slavery, one of them reasoned, was only from the uncivilized

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<sup>4</sup> The full narrative is in Chapter Four.

<sup>5</sup> They often said this about themselves but were angered by such descriptions when made by outsiders.

past.<sup>6</sup> After slavery was outlawed in Tumbang Anoi in 1894, this should not have happened. For them, the real crux of the story was the ability of the family to rise above this situation through sheer industry.

A ceramic Chinese jar that belongs to the descendants of Miring, *Balanga bulan*, is referred to by the people of Baun Bango as evidence of the ability of their ancestors to rise through Ngaju society.<sup>7</sup> *Balanga bulan* is moved from house to house in Baun Bango, depending on who needs it or who is capable of keeping it safe. When a keeper dies, then the jar is assigned to another household. Only descendants of Miring can be keepers of the jar, or display the jar at their funerals. Kreps (1998: 10), citing ethnographic literature and archeological evidence, states that Chinese jars have been in circulation in Borneo for at least 1,000 years and that “a Dayak fondness” for them has been maintained over the centuries. She compares the customs surrounding the collection, care, and treatment of *balanga* as “analogous to curatorship” (ibid: 11). Furthermore Kreps (ibid: 12) emphasizes that jars are still “held in high esteem and revered for both their intrinsic and cultural value”. They are believed to be of divine origins in Ngaju cosmology (ibid, cf. Schärer 1963: 166, n. 1). When representatives from Museum Balanga,<sup>8</sup> the provincial museum on Ngaju culture in Palangkaraya offered to buy *Balanga bulan*, the keepers of the jar refused, saying that no amount of money could match its true value.

The livelihood repertoire available to people in Baun Bango was what enabled their ancestors to acquire *pusaka* such as *Balanga bulan*. In their own articulation of past and future, it is this same livelihood repertoire based on daily interaction with the environment that is going to propel them into the future, towards *kemajuan*. This optimism notwithstanding, the Ngaju of Baun Bango continue to go through the daily struggle of raising their standard of living according to their own terms.

Although some Ngaju of Baun Bango described their livelihood in glowing terms, there were those who were wont to cast their work in less favorable light. At the time of my fieldwork, people repeatedly pointed out that they continue to work in their environs just as their ancestors did. While many described their entire livelihood repertoire – the combination of many different forms of work – as part of their heritage and as part of their being Ngaju Dayak, many also described their labor as backward and old-fashioned, or lacking in modern techniques and technology. Thus, while they may proudly identify themselves as hardworking Ngaju and openly profess their love for the name Dayak (“*aku cinta nama Dayak*”), there is an undercurrent of tension flowing through this identity partly because of its attachment to a livelihood repertoire that people perceive to be primitive and “not yet modern”, in the words of one Ngaju man from Baun Bango.

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<sup>6</sup> The issue of slavery was often brought up in discussions on religion and conversions from Kaharingan to Christianity and Islam, which supposedly erased slave status. Many of Miring’s descendants continue to adhere to the “old religion”, now officially recognized by the Indonesian government as Hindu Kaharingan.

<sup>7</sup> *Balanga bulan* is said to have been purchased by one of the sons of Miring. However the accounts of my informants differ once again over how many times the jar changed hands before it reached Baun Bango, and over whether the jar was purchased with money or bartered for valuable objects such as drums, gongs, or other jars.

<sup>8</sup> For an interesting discussion on Museum Balanga, indigenous curatorship, and Dayak jar experts see Kreps 1998.

This conflicted Dayak pride brings me to the recent emergence of the Ngaju identity. “Ngaju” originated as a term used by Malay living downriver to refer to all natives from upriver (Knapen 2001: 90).<sup>9</sup> Although the ethnic label “Ngaju” may be prevalent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this was not always the case. People tend to identify themselves and each other by locality. In the case of Central Kalimantan the rivers are an integral part of people’s lives and identities. New acquaintances ask each other from which river they hail. Rather than mention an ethnic label such as Ngaju or Ot, they identify themselves to one another first as a person from a certain river, as in *olo Katingan* (a Katingan person).

Furthermore, the term Ngaju continues to be associated with headhunting, barbarism, and primitivity in the imagination of the Indonesian public because of media sensationalism and the official government classification of remote communities as *terbelakang* or, literally, backward.<sup>10</sup> Schiller observes that the label Ngaju also carries “pejorative connotations of rusticity and provincialism” (Schiller 1997a: 16, Schiller 1997b: 186). This was similarly noted for the label “Dayak” by Schärer (1968: 1) who wrote that it “formerly had a contemptuous significance, something like ‘backwoodsman’...”

Although the people known as the Ngaju share a long history, a language, and a rich system of traditional law, *adat*, Ngaju identity – Schiller (1997a) uses the term “Ngajuness” – only began to crystallize and to be wielded with pride in the last century partly through the political strategies and demands of a highly-vocal, educated, and urban-based elite, and also in part due to the paternalistic influence and policies of the Dutch colonial government and the Rheinisch and Basler Missions (Klinken 2004, Miles 1976, Schiller 1997a & 1997b).<sup>11</sup> It was their stand that the Dayak had to be protected from the corrupting influence of the Malays. It was church and colonial government policy to nurture the Dayak in isolation and to make them settle down permanently and live ordered, regulated lives (Klinken 2004: 113). The educational programs of the missions and their encouragement of anti-Banjarese Malay sentiments had “produced the basis for the emergence of a Ngadju-Dayak elite from the Kuala Kapuas area” (Miles 1976: 106) and affected the political developments that were to lead up to then President Sukarno issuing a decree that established Central Kalimantan as an autonomous province in 1957.<sup>12</sup>

From the early 1900s onwards, graduates of the mission schools organized themselves to work towards an “awakening of Dayaks to an awareness of the times” (as quoted by

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<sup>9</sup> According to Knapen (2001: 90-92), “Oral tradition strongly suggests that the Ngaju are related to the present-day Ot Danum and were originally dwelling in the central mountains at the headwaters of the large Southeast Bornean rivers from where they have gradually (presumably in various movements) descended towards the coast.”

<sup>10</sup> Schiller (1997a: 1-7, 2001: 1) notes such instances and writes about Ngaju responses to these depictions.

<sup>11</sup> I find that this parallels the case in the Philippine Cordillera where an educated elite actively campaigned for political unity among the different ethnic groups in the region. To do so, they needed to encourage the idea of a shared identity: Igorot. For more on this, please see Chapter Three.

<sup>12</sup> Today Ngaju continue to struggle to protect and/or gain key positions within local government.

Miles 1976: 108). They gathered data on Ngaju customs and codified these.<sup>13</sup> They gave loans to people who wanted to hold rituals. They also opened schools aiming to equip Dayak youth with qualifications for secondary school and the civil service. A succession of educated Ngaju elite made repeated attempts to gain representation in both colonial and post-colonial governments. Sometimes these movements broke out into insurrections demanding autonomy for Central Kalimantan and official recognition of the “pagan beliefs” or traditional religion of the Dayak.<sup>14</sup> (Miles 1976: 119-121). This elite helped to produce a Ngaju consciousness and actively attempted to shape this consciousness in terms of culture and tradition. They lived, worked and campaigned for their Ngaju advocacies from urban centers but they also worked to create a support-base in villages.<sup>15</sup>

Nowadays the name “Ngaju” is wielded with fierce pride in Central Kalimantan. The label has come to symbolize the ideal of bumiputra, or ‘son of the soil’ sovereignty in the province.<sup>16</sup> It is against this backdrop of a larger history of social movements and the politics of identity that we must see the future envisioned by the Ngaju of Baun Bango in particular. The pride which the descendants of Miring take in their forebears’ capacity to rise from lowly origins parallels the pride that these same villagers take in identifying themselves as Ngaju. Most anthropological accounts on the constant reformulation of Ngaju identity focus on elites, religion, politics, and their intertwining with local lives.<sup>17</sup> However, there is one other aspect of Ngajuness that backcasting and a focus on environmental issues, livelihood, and the ethnohistory of Baun Bango reveals: an articulation of Ngaju identity with work in the environment, and with entitlements to and within that environment.

In this and the succeeding sections I have shown how images of the future link back to actions in the present which, in turn, are colored by the histories and memories of several generations of Ngaju Dayak. In the next section I delve into how alternative livelihoods are seen as the resolution to the conflict between the images of the future of the Ngaju of Baun Bango, and those of the agents of environmentalism.

### **Alternative livelihood: the key to the future?**

Clearly, logging represents a period of Baun Bango history that the resident Ngaju Dayak expect to pass the way other forms of livelihood have faded in and out of their everyday lives over time. They attribute this partly to possible changes in the market. In addition they are aware that they will be affected by the establishment of the Taman Nasional Sebangau, which encompasses the forests around them. They also expect that the

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<sup>13</sup> This parallels closely the aims of Dayak leaders along the Katingan River who gathered together in 2005 to discuss the codification of adat and its implementation alongside local government rules and regulations. See Chapter Seven.

<sup>14</sup> This was to happen only in 1980, when Kaharingan was recognized by the Ministry of Religion as a branch of Hinduism.

<sup>15</sup> See also Klinken’s 2004 discussion on Dayak ethnogenesis that focuses on the career of one such elite Dayak leader, Hausmann Baboe, who participated in and led these early social movements.

<sup>16</sup> This ideal also contains the seeds for inter-ethnic violence as was demonstrated in the sensationalized Dayak-Madura conflicts. For different approaches to understanding the conflict see Dove 1997 and 2006b, and Klinken 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Schiller (1997b: 196) states that “efforts at objectifying Ngaju culture are occurring both from the top down, i.e., in response to the directives from central government concerning how to portray diversity, as well as from the bottom up”

pressure of President Yudhoyono's campaign to put a stop to illegal logging will eventually reach them. Finally, as was mentioned above, informants shared their observations that soon there would be no more trees left of marketable value.



Photo 5.3: A logging canal that connects to Danao Jalam Pangen.

This is not to say that the prospect of a life without logging does not worry the Ngaju of Baun Bango. Young men involved in logging feel that, aside from themselves, local people are highly dependent on their incomes from logging. They say that a total end to logging would compromise their aspirations. The youth who express these views are not in agreement with government plans to put an end to logging in their area. One young man stood apart from the others in his hearty agreement with an eventual logging ban. He imagined that if logging were to continue, the forest would soon become completely bald. He said with certainty that the people would be unable to cope with the extinction of trees in their area. Women predicted that in the future the ladang would become the most important livelihood option because they said it could provide food for their families even if they had no money.

Interestingly, the impact of the newly declared Taman Nasional Sebangau is perceived by informants to be much more threatening to their livelihood repertoire than the eventual exhaustion of marketable trees in the forest.<sup>18</sup> People were apprehensive that the establishment of the Taman Nasional Sebangau would mean a serious curtailment of their livelihood activities in the forest. Their questions on how to deal with the changes are

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<sup>18</sup> Projections by the World Bank predict that lowland forests will be completely denuded by the year 2010.

notably directed towards the WWF, and not just the Indonesian government. “What will WWF give us,” they ask, “If they are going to take away our source of work?” Because of their prominent role in the establishment of the Taman Nasional Sebangau, the representatives of WWF have become significant actors in the eyes of the locals.<sup>19</sup> Some perceive them as outsiders bringing with them a new form of encroachment on Baun Bango’s territories. In other instances they are believed to be new benefactors, bringing with them the hopes of other, better sources of income – so-called alternative livelihoods.

When traveling along the Katingan it is easy to forget that much of the highly visible logging is in fact illegal. As was mentioned earlier, these activities are referred to somewhat euphemistically as *usaha masyarakat*, or community work. In a socio-economic profile prepared for WWF, Persoon and Aliyub (2002: 16) note that “there is a culture of ‘mutual help’ in allowing illegal logging to pass by without severe sanctions. The major reason for allowing this to happen is usually based on the argument that the poor and hungry local people cannot be stopped from looking for a source of income.” Some local people reason that their logging activities became illegal only when government granted large areas of forest to logging concessions. It should be remembered, too, that until the arrival of the logging companies local logging was not carried out for commercial purposes. Many said that they had no other recourse to improve their standard of living significantly. Other sources of income simply did not rake in as much profits in as short a period of time as one logging season. If logging were to be totally banned, they said, then the government should replace it with something.

WWF, local government officials, and other agents of environmentalism, see alternative livelihoods as the key to effective conservation in that they are constructed as replacements for unsustainable, destructive forms of extraction such as illegal logging. Alternative livelihoods are meant to provide other avenues for income generation in the area concerned (Persoon 2004: 1). In interviews, WWF staff members expressed the conviction that rattan would enable people in the district of Katingan to improve their standard of living without further degrading the natural environment. Persoon (*ibid*) pointed out that while rattan and other sources of income may appear promising, it would be important to consider “the time gap between the ‘loss’ and the first harvesting of whatever alternative is offered.” I take this argument further here and show that the time gap is also epistemic. I mean this in the sense that time is either absent or not explicitly dealt with in the frame of alternative livelihoods, thereby creating a gap in the understanding of how local livelihoods undergo shifts.

Rattan is hailed by agents of conservation and local government officials as the livelihood of the future. Government plans and non-government interventions are taking place so that rattan may become the primary source of income for local people. Through the efforts of the WWF, the district heads of Katingan in Central Kalimantan, and Cirebon, Java, signed a Memorandum of Understanding making Katingan a supply center for Cirebon, where raw rattan is processed into finished products. It is hoped that this agreement will raise the price of rattan for local smallholders. Much like the Dutch did in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, agents of conservation and government officials view the present rattan cultivation and harvest practices of the villagers as rudimentary, even primitive, and in

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<sup>19</sup> Please see Chapter Six for more on local people’s perceptions of WWF’s role in Taman Nasional Sebangau.



need of intervention and improvement (interviews and WWF Indonesia Kalimantan Tengah and UNPAR, n.d.).



Photo 5.4: Pak Idrus' rattan harvest is weighed aboard a rattan trader's boat.

Aside from setting up better structures and sending out encouraging signals for the future of rattan trade, local government officials hand-in-hand with community leaders and WWF have closed some of the illegal logging canals inside the protected area. This act effectively closes the entry routes of loggers and the exit routes for logs. Inevitably those who lost their logging locations were angered by the closures. However, those who rely mainly on fishing as a source of livelihood welcomed the closure of logging canals. In their estimation the logging canals have destroyed the natural habitat and spawning locations of fish among the roots of trees growing in the swamps. Furthermore the logging canals cause swift siltation in the tributaries and the smaller, man-made fishing canals. For these people, it is fishing, rather than rattan that will sustain their families in the future. Ecologists who have posited that the canals contribute to the unnaturally fast drainage of the peat swamps, which in turn exacerbates the forest fires that are now a recurring feature of the Central Kalimantan timescape, would also welcome it.

The possible transition to a rattan-based economy is hampered by the constant fluctuation of demand and prices as well as the lack of facilities to process rattan into an end product within Central Kalimantan. Thus most people at the village level have no recourse but to sell rattan as a raw product at prices dictated by middlemen, who in turn set their buying prices at rates determined by factories in Java. Moreover, there is also a limit to the expansion of rattan plantations for smallholders in Baun Bango in particular, as the outer areas of the village are swampy and therefore unsuitable to planting rattan or anything else. It should be noted as well that rattan is as yet not a lucrative option for everybody because not all Baun Bango villagers have rattan plantations. Out of those that do, the majority have only one or two plantations. Only households which own three or more

plantations can expect any steady support from rattan, as one has to wait at least two to three years between harvests.

The timescapes of the people of Baun Bango are constantly shifting. People choose work in time with the seasons and social, economic, and political conditions. They also apportion their time among various tasks. This focus on timescapes affords us some insights into alternative livelihoods.

The parallels and connections drawn between the environmental history of Southeast Borneo and the contemporary livelihood repertoire of the Ngaju of Baun Bango<sup>20</sup> show that the importance and prevalence of various sources of income and sustenance have continually shifted over time. These shifts occurred – and continue to occur – through people’s interactions with physical and temporal aspects of the environment and the decisions they make in the context of these interactions. The relative ease of physical access to both resources and markets leads people to choose less risky enterprises. Decisions on ‘harvesting’ particular resources from the forests and rivers depend on the seasons as well as on the actual means by which these resources can be reached and transported out to buyers. For example, at the time headhunting was prevalent, rattan was abundant in the forest and there was a demand for it, but it was not considered a worthwhile endeavor (Knapen 2001). Contemporary logging is difficult, physically demanding work but risk is reduced by the fact that the loggers find buyers for their timber before they cut the trees.

People also keep an eye on the demand for particular products, and the rise and fall of prices. They are aware of how local labor can be affected by changes on the global market. The Ngaju of Baun Bango factor these in when deciding to invest time, energy, and capital into a given livelihood option at a particular season. As one informant pointed out, “If people continue to buy, we will continue to sell. It’s the same with our other sources of livelihood in the forest. No one buys damar or rubber anymore, so we have stopped gathering damar.”

The fact that there is a wide array of choices available in the environment of the Ngaju of Baun Bango is a key aspect of the livelihood shifts over time. Knapen (2001: 387) argues that in Southeast Borneo people have been “most successful in making a living” in places where many possibilities are found close by, especially where there is more than one fertile ecological zone. For the residents of Baun Bango locally available resources such as the lakes, rivers, tributaries, land, and now trees embody as well as contain the affordances out of which they can build their lives. The ability to perceive and harness diverse affordances in the environment and so to diversify livelihood reduces risk. Therefore, although the Ngaju of Baun Bango tend to be ambivalent about the supposed backwardness of their forms of work, their ways of interacting with the environment definitely carry advantages for them and so they maintain locally-generated rules – some of them traditionally-based – for determining access to resources.

While it appears that this has been taken into consideration in the choice of an alternative that has already proven to be locally viable, the embeddedness of rattan within a wide,

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<sup>20</sup> See Chapter Four.



interwoven range of options has been overlooked by agents of environmentalism. Instead, it is being isolated in development plans as the alternative livelihood of the future. Conversely the “typical Dayak way” of working in several livelihood options at once is believed to be counter-productive. However, the point is, taking a deeper and longer view of the element of time, from the future to the present and the past, shows us that the Ngaju of Baun Bango have always maintained alternative livelihoods. These options have sustained them, and continue to sustain them through economic, political, and ecological instability.

### **Images of the future as timescapes**

We now want to discuss the variation in time perspectives as they usually prevail in the context of environmental projects of which Sebangau is just an example. These perspectives are held by the different actors as mentioned above, and in some cases these perspectives project a particular disciplinary view. They are used by a variety of people representing different institutions from various spatial contexts. The people operate from diverse normative viewpoints and different time-order or time-value-systems. These perspectives allow for an exploration of conceptions of time and future, in relation to the notion of sustainability and the critical role which anthropology has played or could play in the sustainability debate.

In recent times, agents of environmentalism seem to have found natural allies in local or 'indigenous' people. Increasingly, these people's 'traditional' management and tenure systems are seen as building blocks in new approaches to conservation in general and protected areas, in particular. This, often referred to as community-based resource management, has become much more than just an abstract idea during the last decade. Community boundaries and resource use are being mapped, and experiments or pilot projects in collaborative management are in progress in many parts of the world. Financially these world-wide initiatives are strongly supported by international institutions. The cooperation between conservationists (advocates and planners of community-based resource management) and local communities is a fragile one. In this equation, indigenous communities are currently the favored or preferred partners. This offers possibilities to link concerns about security and justice with environmental destruction and it has stimulated discussions about human rights to self-determination. Rights of access to resources (and habitat) are based on historical arguments: local people were always the rightful owners of the resources in the past (sometimes even 'since time immemorial'), before being deprived of them by external forces. The claims to such rights (to forests, land and wildlife) are often permeated with the contemporary rhetoric of sustainability. At the same time there are some problematic legal, political and cultural complexities embedded in these conservation programs as some (indigenous) groups are embraced while others (for example, migrants, agriculturists, and nomads) are virtually ignored (Benda Beckmann 1997, Osseweijer 2003).

Development bureaucracies, both national and international agencies, with their multiple aims and internal contradictions, have different time perspectives. Their time perspectives are predominantly organised around the cycle of projects of two to five years, which are repeated again and again, while reflecting changes in development discourse. The lack of institutional memory has often been noted. The time perspectives of development

bureaucracies are in many ways closely linked to the rise and fall of politicians or political parties. This can raise big problems in politically unstable situations, as is the case in the Sebangau area, with many new administrative and political processes going on at the same time. Large conservation institutions, which often act as a kind of third party aiming to facilitate nature protection in a complex field of actors, may also develop procedures and practices that resemble those of the development agencies in terms of projects cycles and time horizons.

Economists can also be said to have a dominant way of looking at time and the future. The most important conceptual instrument they have at their disposal in order to express the present and future value of goods, including natural resources and services, is that of 'discount rates'. Present day satisfaction of needs is ascribed a higher value than satisfaction of needs in the future. Natural resources are generally assigned a market value, which is largely equivalent to present day market value. This raises problems of market imperfections and difficulties in the pricing of ecological functions. A result of these market imperfections and pricing problems is that the future in all its dimensions (need satisfactions, rights of future generations and future value of biodiversity) is given a lower priority than present day values. As a consequence of this powerful discounting logic, investments in the long term productivity of forests or in the conservation of nature as an 'heroic sacrifice' (Passmore 1980) are automatically seen as uneconomic, irrational ventures (Adam 1998). This may be partly solved through appropriate pricing mechanisms of the environmental functions of natural resources, but this is not an easy task. At the moment efforts are undertaken by some consultants in the Sebangau case to 'market the forest' in terms of certificates for carbon sequestration. The time horizon of economists in relation to the exploitation of natural resources, is generally not a long-term perspective: the further removed in time are the benefits and problems, the less they will be taken into account. The economic view leads to free-market environmentalism, to use Eckersley's term. This is characterised by an attitude of scepticism towards limitations to growth and non-economic uses, and an emphasis on quantifiable material values and a maximised economic output. All these characteristics are based on a strongly anthropocentric worldview (Eckersley as cited in Stephens 1999: 16-17).

## **Discussion**

Asking local people about their envisioned futures led into discussions with them about how the future might look, and more importantly, who could prevent it or realize it. Usually, that future was spoken of as being shaped by others, like the government and conservation organizations like WWF. Or, in most cases, by "those who are cutting trees", "those who are making canals," "those who are using batteries for their electro-fishing," or "the community". Remarks were made about the government's focus on natural resources and timber in particular as a source of income. Locals expressed the hope that government officials would change this focus, and would assist them in starting other means of livelihood.

In their envisioned futures, people didn't speak of themselves as personally engaged in the creation of the futures of the forest and river. The future of the village was also spoken of as being shaped by an unclear other. This is not to be misconstrued as passivity on the part of the indigenous Ngaju. More likely this is a recognition of an indeterminate, open future that is contingent upon the interactions of countless actors and non-human factors. However, they unequivocally stated that the futures of their own families

depended on the work that they did in the present, in their environment. People were working hard harnessing various affordances, trying to save money, trying to find other opportunities to increase income, to gain chances of higher education for their children, and to attain *kemajuan*. People also considered religious piety and strong faith to be means of securing blessings for the future.<sup>21</sup>

In the ‘real world’ of natural resource management, these various time perspectives, including the ‘native visions’ of temporal contexts, and the visions of environmental futures, collide and coalesce in a dynamic but chaotic manner (Dilley 1999). Adams’ timescapes emphasise the rhythmicities, timing and tempos of past and present activities and the interactions of organisms and matter, including their changes and contingencies (Adam 1998: 11). In Chapter Four I described how Ngaju actions in the present are part of a continuum of social relations and environmental interactions that stretch from the past towards the future. Historically, their livelihood repertoire in their environment has sustained them over time, and is therefore a viable livelihood repertoire in that sense. However, placed within the context of a concrete nature conservation project such as the Sebangau Watershed Area, it is clear that economists, nature conservationists, representatives of local people, donor agencies and bureaucracies operate from highly divergent timescapes. Agents of environmentalism view the present livelihood repertoire of the Ngaju to be a threat to the protected area, but if they pursue a line of action that severs Ngaju sociality and economy from the forest, they would effectively sever them from a future in the environment.<sup>22</sup> These various actors have to decide on a middle ground in the design of projects from which power play is inextricable. Projects are future-oriented and are intended to incorporate future interests. Divergent timescapes impact on projects during the implementation phase and in the flow of everyday life, though often in hidden ways. The outcome of this process of interaction often gives rise to a variety of interpretations. These interpretations are part and parcel of present day realities, which are a combination of the planned and unintended outcomes of past actions as well as the result of activities intended to bring about another kind of reality.

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<sup>21</sup> This is paralleled in the Philippine case study, as discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>22</sup> I am indebted to Leontine Visser for this insight.



## CHAPTER SIX



Photo 6.1: Local government officials of Kecamatan Kamipang sit down to a meal during a sosialisasi visit to one of the villages in their jurisdiction.

### **An etiquette of environmentalism: interactions for natural resource management in the Philippines and Indonesia<sup>1</sup>**

“Environmental projects must be participatory and include local communities if they expect to succeed.” This proposition has been the subject of debate time and again among agents of environmentalism and social analysts, without final consensus (see for example, Cooke & Kothari 2001, Hickey & Mohan 2004, Milton 1996, Zerner 2003). Environmentalists take different positions on this debate and thus create varying degrees of involvement and commitment with locals. Most conservation organizations routinely allocate staff, time, and resources to workshops, training seminars, information and education campaigns, and consultations involving local people. This then creates relationships and interactions among communities that need to be examined and explored, rather than taken for granted as part of the standard operating procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> Previously published as Perez, P. (2008) An Etiquette of Environmentalism: interactions for natural resource management in the Philippines and Indonesia,’ in Persoon, G. and Osseweijer, M. (eds) Reflections on the Heart of Borneo (Tropenbos Series, 24: 197-230). Wageningen: Tropenbos International.

In this chapter, I will focus on interfaces where environmentalists aim to enlist indigenous peoples and other local people to the green cause, on the premise that indigenous cultures engender ecological harmony or that locals possess an intimate knowledge of the environment, and that their cooperation is necessary for the success of an environmentalist project. I examine interactions between indigenous leaders/representatives and agents of environmentalism in the light of the nature-culture *imaginaire*, which Zerner (2003: n. 18) describes as an “*imaginaire* in which progressive social schemes and green dreams are aligned but in tension and sometimes in contradiction.” It is interesting to note, however, that even those projects within the scope of this study that aim to be highly participative and sensitive to indigenous cultures and indigenous peoples’ rights eventually meet with a dissonance between spoken or written agreements, and the actions of people. Why so? The present chapter explains this dissonance in the light of what was seen to pass between key actors before, during, and after participation in interactions organized around the Mt. Pulag National Park in the Philippines, and the Taman Nasional Sebangau in Indonesia – two, locally-contested sites for nature-conservation, as was shown in the previous chapters.

In both case studies, agents of environmentalism were observed to be working towards modifications of the actions and attitudes of the people that they perceived to be stakeholders in bounded protected areas. They sought to enroll identified stakeholders in taking up green positionalities. One who takes up a green positionality people who take up the green positionality are sees the need for environmental protection in some form and his/her “practices and words bear the mark of this acceptance” (Agrawal 2005: 18, on the environmental subjects). The green positionality entails a certain degree of internalization of, and engagement with, the objectives of agents of environmentalism. An implicit agenda of agents of environmentalism was to generate in the world around them prescribed actions that would correspond to their own brand of environmentalism. As can be gathered from campaign materials and reports, it is commonly assumed within conservation circles that the creation of venues for addressing environmental concerns – environmental venues, from now on – raises some imagined participatory quotient that is directly related to positive community relations and the organization’s effectiveness. Environmental venues will be treated as scheduled encounters that gather particular people together at a time and place decided upon by at least one of the key actors concerned, to either further environmentalist objectives, or to negotiate them. These venues and interfaces are the primary site and focus of fieldwork for this chapter.

Through my own participation in these venues, I noted that a certain etiquette prevailed at these gatherings. By etiquette I mean recognizable patterns of behaviour that are deemed by participating actors as proper, respectful, and acceptable ways of interacting. In this chapter, I will show how the practice of an environmentalists’ etiquette between hosts and guests in these venues is beneficial to the maintenance of cordial relationships.

I myself was not exempt from this etiquette, as I was attending environmental venues not only as an observer, but also as a guest to both the convenors and the participants of these meetings. As a new face at most of these gatherings, I was often obliged to introduce myself to the body. In my introductions, I stated my name, my hometown (or home country), and my research objectives as an anthropologist. I also made it clear that I was participating in these meetings not as an employee or partner of the World Wildlife Fund in Indonesia, or the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Philippines, but as an observer and student interested in the decisions on the environment that are made at these meetings. When I introduced myself, I was conforming to the

accepted protocol at these meetings and at the same time, I was establishing my own positionality within the context of the environmental venues. Protocol, venues, and the foregrounding of particular identities, objectives, and positionalities – these are all elements of the etiquette that I will define and describe in this chapter. Environmental venues are the sites at which the etiquette is practised and continuously reproduced. While etiquette facilitates smooth communication, it does not necessarily create deep understanding between actors, and this can be obstructive to the goals set by environmentalist agents themselves.

While I recognize that environmental venues are a regular, functional – and in many respects, valid – part of the operations of environmentalist agents, I will disrobe these venues of their status as *modus operandi*. In doing so, my objective is not to evaluate specific projects, organizations, or their methods but rather, to reach an understanding of how they become internalised by the people and communities that are drawn into nature-conservation plans. I examine how these venues fit within the timescapes of different actors. Furthermore, I do not wish to detract from the successes that have been achieved by the environmentalist agents mentioned here, nor to denigrate the credibility of local leaders who work closely with environmentalists. As an anthropologist I study environmentalisms and indigenism in the hopes of contributing knowledge that is useful to both causes, and this chapter serves as an attempt to make such a contribution.

Although the practice of environmentalist etiquette occurs at many levels, such as at international<sup>2</sup> or even regional meetings, this paper is confined to local contexts. There are two aspects of local context which will be attended to. First, I will describe the specific locales and situations of the communities within and around the Mt. Pulag National Park, in the province of Benguet, in the Philippine Cordillera, and the Taman Nasional Sebangau in the province of Central Kalimantan, in Indonesian Borneo. Secondly, I will look at the more general context of the locale that environmentalist agents enter into and contend with wherever they may plant themselves. This discussion will be followed by descriptions of actual environmental venues, which brought together agents of environmentalism, indigenous people, and other actors. The attention to detail serves the purpose of highlighting aspects of environmental venues that are usually taken for granted by their proponents and participants; aspects of interaction which add up to an etiquette of environmentalism. For every environmental venue described, I will draw out and discuss different elements of the interaction which I deem to be crucial to emergent relationships, understandings, and misunderstandings between actors.

### **Acting locally**

The processes of localisation for both national parks in this case study began with the recognition of increasing threats to something valuable about each area. In Mt. Pulag it was the existence of a “unique mountain ecosystem” at 2,900 meters above sea level, its watershed functions, high plant diversity, and endangered species. Some examples of

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the heads of the districts encompassed by the Taman Nasional Sebangau have been hosted by the WWF in the Netherlands and in Kuala Lumpur. This can be seen as an activation of a host-guest etiquette in that it then becomes bad form for the district heads to take away their support for these nature-conservation projects, after having been hosted abroad.

these species are a dwarf bamboo (*Arunolinaria niitakayamensis*), the Luzon bushy-tailed cloud rat (*Crateromys schadenbergi*), and the Philippine brown deer (*Cervus marriannus*). The threats to the environment in the Mt. Pulag National Park are tree-poaching, forest and grassland fires, and the continuing conversion of forests to agricultural land.

Nature-conservationists were drawn to Sebangau for its “unique tropical peatland forest”, its hydrological functions, richness of biological diversity, and an estimated orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) population of 6,910 individuals, as of the year 2003 (Husson & Morrogh-Bernard 2004: 14). The threats that were identified for each place at the outset of environmental efforts continue to be threats in the present. Similar threats infringe on the Taman Nasional Sebangau as they do in the Mt. Pulag National Park, albeit on a much larger scale: illegal logging, oil palm plantations, widespread forest fires. Because of the human aspect of these threats to the environment, agents of environmentalism in both areas have attempted, with differing degrees of effort and success, to work closely with local communities.

In the Northern Philippines, the 11,550-hectare Mt. Pulag National Park in the Cordillera Mountain Range has been in existence since the year 1987, and it has been under the jurisdiction of a Protected Areas Management Board since the enactment of the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS), or Republic Act No. 7586 of 1992. The protection of the tropical montane forests of Mt. Pulag and its endemic species has been problematic from the park’s inception. Officials of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Service attribute this to the inclusion of agricultural settlements within the boundaries of the park. The root of this problem was that the delineation of the park was done by a table survey. Literally, laying a map on a table and drawing the boundaries of the park on it. This has fuelled resistance towards conservation efforts on the part of the indigenous communities living both beside and within the park. They claim they were not consulted by authorities at the start of the process. Nevertheless, park officials and other agents of environmentalism continue to try to reconcile local people’s desire for development with the protection of the park’s ecological riches. This issue hangs as a backdrop to many interactions between local people, agents of conservation, and government representatives in the Mt. Pulag National Park, as was observed during fieldwork in 2003 and 2004.

The Taman Nasional Sebangau, a 568,700-hectare protected area was established in 2004. The park is highlighted as one of the achievements of the World Wildlife Fund in Indonesia, which facilitated the process of obtaining the park’s legal status through “bottom up and participative involvement of local community and local government” (WWF Factsheet: Sebangau National Park, June 2005). At the time of writing, the WWF and various government bodies and their representatives were working together to create structures for multi-sectoral collaborative management, and to create constituencies for conservation especially among local people living in proximity with the park. The interactions that will be described in this paper took place in 2003, an intense time for the WWF campaigns for the protection of the orangutan population of Sebangau and their habitat, and in 2005 when the park was newly established and community forums on the park were being set up across the area.





Photo 6.2: Residents of Tawangan work voluntarily to keep the roads to their village open during the rainy season.

#### Mt. Pulag National Park: making in-roads to progress

As was discussed in previous chapters,<sup>3</sup> any cooperation between agents of environmentalism and local people in the Mt. Pulag National Park takes place against the backdrop of conflict over the inclusion of agricultural settlements within the protected area. Indigenous peoples living in the park, primarily Kalanguyas and Ibalois, consider the park's presence to be an encroachment on their ancestral lands. They point out that they have prior rights to their ancestral territory, now recognized in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, or Republic Act 9518 of 1997. They argue that they have been living in the area long before the park came into existence, and they were not properly consulted or adequately informed about the creation of the park. They are hostile to park regulations and counter that the park limits the people's opportunities for development. The primary field site for this study is the Kalanguya village of Tawangan, which lies entirely within the boundaries of the national park on the eastern slopes of Mt. Pulag.

Residents of Tawangan feel themselves to be distant from the government and urban centers to which they are connected by political administration and trade. The village lies just within the line of mossy forest growth, with vegetable gardens extending outwards from the clusters of households scattered along the eastern slopes. The Municipality of Kabayan, the local government unit and political center to which Tawangan is attached, is situated on the north-western side of Mt. Pulag. Residents of Tawangan who have official transactions to make at the government offices in the Poblacion of Kabayan must travel there on foot (anywhere from four to six hours of walking), or by hitching a ride

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapters Two and Three.

with the trucks and jeepneys that carry vegetables from the barangays of Kabayan to urban market places and trading posts. On the other hand, the Municipality of Tinoc, which is part of the province of Ifugao, lies just across from Tawangan. It is a one or two hour walk to reach Tinoc, and from there daily buses ply the dirt roads leading to La Trinidad. This is a six- to eight-hour bus ride. As was expressed to me by residents of Tawangan, getting their vegetable crops to the market is difficult, and getting the sick to hospitals is even harder. The residents of Tawangan desire change, and would like to have easier access to markets and government centers to which they are connected. For this to happen, they said, they need good roads. The two roads extending to and from Tawangan are unpaved dirt roads which become impassable in the rainy season, if not for the residents who voluntarily work to keep the roads open.

The principal agents of environmentalism in the Mt. Pulag National Park are, the members of the Protected Areas Management Board (referred to as the Board from now on), and the local municipal and barangay government officials. The Board is a body responsible for the implementation of the National Integrated Protected Areas System, and the Management Plan that is required for every protected area in the Philippines. The existence and structure of the Board is set out in the implementing rules and regulations of the National Integrated Protected Areas System. The Board should be composed of:<sup>4</sup>

1. The DENR Regional Executive Director (RED) as Chairman and advisor in matters related to the technical aspects of protected area management. When there are two or more REDs on the Board, the Secretary shall designate one of them to be the Chairman.
2. One representative of the Autonomous Regional Government where this is applicable.
3. The Provincial Development Officer from each province with territory within the protected area.
4. One representative from each Barangay with territory within the Protected area.
5. One representative from each tribal community residing within the protected area, if applicable.
6. At least three (3) representatives from local NGO's and community organizations, including people's organizations, church or civic organizations. These representatives shall be based in or near protected area.
7. One representative, if necessary, from other national government departments that may be involved in protected area management. In situations wherein two or more such departments are involved, the representative shall be chosen by and among themselves.

The Mt. Pulag Protected Area Management Board is composed of 24 members. The Board meets quarterly to discuss matters pertaining directly to the management of the park. Most of the barangay and tribal representatives of the Mt. Pulag Board are also local government officials in their village. Furthermore, all the members of the Board, with the exception of one or two regional-level DENR officials, consider themselves to be indigenous to the areas immediately within and surrounding the national park. They claim to have the most active Protected Areas Management Board in the country. One member explicitly attributes this to the fact that they are all indigenous, and "indigenous people know how to cooperate with the government, and with each other" (personal communication, Board member).

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.psdn.org.ph/chmbio/dao25.html>

For that matter, politics throughout the Cordillera Administrative Region are dominated by individuals and networks that are predominantly indigenous (Casambre 2001, Finin 2001, Minter and Perez 2004). Thus, all local government positions in the municipality of Kabayan are occupied by members of the Ibaloi, Kankana-ey, and Kalanguya groups settled in that area.

#### Taman Nasional Sebangau: saving the orangutan

As with the Cordillera Administrative Region in the Philippines, politics in the province of Central Kalimantan, Indonesia are dominated by an indigenous elite of Ngaju Dayak roots (v. Klinken 2002 and 2004, Miles 1976, Schiller 1997 a). Prior to this, decisions on local governance and natural resource utilization came from central government. Until recently Indonesia's state has followed a policy of environmental exploitation for national economic gain. However, for Dayak political leaders Central Kalimantan is a province of Dayaks, created especially for Dayaks. So decisions on governance issuing from Jakarta have been received with resentment in the province, and today the view is strongly held that development of Central Kalimantan should be development for the Ngaju Dayak. In the Katingan District, one of three districts with jurisdiction in the vicinity of the national park, most of the local government officials that were encountered and consulted in the course of this research ascribed to Dayak identity, although not necessarily of Ngaju origins. Like some of the officials of Kabayan, in the Philippines, these officials of Katingan and its sub-districts and villages were sometimes observed to act as agents of environmentalism. Although they may not identify themselves as environmentalists, nor do they officially occupy positions as agents of environmentalism, they occasionally act as incidental environmentalists, or combined entities. Combined entities are actors who, at various times, embody the positionalities of both indigenous persons and agents of environmentalism. These circumstances will be described in the section on *modus operandi*.

In the Taman Nasional Sebangau case study, the most visible and active environmentalists were the team-members of the World Wildlife Fund – Indonesia that were based in the provincial capital of Palangka Raya. The WWF runs along a completely different trajectory from that of local government officials. The latter explicitly consider themselves to be working within their own territory, for the future of the Dayak peoples. On the other hand, the WWF as an organisation originates from outside of the locale. It is essentially an international organization that has chosen to work for the protection of the Sebangau Watershed Area, for the future of what agents of environmentalism consider a global heritage: biological diversity.

Establishing an office in the Central Kalimantan capital of Palangka Raya in the turbulent wake of the Dayak-Madura conflict of 2001, the WWF considered it prudent to align itself closely with local government. The early stages of their strategy involved the re-classification of the Sebangau watershed area from production forest to protected forest. Their campaign included the drumming up of support among local government officials, a focus on informing local people of the endangered status of the orangutan and other protected species, and the benefits of conservation. One of the strategic moves of the WWF that worked very well for their campaign was the hiring of one or two Ngaju Dayak team-members to bridge the gap between two worlds that are foreign to one another – the world of the WWF, and the world of the Ngaju Dayak of Central Kalimantan. In 2004, the goal of establishing the Sebangau watershed as a protected area was attained. Following this success, the WWF in Palangka Raya worked to build community support hand in hand with the provincial-level Balai Konservasi Sumber

Daya Alam, a division of the Ministry of Forestry. Together they were working to establish structures for collaborative management for the Taman Nasional Sebangau.

Local people had different reactions to the WWF campaign. For one, locals considered it peculiar that people around the world should have “sympathy for the orangutan, but not for the orang Dayak.” This suggests that they had an awareness of the international resources on which the WWF draws. There was a note of bitterness relating to the fact that these resources were simply not meant for the aid of local people who repeatedly described themselves as living in a state of poverty, hardship, and governmental negligence. The major sources of income for local people entail daily, continuous labour: fishing from inland bodies of water, harvesting and selling rattan, or logging.

Interactions with agents of environmental projects have raised hopes among local people that rattan and fisheries will provide better economic opportunities, soon. In addition, by the year 2005 some community leaders who were previously sceptical had begun to express an enthusiasm for the benefits that the Taman Nasional Sebangau might bring to them. In contrast to this, political leaders of the communities around Mt. Pulag remain at odds with the national park.

#### Localisation

The preceding paragraphs show that when establishing an environmental project in a locality, agents are entering into a multi-faceted social situation. Aside from their main task of halting the march of environmental degradation, they are faced with the complexities of making new acquaintances, finding allies, and building a network of supportive and sympathetic individuals and organizations: “building constituencies” (Eghenter 2008), in their own language. This is not so easily achieved when working in locales where financial and social resources are scarce for local people, and where basic services may be few and far between, or even non-existent in extreme cases. In both my case studies, the lives of local people are characterized by economic differentiation across residents, relative poverty and hardship among the majority, a lack of basic services from the government, and the daily struggle to cull a living from locally available resources such as forest products, riverine fishes, water, and soil. In such situations, it is difficult to make clear what the benefits of long-term conservation might be to a family that struggles to have three meals a day. In addition, environmentalists may find that local politics cannot be completely avoided, be it in government or among other non-governmental organizations who have their own agendas, and who may or may not be willing to work with yet another new arrival.

Although there are many examples of community-initiated conservation efforts (see for example, Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997), the more common occurrence is that environmentalists initiate projects or programs and establish relationships with local communities from the outside, going in. This trajectory is part and parcel of organized chains of reaction to perceived global threats such as deforestation, global warming, or extinction of what are considered to be intrinsically valuable species. That is to say, threats as perceived by agents of conservation and not necessarily by local people, who may experience the environment quite differently (Croll & Parkin 1992, Ellen et. al. 2000, Milton 1996, Ingold 2000). Thus, agents of environmentalism will often first make their entrance into a locale as guests, or even as uninvited third parties (Gerard Persoon, personal communication). Hence, the task and process of localisation is an immense one.

In this light, it becomes vital for environmentalist agents to follow culturally accepted ways of entering a home, so to speak. They must make themselves known to their hosts, explain their agendas from the outset, and forge steadfast relationships. The process sees the production of an etiquette that appears to serve the purpose of environmentalist agents. For instance, it works to the advantage of the guest environmentalist agents that, as one Dayak informant put it, “we never turn away people who come in peace.” However, I ask, does the creation of an environmental etiquette between hosts and guests serve or undermine the objectives of its agents? This will be expounded upon further in the discussion that follows on how host-guest dynamics were observed to operate before, during, and after environmental interactions.

### **Modus Operandi**

In this section I will give detailed, ethnographic accounts of four different environmental venues, and I will discuss the aspects of the etiquette that are illustrated by the interactions that took place in and around each venue.

#### **Forum Masyarakat**

In the third quarter of 2005, the WWF-Indonesia team based in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan was building up a plan and structures for collaborative management of the Taman Nasional Sebangau. WWF team members, government officials and other agents of environmentalism travelled from sub-district to sub-district around the park, convening meetings for the purpose of establishing community forums.<sup>5</sup> What follows is an account of the meeting that was convened in the village of Petak Bahandang in June 2005, the Inisiasi Pembentukan Forum Masyarakat.<sup>6</sup> This account is built up from my attendance in the meeting itself, and from conversations and interviews I conducted before and after the meeting.

I aim to bring into sharp relief the host-guest protocol, and the positionalities of agents of environmentalism. Although positionality encompasses an actor’s post or position in an organization, and also an actor’s position or opinion on a given topic or issue, it is more than these two combined. Positionality locates people within shifting networks not only in terms of their gender, status, or class, but also in terms of their webs of relationships. Thus, positionality is always evolving, context-dependent, and relational (Tetrault & Maher 1997: 198). As a secondary objective, I also offer up to agents of environmentalism a behind-the-scenes glimpse of what happens in a community immediately before and after the meetings that they convene.

In the days leading up to the Inisiasi, I had the opportunity to meet and converse with a few local leaders in Petak Bahandang. They had heard that WWF was convening a meeting, and each of them speculated on whether they would be invited or not. The matter of invitations was discussed informally among men during neighbourly

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<sup>5</sup> At the time of fieldwork for this researcher, only two sub-districts remained that had not yet been convened for the forum.

<sup>6</sup> This translates literally as, The Initiation for the Formation of the Community Forum.

conversations in different households. They told me that they did not know for certain when WWF would arrive, because they hadn't received an invitation. According to them, the directive to attend should issue from the WWF itself, the sub-district head, or the village head. Without an invitation, they felt that they could not go. This question of invitations encapsulates the double-sided nature of host-guest relationships in the dynamic of environmentalism. In a sense, the villagers are hosts to the WWF and its nature-conservation projects. However, at an environmental venue, as convenors the WWF becomes the host, and the villagers become guests who cannot transgress the taboo of appearing uninvited. On the day of the meeting, one of the men told me that he and several others had received an 'oral invitation' and that he would attend the WWF meeting later that morning. I too had received an invitation from the WWF, which was why I had travelled to Petak Bahandang from Baun Bango.

In the local government building, WWF staff were busy preparing a room for the meeting. They followed the traditional lay-out of a classroom, with a long table up front for speakers, and a screen for the projection of their PowerPoint presentations.<sup>7</sup> A streamer was hung up high above the heads of the speakers. It read: Inisiasi Pembentukan Forum Masyarakat, and was flanked by the panda logo of WWF, and the logo of the Ministry of Forestry. As participants arrived from the different villages of sub-district Tasik Payawan, there was much friendly banter and laughter between some of the men and the WWF staff. Apparently, most of them had met in previous WWF-organised venues. The atmosphere felt much like that of a gathering of old friends who had not seen each other for a long time.

This jovial atmosphere changed palpably when the meeting began. All 53 participants (all of them male) shuffled into the room, took their seats, and fell silent. The meeting was formally opened with a prayer from one of the participants and welcoming remarks from the sub-district head. This was followed by PowerPoint presentations and speeches from WWF- and government-representatives from district and provincial levels, all of whom spoke about cooperation for the Taman Nasional and saving the environment. Participants were encouraged to ask questions.

Pak Nurdin of the Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam (BKSDA), gave a presentation explaining what the BKSDA is, and its relationship with the Taman Nasional Sebangau. He told the assembled audience that prior to the establishment of a technical execution body, the BKSDA would be responsible for the management of the park. This was the office within the Ministry of Forestry directly responsible for protected areas. They plan to eventually establish an office near the Taman Nasional Sebangau and monitor the status of flora and fauna, and human activities therein. He also gave an explanation of the forthcoming zonation of the park, which would be carried out by the Badan Planologi, yet another division of the Ministry of Forestry. Pak Nurdin explained the mechanics of the zones, such as the core zone, and the use zone or buffer zone. Questions addressed to Pak Nurdin revolved around two things: the delineation of the zones, and the name of the park. The men were anxious to know how their fields and community forests would be

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<sup>7</sup> Other organizations opt for less formal physical lay-outs for meetings. For instance, circles were the preferred seating arrangements used by NGO-facilitators at training workshops convened for the South Central Kalimantan Production Forest Project.

affected. Some pointedly added that these places had belonged to the people for centuries before the park was established. Pak Nurdin assured the men that their recommendations and knowledge would be incorporated in the delineation process, for they were the ones in a position to identify the areas occupied or worked in by community members. As regards the park's name, apparently some of the participants felt that the name was not representative of the area covered by the park. They felt that it should be named after the Katingan River instead of the Sebangau River, so as to acknowledge the inclusion of much of the Katingan district in the protected area. In response, Pak Nurdin informed them that the name Sebangau was chosen because that was the core area of the park. However, if they so wished it, there was a legal process that could be initiated to have the name changed.

I mention these questions here because they are indicative of local leaders' concerns on ownership. By ownership I do not only mean the actual holding of land as private, corporate, or communal property. Rather, I am referring to local sentiments on the park's belonging to the district of Katingan as a whole. For the local leaders that voiced this concern, the labelling of the park with "Sebangau" misrepresents the existence of their villages on the borders of the park (or rather, to their minds, the existence of the park on the borders of their villages), and therefore conceals the imminent involvement of their people. This concern was partly allayed by Pak Nurdin's response as well as the proceedings of the rest of the meeting, as shall be seen below.

Following Pak Nurdin's discussion, the PowerPoint presentation of the WWF dealt with the ideal of collaborative management and the purpose of the community forum. Pak Anton of the WWF asked the gathering for their full participation in the management of the park. Jokingly, he said, "Some of you here may be afraid that the WWF will use weapons on you later on! But don't worry, the purpose of the community forum is for your inclusion. No need to be afraid. There is a way for you to participate." Only through the participation of the community would the protection of the national park meet with success, he continued. In addition, he pointed out that it was a common experience in other protected areas that a lack of harmony and direct communication between the government and local communities led to conflict. The forum was conceived of to serve as a multi-sectoral coordinating body, which would bring together representatives from the villages, the districts, the government, and other stakeholders. It would be the mouthpiece for the aspirations of the community, and to ensure that it would be truly representative, it was being created through a bottom-up process, that is to say, the meeting itself.

There was a break with coffee, tea, pastries, and more lively banter, after which the real business of the gathering was addressed. Pak Anton took the floor once again as the facilitator. He asked the participants to decide whether or not they wanted to create a community forum for the sub-district of Tasik Payawan, emphasizing that this was part of the bottom-up process. He said,

"Gentlemen, you may have other opinions, there may be no need to form it, so we can close this session now and all go home. Ok? But I want to warn everybody one more time, if we don't create this forum it will be a pity for the future of your communities' involvement, for the Tasik Payawan sub-district. But that's only my opinion, and I want an answer from you whether or not we should continue on to the next session."

The men chose to create a forum for the sub-district. In order to ensure that the process would “really come from the community”, Pak Anton asked the participants to choose a system of electing representatives to the forum. It was decided that they should have direct elections by nomination and then by ballot. The nominees were called up one by one to introduce themselves and give mission and vision statements before the participants. Following are excerpts of noteworthy campaign speeches from three different candidates.

Pak Achmat: “One of the things I hope for from WWF, is a reference book. Usually, in a program like this, there is a sort of book that will serve as a guide or a reference for people. If these candidates here today work in the future without any reference book, there will be chaos in the community... If some one were to ask what the WWF is, they would think it’s just a cat in a sack, when in fact the animal within is not a cat... It so often happens that when some one is involved in a certain training, there are no benefits for the community because the person is unable to spread information, to make a campaign. So it’s the same as nothing. This happens a lot in the community... I have learned from my experiences of having been appointed for many things which, in the end, were of no use at all... So whoever is elected to this forum will have a big responsibility to not spread information that is not true, otherwise there will be many misunderstandings, such as [misunderstandings] about the restricted areas of Sebangau.”

Pak Benny: “If I am elected as the head of the forum later today, I will immediately raise a question with the... WWF and the regional government about one thing first: about the construction of canals or trenches in the forests inside the Sebangau area. Secondly, the issue of illegal logging and deforestation. These are some of my questions: How will these caretakers work in the Taman Nasional Sebangau later on, if there are still logging concessions operating inside? What system will the caretaker follow from the WWF and the regional government to overcome this? ...According to the pamphlet [we were given] earlier, there must be no stealing, no canal or trench-construction in the scope of the forest. I don’t care about other villages, but I know for a fact that a lot of this is happening in the area of Tasik Payawan, and this could lead to a lot of trouble in the future. If I am elected as leader later on, please, let us all think together about this problem, and I will deal with it directly.”

Pak Dian: “It is my hope that the communities of Tasik Payawan will not be left behind. Let us keep up with development. [Let us] modernize. So later on we can socialize any regulations and procedures with the regional government, with the WWF, and the community. So then the aspirations of the community will be strengthened... Then Petak Bahandang and also the whole area of Tasik Payawan will become prosperous. This is my hope.”

There were two rounds of votes. In the first round, the two candidates who voiced environmental concerns were in the lead, with Pak Dian trailing behind by three votes. The other candidates were eliminated for having received less than a predetermined number of votes. After these results were released, the group broke for lunch; a sumptuous meal provided for by the WWF. This time, the atmosphere was different. Although there were much exclamations of appreciation over the food, the men were no longer joking with one another and laughing out loud. Instead, they clustered together in groups which excluded WWF staff and observers such as myself and my research assistant. They spoke in low tones. When they re-convened for a second round of ballot casting, the outcome was that Pak Dian won by a small yet surprising landslide and took the position of leader for the community forum of this sub-district.



If one were to judge by the strength of the campaign speeches alone, it could have easily been concluded that either Pak Achmat or Pak Benny were the more suitable candidates for the leadership of the forum. They had raised pertinent issues which were compatible with the objectives of the environmentalist agents. Pak Dian's speech, in contrast, took on a rather general and vague tone. It was a safe speech, and did not challenge the status quo. Could this have been the reason that he won? If so, why did he not take the lead from the first round of votes?

It would be simplistic of course to assume that a leader could have been chosen on the basis of a two-minute speech alone. Literature on the selection or emergence of community leaders has shown that they succeed or are chosen for their proven and time-tested ability to command attention and respect, to make fair and just decisions, to be a skilled mediator, to make sacrifices, also to exhibit a decent sense of humour in different situations, to negotiate and convey meanings before various audiences, and above all, to act towards the welfare of the community (Hilhorst 2003). One participant whispered to me during lunch that Pak Achmat and Pak Benny were known to act in their self-interest in previous leadership positions. In the case of Pak Dian's victory, however, other things were being weighed besides his character.

Pak Dian himself later confided that he won because the sub-district head had intervened. Pak Dian was a village official responsible for a group of households (RT) in the village. The sub-district head had recently given an outsider permission to put up a temporary night market in that area, without consulting Pak Dian. He had been unhappy with this because any disturbances that might take place in the night market would be his responsibility, and yet he had no say in the decision. Pak Dian had aired his grievances with the sub-district head. Apparently, to atone for this oversight the subdistrict head prompted the participants to give him the leadership position for the community forum. This shows that an "organizational model of participation ignores the fact that many interactions between people also take place outside formal organizations, that the interactions of daily life may be more important in shaping cooperation than public negotiations" (Clever 2001: 42). However, as guests of the WWF at this meeting, it would've been unacceptable for the sub-district head to openly endorse Pak Dian's leadership for his own reasons. Thus, it had to be done discreetly so that the objectives of the WWF, the hosts of the meeting, remained at the foreground. For his part, Pak Dian was bemused by the politics behind his victory, but was quick to point out that since he was elected, he would take his new responsibilities seriously. On his own initiative, he visited the WWF office in Palangka Raya later that month, to gather materials and information for his own study.

After the various officers were elected, Pak Anton reiterated that the purpose of the forum was to make known the aspirations of the community. He admonished the elected leaders to refrain from keeping silent, as this would defeat the purpose of the forum. He went on to explain that the forum would later consist of district and provincial levels, with representatives from different sectors and stakeholders. In addition, the body would be given authority by the provincial government to manage the Taman Nasional Sebangau. One participant then wanted to know how the organization would do this, if it didn't even have rules and statutes yet.

Pak Anton replied: "Yes that's correct every organization should have its own rules and statutes. Isn't that so? But, if we were to come to you with these rules and statutes already formed, then we would be intervening with the process."

We don't want to do that. We are just facilitators of the process... Anyway, that was a very good question and I assure you that the matter is on the agenda for the next forum meeting.”

In response, Pak Achmat jokingly piped up: “In which hotel?” Finally, a document<sup>8</sup> was drawn up to summarize the results of the gathering, and it was signed by the government officials present.<sup>9</sup> A final round of speeches were made, and the meeting was adjourned. Amidst goodbyes, participants drifted out of the room and made to head home.

In the estimation of Pak Dian, elected leader to the forum masyarakat, the formation of the forum masyarakat in Petak Bahandang was successful in the sense that its purpose had been met: leaders were elected, and participants felt that their questions were answered. Before the forum was held, this researcher asked different leaders what their opinion was regarding the Taman Nasional and the work of the WWF. They stated that they had many unanswered questions about what the role of WWF was. Pak Dian felt it was now his responsibility to inform community members better and to explain the advantages of having the Taman Nasional. He was apprehensive however that people who had been working in the forest for generations would be resistant to the idea, especially those who owned logging canals. He said he was handing out stickers and explaining what the stickers were all about to his neighbours. He still felt that his question was not answered regarding the livelihood options for people. In his opinion, the government should give something to replace people's current livelihood options in the protected area. He also continued to believe that WWF would provide programs to increase economic activities and income of local people.

#### The positionality of agents of environmentalism

In the course of my fieldwork, I had heard many mistaken accusations and suspicions levelled at the presence of WWF in Central Kalimantan. Some alleged that the WWF had a secret agenda to become the owners of the Taman Nasional Sebangau. Few understood that in fact, it is the government that is in charge of the national park, and not the WWF. Others accused them of distributing money to buy people's support. Many felt that in fact the WWF should distribute money, land, or job opportunities in order to raise the welfare of the orang Dayak, instead of the Orangutan. In a discussion with the Palangka Raya team of WWF, I presented to them the ways in which they were viewed and described by the Ngaju Dayak and other village residents that I had interviewed. In turn they said that these views posed some dangers not only for the WWF but for the Taman Nasional

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<sup>8</sup> Documents are not only the material part of the culture of reporting prevalent in most organizations and offices, but also, they are the outcomes of social processes of persuasion and enrolment (Gardner and Lewis 2000: 18).

<sup>9</sup> It stated that: “Pengurus forum masy. ini untuk selanjutnya menjadi bagian dari para pihak sebagai wakil masy. yang ikut dalam perencanaan, pengelolaan Taman Nasional Sebangau serta bersama-sama bertanggungjawab atas berkelanjutan Taman Nasional Sebangau. Pengurus forum masy. bersama-sama dengan para pihak dan pengelola Taman Nasional Sebangau harus aktif mengkomunikasikan berbagai kegiatan dan rencana pengelolaan Taman Nasional kepada anggota masy. secara luas.” Roughly translated: The coordinator of the community forum will become part of the body of representatives of the community that will join in the planning and management of Taman Nasional Sebangau and will be jointly responsible for the sustainability of the Taman Nasional Sebangau. The coordinator of the community forum together with the other parties and the manager of the Taman Nasional Sebangau must actively and extensively communicate all the various kinds of activities and management plans of the National Park to the members of the community.

Sebangau itself. The danger, in their opinion, had to do with continuity. They expressed the worry that in the event that the WWF should withdraw from the project and turn it over completely to the government, people might consider the time of the national park to be over since they hardly associate it with the government agency responsible, the BKSDA. The local WWF team speculated as to whether something should change in the way the WWF conducted its campaigns. They also pointed out that the BKSDA would have to do a lot more work to gain a higher profile in the Taman Nasional Sebangau. With regard to questions of money and development aide, it worried them further that these views persisted in spite of the staff's constant efforts to negate them in their interactions with community members, and to emphasize their role as facilitators.

However, the emphasis on the facilitator-role elides the fact that many environmentalists are also initiators of processes and therefore, undeniably, intervenors. Long (2001: 38) points to an underlying belief among development agents that desired changes cannot be generated from within communities, but must be initiated by good influences from the outside. In turn, this positions agents of environmentalism as outsiders, which the facilitator-role only magnifies. An outsider can choose to remain unaffected by what takes place within visited communities. This is compounded by a widely-held view among agents of environmentalism, that nature is something 'out there', cordoned off from human society and human activities which are limited to cultural spaces such as villages, or bounded spaces such as the use-zone. Thinking in this way, environmentalist agents are doubly outsiders. They do not belong to or live in the nature that they work to protect, and they do not belong to or live in the communities that they seek cooperation from. The flipside of the belief that one can intervene, is the belief that one doesn't have to intervene or take direct responsibility for what takes place in the environment out there or the community that one does not belong to (see Cronon 1996, Hornborg 1996, White 1996).

A facilitator, as one who simply guides a process and encourages people to find their own solutions to problems, does not have to take responsibility for decisions made by participants. Thus the cost of any actions taken would have to be shouldered by 'empowered' community representatives. The costs cannot belong to a facilitator whose involvement is bounded by neutrality, and an eventual, total detachment from a project when it comes to be 'owned' by the community. This can be clearly seen from the tone of Pak Anton's statements above, where any decision of the participants not to have a forum would be a waste, where any silence on the part of elected leaders would defeat the purpose of the forum, and where any structure imposed by the organizers would be an intervention. But did participants really have a choice?

Furthermore, an outsider can leave. The facilitator-role conveniently paves the way for a graceful project exit. Exit plans are a part of the standard operating procedure of most non-government organizations working on a per-project basis. When the project's funding cycles have ended and objectives have been met, then it is time for a project to withdraw and for empowered communities to take over. Facilitators can leave with the belief that they have bequeathed their partners and participants with the ability to continue where they left off.

On the other hand, positive images of the WWF included integrity as a non-government organization. In particular, the elected leader for the Forum Masyarakat in another sub-district pointed out that WWF paid for the meetings they themselves convened. Furthermore, they had the ability to also shoulder the expenses participants incurred

when travelling to attend WWF meetings. They also provided food and lodging. Few other non-government organizations in Central Kalimantan were known to do this; not even the government could do this, in his opinion. This statement must be seen as coming from some one who has repeatedly benefited from this ability of WWF to sponsor their own participants, and who has had direct and sustained contact with the team members.

Additionally, the WWF has met with a measure of success in that there was a marked change in knowledge of and attitudes towards the Taman Nasional Sebangau in 2003 and in 2005. After the meeting for the Forum Masyarakat in Petak Bahandang, local leaders said that they felt less doubt and apprehension regarding people's continued access to the protected area. The same could be said of the residents of the village of Baun Bango, further downriver. In 2003, even though WWF posters were hanging in almost every household, people said that they had only heard of WWF but did not know what it was about. In contrast, in 2005, people spoke about WWF with an air of familiarity and there were far less expressions of suspicion. Some community leaders even spoke of carbon sinks and made jokes about other villagers who misunderstood the concept and thought that oxygen could be extracted from the swamps and sold by the piece.

In this regard, the spread of information, the production and transformation of knowledge, become vital to the generation and manipulation of relationships and actions. In particular, scientific and expert knowledge are used to legitimize environmental projects and convey the urgency of issues (Chapin 2004, Fairhead and Leach 2003, Long 2001, Zerner 2003). This has at least two outcomes. Firstly, technical-scientific knowledge creates 'a sphere of ignorance' (van der Ploeg 1989, as referred to in Long 2001: 182) in which the knowledge of indigenous peoples and other local people become marginalized in favour of the science that agents of environmentalism bring. Secondly, technical-scientific knowledge creates expectations, as indigenous people and local people anticipate that agents will bring them new knowledge, and impart it to them in a manner that they can easily understand. When this is not delivered, it is seen by indigenous peoples and local people as a shortcoming of the environmental organization.

The configuration of the positionality of agents of environmentalism in a defined project is made up of the information that they provide on themselves, their chosen facilitator-role, and the various perceptions that people hold of them, as discussed above. The complexity of this positionality is compounded further by the host-and-guest role-switching that takes place between agents of environmentalism and indigenous leaders. In the context of the Taman Nasional Sebangau, it would be interesting to see whether relationships beyond the frame of hosts and guests will emerge later on, and whether this will significantly affect the future management of the national park.

In describing the formation of the Forum Masyarakat for the Taman Nasional Sebangau, I have focused on an environmental venue in which a clear line is drawn between participants and agents of environmentalism, and where an organization was created without clear rules and statutes as to its functions and administration. In the next environmental venue, I describe the reverse. The boundaries between environmentalist agent, local or indigenous participant, supporter, and offender, are not so clear, while the structures for administration, participation, and even bureaucracy have been created in detail by policy-makers.

Board meetings

As previously mentioned, the structure for collaborative management in the case of the Mt. Pulag National Park is the Protected Areas Management Board. The Board is mandated to:<sup>10</sup>

1. Decide matters relating to planning, resource protection and general administration of the area in accordance with the General Management Planning Strategy (GMPS).
2. Approve proposals, work plans, action plans, guidelines, for management of the protected area in accordance with the approved Management Plan.
3. Delineate and demarcate protected area boundaries, buffer zones, ancestral domains, and recognize the rights and privileges of indigenous communities under the provisions of the Act.
4. Promulgate rules and regulations to promote development programs and projects on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development consistent with the Management Manual of the protected area.
5. Ensure the implementation of programs as prescribed in the Management Plan in order to provide employment to the people dwelling in and around the protected area.
6. Control and regulate the construction, operation and maintenance of roads, trails, water works, sewerage, fire protection and sanitation systems and other utilities within the protected area.

The Board of Mt. Pulag meets at least four times a year, in the office of the Protected Area Superintendent in Ambangeg, Bokod, located in the foothills of Mt. Pulag. The Regional Technical Director of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Services usually chairs the meetings, and a secretary takes note of the minutes. In this section I will describe interactions from two different meetings I attended.

In December 2003, I was an invited guest of the year-end meeting and Christmas meal. In this meeting, as well as in the next one I would attend, I witnessed the formal manner in which Board members addressed one another and conducted the meeting: “Mr. Chairman, may I raise a question on this matter?” Motions were forwarded by individual members, and seconded or questioned and rejected by the body.

Since most of the Board members arrived late, the Christmas meal came first. It was a full meal, catered by the home economics department of a nearby vocational school and paid for from the operational funds of the Board. Board members spoke quietly with each other about coming weddings, and the latest news from each of their barangays. Conversations were light and jovial. Apart from myself, the gathering felt like one in which all the people had known each other for a long time. In their conversations with one another, and with me, the men described new forest clearings and vegetable gardens being opened up. These were discussed openly and casually. When I asked where the new gardens were located, the talk turned to boundaries, and the responsibility for the

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<sup>10</sup> (see <http://www.psdn.org.ph/chmbio/dao25.html>)

clearings was laid on people who had moved into the area from elsewhere, or from neighboring villages.

After lunch, the meeting was called to order. The main purpose of this board meeting was to discuss the park's Work and Financial Plan for 2004, particularly the allocation of a P325,211.39 working budget, which came from the park's collection of entrance fees and green fees from backpackers and hikers (minutes of the meeting, December 2003). Since there were three pending proposals, a "division of the house" was suggested by one of the board members, in order for a decision to be reached. Notably, all of the pending proposals were for infrastructure, including a visitors' center at one of the entry points to the National Park, and toilet and shower facilities at Babadac, another, more frequented entry point for hikers. In the votation, it was the latter option that was selected by the board members. Since the budget for this was only P150,000, it was unanimously decided that the remaining amount could be put into "Phase I" of the construction of the visitors' center.

At the very end of the meeting, I was called forward by the Protected Area Superintendent and requested to introduce myself, explain my research objectives, and inform the Board of my research plans for Mt. Pulag. Board members asked me whether I could speak the local languages, how much time I would spend in the area, what barangays I would visit, when my research proper would begin, and whether I could provide copies of my completed study to the board and to every barangay that would be involved. After I answered each question, the Regional Technical Director explained my presence further by saying that I was following protocol and asking for the board's permission. I was asked whether I would be collecting biological specimens. When I answered, No, the motion was raised for my research to be approved, and it was seconded by the rest of the members. Finally, the Regional Technical Director gave a few closing remarks about the spirit of Christmas and the board's visions for the new year ahead.

In December 2004 an emergency board meeting was called. The urgent matter at hand was the construction of a 7.4-kilometer road between the barangays of Tawangan and Lusod. Both villages in their entirety lay within the boundaries of the park. The Protected Area Superintendent reported to the board about the visible impact of the road: it had cut through primary-growth pine and mossy forests, causing erosion on the slopes immediately adjacent to the road, and thereby destroying flora. She went on to say that mountaineering visitors had complained to her that the road could be seen from the grasslands just below the peak of Mt. Pulag. She also reported that new pig-pens, houses, vegetable gardens, and signs that read 'private property' and 'no trespassing' had sprung up by the roadside. To say, however, that she was 'reporting' new information to the board would be misleading, for all the board members were in full cognizance of what was happening. In fact, only 1 kilometer of the road remained to be built. A few of them, especially those from the municipal government of Kabayan, and those living in Tawangan and Lusod, were themselves witnesses to, if not responsible for these developments. Also present were the municipal mayor of Kabayan, and engineers from the Department of Public Works and Highways.

A representative from the barangay of Ekkip raised a question: "One of the conditions for the release of that fund was an Environmental Compliance Certificate. How could the project push through without it?"

The mayor explained that there was an urgency for the local government unit to make use of the P5-million fund while it was available. More importantly, he added, they were only following the wishes of the indigenous people who had been “living there for centuries and yet still did not have a road for them to get to hospitals or get supplies.” Apparently, the road-building had proceeded with the blessings and support of elected government officials through a string of connections traceable from the barangays and the municipality, through to provincial, congressional and senatorial levels of government.

The meeting proceeded apace as the case of the road was pieced together bit by bit by the board members, the municipal officials, the engineers, and officers from the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. At times voices were raised slightly, and accusations were subtly passed back and forth, such that no one lost face and the tone of the meeting remained formal and diplomatic from beginning to end. At one point the Protected Area Superintendent turned to the engineers from the Department of Public Works and Highways and calmly informed them that they would have to pay a penalty for implementing their project “guerilla-style”, without an Environmental Compliance Certificate. One engineer replied: “Let’s plan for future maintenance and management of the road. The road should push through, and so should the Environmental Impact Assessment.”

The Environmental Impact Assessment was described by the chair of the meeting as a planning tool, not a building permit. The Protected Area Superintendent described it as a “weapon for forecasting”. Under the Philippine Environmental Impact Assessment System (Presidential Decree 1586), all constructions, public works, and enterprises are required to undergo assessment, and produce a management plan which would identify the impacts of the project on the environment, lay down the environmental costs of the project, and propose appropriate solutions or interventions.

As the meeting went on, the following decisions were reached by the Board: First, they called for a temporary halt in the construction of the road. The proponent, in this case the Department of Public Works and Highways, was asked to pay a fine and acquire an Environmental Compliance Certificate before the road-building could proceed. A Memorandum of Agreement would be drawn up with the communities of Lusod and Tawangan, wherein the communities would agree not to put up new constructions or open new clearings along the road. Both barangay government units would be asked to create resolutions to this effect. The Regional Technical Director of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Service emphasized that, “Penalties should be added, subject to due process.”

In relation to this, a barangay representative suggested that the forest patrol should be brought back in full force and that they should have more visibility. Another barangay representative asked whether the Board members should participate in monitoring such projects. And a third agitatedly asked, “What authority do we have? In [my barangay] I want to protect the environment but what’s my authority to do so?” He was placated by a promise from the Regional Technical Director that they were working towards a deputization that would be issued by the Department of Justice.

Finally, the meeting ended on the spoken agreement that the local government of Kabayan would coordinate more closely with the Board in future development projects, to prevent any further inconveniences and unnecessary costs. Plans were made for a

seminar on Environmental Impact Assessment, to be attended by both board members and local government officials.

The positionality of indigenous peoples

As mentioned earlier, almost all the members of the Board are themselves indigenous peoples. Each member is a combined entity. There are no clear and simple boundaries between majority and minority, insiders and outsiders, government officials and local residents, agents of environmentalism and ‘targeted’ participants. And yet another kind of division prevails in these board meetings, that between those who are interaction-savvy and those who are not.

It is interesting to note that the discussions during meetings were peppered with a slew of acronyms. The board members who spoke up did not actually say “Environmental Compliance Certificate”. They only said “E-C-C” and “E-I-A” (for Environmental Impact Assessment). They described the road as an “E-C-P”, or an Environmentally Critical Project. The Memorandum of Agreement was referred to as the “MOA”. The Protected Area Superintendent was addressed as “Pasu”, and the Board was constantly referred to as the “PAM-B”. Assumedly, everyone present was familiar with and understood these acronyms and there was no need for them to be spelled out for anybody, besides me. However, interviews later showed that not all members were familiar with the acronyms being invoked. Furthermore, few of the members were well-versed in the formal manner of speech that was evidently the protocol at these gatherings. Only a handful had read and understood the laws pertinent to their positions. These members were observed to be quite vocal about their views and suggestions, ably invoking specific sections and article numbers of various laws. The others remained silent for the most part of the meetings. In the emergency meeting regarding the road, not one of the representatives from Tawangan or Lusod made any remarks, although they were the board members directly concerned.<sup>11</sup>

A look into the professional life histories and current activities of these board members reveals frequent attendance at environmental venues and other gatherings convened by government and non-government organizations alike. Some of them are involved in local decision-making, and serve as consultants and liaisons for foreign-funded development projects. They also have a solid educational background. This positions them as being interaction-exposed, and so they possess the necessary skills to make themselves heard and, often, to influence the flow of events, discussions, and actions taken by others. Over the years, countless interventions have been organized in the municipality of Kabayan and other territories within the Mt. Pulag National Park. A development worker noted that one is likely to see the same community representatives, again and again, at each of these venues. This interaction-readiness sets them apart as obvious participants. Hilhorst refers to these actors as interface experts (2003: 182). Their dominance at the interface means that less outstanding individuals who may have something to say, or who may represent an already under-privileged sector of a local community are mostly excluded or

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<sup>11</sup> A member of the municipal government of Kabayan shared her observations with me, stating that when Kalanguya are elected to the municipal government, they always remain silent and barely participate in discussions. However, when they do their work, they are known to deliver results swiftly and satisfactorily. “They lose out on a simple technicality,” she said (Municipal employee, personal communication).



unheard at these interfaces. The result of this is that interaction outcomes may be skewed to favour the perspectives and agendas of obvious participants.

At this point, we might ask: If local government officials were also board members, why was information regarding the Tawangan-Lusod road and other development projects not shared between the local government and the Board? Why was 90% of the road already built, by the time the Board intervened? I argue that among professional indigenous persons who are in local government, duties, obligations, and accountability towards fellow indigenous persons and constituents come first, regardless of the questionable lawfulness of their actions. As Mr. Orlando, one former forest ranger<sup>12</sup> painfully found out, his attempts to curb his fellow-Kalanguyas' illegal logging activities constituted betrayal of his kailian<sup>13</sup>, causing him to be ostracized and sometimes threatened (see discussion below).

The agents of environmentalism in this study make a living by working for the environment. Although many of those I encountered were sympathetic to the needs and aspirations of the local communities they worked with, their primary objectives and professional interests were environmental. In contrast, professional indigenous persons in environmental interfaces appear to give their loyalty to fellow indigenous persons first – especially those of their own ethnic group.

A member of the board remarked in an interview that indigenous people are not likely to report on the illegal activities of other indigenous people, even when it may be their duty to the state to do so. There exists a tacit understanding between kailian, that every one puts all their efforts into making a living. In interviews and casual conversations any questionable environmental activity vis-à-vis the park rules was described as a last recourse in meeting one's family's needs. The same holds for the Ngaju Dayak and other local residents in the Indonesian case study. The sense of entitlement of people to their territories, and the right to do as they see fit within these territories were very strongly articulated when spoken of in relation to their indigenous identity. This was often expressed along the lines of having been present in the area for centuries, and having been stewards of the forest since “time immemorial” or, in the case of the Ngaju Dayak, “within living memory”. In both the Indonesian and Philippine field sites, I was asked by at least one indigenous person, in so many words, to reflect on this question: “Why is the forest still here, even if we have been working in it for centuries?” Surely, they argued, agents of environmentalism must realize that it is because they themselves live harmoniously with the environment. It followed, then, that no one should interfere with a way of life that has existed for centuries, and that they should be able to choose the changes they desired in their own territories.

In the context of NGOs working in the Philippine Cordillera, Hilhorst has shown how NGOs create legitimizing representations of themselves and their clients. While she finds

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<sup>12</sup> At present there are five forest rangers for the entire park area. Some of them reside in urban centers far removed from the park.

<sup>13</sup> Generally speaking, kailian is used by the Kalanguya of Tawangan to refer to co-members of a community or a defined territorial area. In the ritual sphere of life, kailian refers to those who are invited to a feast and included in the distribution of meat at such a feast.

that “the influence of local people in these processes is negligible” (2003: 222), she goes on to point out that local people form their own image of the intervenor, and expect them to act according to this image. The converse of this, I would add, is that indigenous people, especially those who are interface experts, are also adept at tactically deploying representations of themselves, even in contexts where other participants may be cognizant that these notions do not fit with on-the-ground realities.

In the dynamic of environmentalist action, these articulations are an ability to perform environmentalism. For indigenous peoples, performing environmentalism works two-ways. First, it bolsters the view among agents of environmentalism that indigenous peoples live harmoniously with nature. If it turns out that they no longer do so, then it is argued that they should, since the capacity to do so is embedded in their traditions. Secondly, performing environmentalism also draws power and legitimacy from the widespread appeal of the idea of indigenous-ecological harmony.

As can be induced from the Board meetings above, performing environmentalism entails attention to form and formality, but not necessarily to content. It is interesting to note that during the cigarette and coffee breaks at these and other Board meetings, it was observed that the restrained and formalized discussions turn into unreserved conversations between board members. Topics ranged from news about one another’s families, the prices of vegetables in lowland markets, jokes, and the continued clearing of forests for gardens. When it came to the latter, the story always ran along the lines of how people from other areas (usually neighboring barangays or municipalities) were the ones doing the burning and bulldozing in the board members’ own barangays. The opening up of gardens – the violation of the park regulations – was strikingly almost always the fault of an Other. Within the official time of meetings, these matters, equally pertinent to the responsibilities of the Board, were left out. Instead, attention would be devoted to protocol (case in point: my introduction to the Board and the subsequent motion to permit my research in the park), infrastructure, and the wise use of available funds. In this way, the Board still met its system goals (Mosse 2005: 104), without having to get to the bottom of the conflict between indigenous peoples’ interests and park regulations.

Below I describe two more environmental venues which will pave the way for a deeper discussion on attention to form and etiquette.

#### Barangay meetings, sosialisasi, and everyday life

In Tawangan, general assemblies for barangay residents are held once a month. The assembly is attended by two or three representatives from each of the barangay’s 13 sitios. Not all barangays in the municipality of Kabayan meet on a monthly basis. The barangay chairman, also addressed as ‘Kap’, explained that the monthly meetings were drawn up as a policy by the barangay itself, with the aim of maintaining the unity of the Kalanguya residents. At these meetings, local activities, development plans, policies, and problems are discussed.

In a general assembly that was held shortly after the emergency Board meeting described above, the following agenda points were discussed in the presence of about 30 Tawangan residents and barangay officials: the barangay curfew, the concreting of footpaths, the road construction, the location of communal forests, the prohibition on firecrackers for New Year’s Eve, illegal logging, house-building regulations, and planning for the coming end of school year program. It was an evenly mixed group of men and women several of whom had taken their small children along. The meeting was held in the barangay hall,

with the people sharing benches and tables facing the Kap and the blackboard on which he had written down the agenda points. I am limiting the description of the meeting to those agenda points and remarks from the residents that had some bearing on protection or conservation of the forest, such as, illegal logging, communal forests, the road, and house building.

The representative of Tawangan to the Protected Areas Management Board had informed Kap of the discussions at the emergency meeting. During the general assembly, Kap announced that it was prohibited to build houses or open new gardens along the road. The announcement was met with quiet laughter, which Kap ignored. Another barangay official reiterated that although it was desirable to have a house by the road, it was for their own good that people should avoid building their residences within 7-15 meters of the road; children could get into accidents, or the land could be claimed by the government for right of way. In relation to this, another barangay official reminded people that they should also avoid building houses beside creeks and rivers. He cited safety as the reason behind this: the bodies of water swell during typhoons and could sweep houses and belongings away.

The concern of house-building led on to the agenda point on illegal logging. The barangay chairperson informed every one that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had declared a total ban on logging. Barangay officials clarified that it was permissible for residents to cut wood for building houses in Tawangan, but that it was illegal to transport wood to sell in other barangays. Mr. Orlando, who once worked for the forest patrol of the Mt. Pulag National Park stood up and said that he hoped the people would take the logging ban seriously, as the trees were protecting them from the possibility of landslides. He related that during typhoons he could not sleep because he feared they would be swept away. People laughed again, and no one reacted directly to his comments. In contrast to this reception of his views, Mr. Orlando is lauded by officials for the service that he did for the national park. He is regarded by them as a hero of sorts, as in the past he had received death threats from fellow indigenous persons for his interference with their tree-poaching activities, and to this day, he tries to dissuade people from environmentally-destructive activities. "I was hated for that kind of work," Mr. Orlando confided. "The people know what they are doing, but I'm thinking, in about ten years when the trees are gone they'll see: 'It's our fault'."

To return to the barangay assembly, Kap reiterated the total logging ban. He narrated a story of a jeep-load of logs that he and another barangay official had apprehended recently. They only let it through because the people had pleaded with them, explaining that the wood had already been paid for. Every one present knew of this incident, he said. This was not going to be allowed ever again. Now, if people continued to smuggle timber out in secret, said Kap with a shrug, there was nothing he could do about that. When Kap came to the agenda point on communal forests he rattled off the names of the designated communal forests of Tawangan. Nothing else was said about them, except that people should be reminded of their existence. Similarly, in the Taman Nasional Sebangau case study, I had attended community assemblies where local government officials 'reminded' the gathering about certain regulations.

In sub-district Kamipang, adjacent to the Taman Nasional Sebangau, the new sub-district head of 2003, Pak Ramelan, travelled to all the villages within his jurisdiction in order to see what the situation was of each village, and also for sosialisasi. The socialization of a policy or an environmental concern basically means that information campaigns and

meetings are held so as to introduce them to people on the ground. I was invited to join the team of government officers that travelled with Pak Ramelan: a local government health worker, two police officers, the head of the district's Department of Education. We travelled from village to village by speedboat. In each village, the officials were welcomed in the house of the village head or his deputy. There we were fed full meals and served coffee and tea. When the team was caught by nightfall, then the village head would accommodate the whole team in his house.

Shortly after these meals, the team would walk to a classroom in the school, where village residents were already waiting for them. The government officials all sat at a table in front of the gathering, and each in his turn delivered speeches. The residents were also invited to ask questions, or to voice out their concerns. While the meeting proceeded, women came to pass out snacks and drinks to all the participants. Some of the women sat in the audience and listened intently to Pak Ramelan as he explained that since the District of Katingan was new, every one had to pool together their efforts and resources in order to develop the area. This was the reason he had decided to visit all the villages under his jurisdiction, he said: to get to know the situation in his sub-district, and to discuss with the villagers about development. In his opening speeches, he told villagers that one could not speak of development without speaking of education, health, and the environment.

As regards environmental concerns, the police officers reminded villagers that they would arrest or penalize any individuals apprehended using poison, potassium, dynamite or electricity for fishing. They remarked that people who use these destructive fishing methods were only thinking of themselves and were depriving the rest of the community of food. Pak Ramelan added that there was now a legal basis for issuing warnings, collecting fines, or even imprisoning people apprehended for illegal fishing. He emphasized that they were not just going to implement this for themselves or for the government. He told locals assembled at their meetings that they were doing this to stabilize the livelihood of people for the future. No mention was made of illegal logging at any of these meetings.

While travelling between villages, the sub-district head and his team apprehended two fishermen who were using car batteries to electrocute fish. The police informed them that it was illegal and that they could be arrested for doing so. Then the team confiscated the fishing tools, but let them keep the fish. The fishermen were told that their equipment would be kept in Baun Bango, the seat of the sub-district government. As the team's boat sped away from the bewildered-looking fishermen, jokes were raised among the officials about how it was a pity there was no press around to take their photographs and write a story for the newspapers.

Environmental etiquette, performances, and everyday life

The actors featured in the preceding paragraphs also ascribe to indigenous identities. However, in the contexts just described, there was no assertion nor ascription of indigenous identity. Instead individuals were witnessed performing their duties as government officials, and as members of their communities. Kap's brief narrative on illegal transportation of timber outside of Tawangan hints at what lies behind-the-scenes of his environmentalist performance. His remark regarding village members who secretly pursue this activity hint at a resignation that this illegal trade may continue despite his performance of his duty. It is defeatist because it connotes an admission of inability to police the matter at hand, or a lack of political will. In the case of illegal

fishing in the Indonesian case study, residents said that it was common knowledge that if the police confiscate your fishing equipment today, you may ‘pay a fine’ a few days later in order for your equipment to be released. Afterwards, people are knowingly left to continue using the equipment illegally, until the next time some one is apprehended.

This on-the-ground fact of life has led me to the question, how do environmental venues fit into the timescapes of different actors? At the village-level, environmental venues are often mere intermissions in the unending activities of nourishing life and nurturing relationships. In some instances, formal meetings provide diversions from the drudgery of everyday work. For the most part, workshops away from home are experienced by people as costly in terms of time. While it is true that some environmentalist agencies are able to provide food and lodging, the same benefits do not extend to the families of these participants. Time in meetings is time away from the work that sustains daily life and that keeps people in touch with the environment that holds the bases of their existence. This is the very same environment that agents of environmentalism regard as nature that needs to be saved. For agents of environmentalism and professional indigenous peoples, meetings and similar interactions are part and parcel of the work that fills the weekdays, and provides their salaries. However, local government officials are incidental environmentalists, performing environmentalism at strategic moments, but reverting to a complicity regarding the need for livelihood when faced with the reality of their constituents’ daily lives.

At these environmental venues, the prevailing etiquette means that no one blows the whistle on careful omissions, or on representations and performances that are not reflected in everyday life. Consonantly, saving face and maintaining congenial relationships during these interactions are given more importance than the actual environmental issues at hand. In the following section, I discuss and reiterate a few more elements and implications of this etiquette.

### **The etiquette of environmentalism**

As was mentioned in the discussion on the Forum Masyarakat, invitations are one of the elements of etiquette at environmental venues. Invitations are usually sent out in letter-form, occasionally, by word of mouth. Attention to etiquette is evident in that in certain instances, people feel they cannot or should not attend if uninvited. Thus, the invitation-giver holds a power to include and exclude individuals or certain community sectors from environmental venues. Who receives these invitations and responds to them? In the Indonesian interactions, participants were predominantly male and occupying leadership positions either by seniority, by election, or through their being part of local government structures. The same is generally true for the Philippine interactions, although one is more likely to find that women and children come to listen in at these meetings as well, and that efforts are made to assure that some female representatives are present. Sometimes a general announcement is simply sent to some one in the village who is a formal leader and it is left to him (almost always a he) to assemble a delegation or to pick a representative if he himself will not go.

When environmental venues are situated in local villages, in keeping with protocol, the village head and other important officials present are asked to give opening or welcome speeches. If the meeting is held in an urban center rather than in the village, then villagers are usually not asked to make opening speeches unless they are an official of some

committee or consultative body. Thus, inclusion and exclusion and who to honour and what protocol to follow also depends on where the interaction is situated and who the hosts are.

When agents of environmentalism travel to villages where there may be no accommodations for travellers, they are hosted by local families, and the entire village is seen to be their host. When the host-guest relationship is activated, then people take the utmost care not to offend one another. This may explain why environmentalist agents sometimes choose to turn a blind eye to the environmental transgressions of their hosts. Once again, they emphasize that their role is to facilitate processes and not to police people's activities. Similarly, the prevailing host-guest relationship may also prevent indigenous peoples from outwardly contradicting their guests. This may be especially so among the Ngaju Dayak and Kalanguya in this study, both of whom expressed to me that hospitality to strangers, friends, and family alike was a great virtue of their people. Food always plays an important role in the host-guest relationship. The offering and acceptance of food can be taken to be a seal of companionship, even if it is but temporary. A reversal of roles takes place when the environmental venue is set up and commences. Here, agents of environmentalism become scheduled hosts, and the villagers become their guests.

The host-guest relationship terminates when the guest departs (Nash 1977, Smith 1977). Environmentalists assume that it continues. In a way, they are correct in that all their encounters with locals at environmental venues have a cumulative effect, potentially leading to indigenous actors choosing to form for themselves new, green positionalities. Participants get to know the convenor and one another better, and agendas are slowly brought to light. However, if agents of environmentalism position themselves as guests each time, or scheduled hosts within a specific time frame, then the relationship doesn't deepen further. Any agreements may be superficial in the eyes of locals, who are permanent hosts to any localized environmental project, and who see the proponents of these projects as absentee- or long distance managers.<sup>14</sup> Inevitably, agents of environmentalism will always be departing. This is because of the boundedness of their work within project cycles, and also because of the way they structure interfaces with their chosen participants. If these are the conditions of their work, will it ever be possible for them to transcend the role of a polite guest, and act or speak as an accepted and respected community presence?

### **Epilogue: Continued misunderstanding, future possibilities**

In 2006, the leaders of indigenous groups in the Mt. Pulag National Park sent a formal petition to President Macapagal-Arroyo, seeking the turnover of the management of the park to the Municipality of Kabayan (Sunstar 17 May 2006). Similarly, an article regarding the Taman Nasional Sebangau in the Kalteng Pos (13 February 2006) aired the misgivings and disappointments of one village leader concerning the role and presence of

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<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, among the Kalanguya or the Kallahan, Afable points out a traditional distinction between interactions made in the home and those made "on the trail", or away from home: "Agreements between people other than close kin made in settings other than their homes are regarded as of little consequence..." (Afable 1989: 299).

WWF in his village. Together these two news items point to continued resistance and misunderstandings between agents of environmentalism and local communities, despite the efforts of the former to create venues for participation and representation. Put in a positive light, localisation can be seen as cooperation, inclusion, participation, and "... the localised management of available resources in accordance with existing local and regional knowledge, skills, potentialities and restrictions" (Long 2001: 225). However, localisation could also mean control in a negative sense. By identifying a space to work in and stakeholders to work with, agents of environmentalism produce new layers of power relationships and also new boundaries, both of which come hand in hand with various forms of exclusion (Cooke and Kothari 2001).

Through these two case studies in Southeast Asia, I have shown that these participative venues, with their intermittent schedules and clear-cut beginnings and endings, set the stage for environmentalist performances and cultivate an etiquette of environmentalism. The etiquette of environmentalism supports the formation and maintenance of cordial relationships between the permanent hosts of environmentalist projects (local communities) and the guests that bring them (agents of environmentalism). However, the etiquette also serves to maintain a distance between these two actors; hampering the deepening of relationships and preventing meaningful agreements on complicated, gritty, and even dangerous issues. The etiquette of environmentalism keeps the development of a locally-generated nature-culture imaginaire at a superficial level of performances. Thus, it is a grave error for environmentalist agents to conflate local participation with consent, and to expect this to translate into the kinds of ecologically-sound actions they hope to encourage.

In the light of these conclusions, I believe that there is a need for radical re-tooling of the structure and design of environmentalist interfaces with local people. Furthermore, the boundedness in time of environmental projects needs to be re-configured. As they are presently organized, they are merely fleeting moments in the daily lives and timescapes of local people, and make up only a fraction of the life of a community and the environment. If agents of environmentalism are able to expand their facilitator-roles, breach the pleasantries of etiquette, and break down the cycle of host-guest role reversals, then in the future they might have deeper engagements and understandings with local leaders, indigenous communities, and their landscapes. The task is a gargantuan one, but the agents of environmentalism in this chapter have already taken the first step by examining their positionality and contemplating the need for change.





## CHAPTER SEVEN



Photo 7.1: Ginsiman, one of the respected elders and mabaki of Tawangan, speaks at a community assembly organized by the NCIP.

### **Making and Breaking Boundaries: Indigenous peoples and resource management In the Philippines and Indonesia<sup>1</sup>**

Ideas and advocacies are resources that cross national borders. In this chapter I will focus on the flow of resource management styles and indigenous peoples' rights discourses – ideas on the move – between the Philippines and Indonesia. The ongoing implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act in the Philippines serves as a benchmark for Indonesians advocating indigenous empowerment in their own country. At the heart of this advocacy is the issue of access to and control over natural resources within indigenous territories. It is often assumed, or even argued, that involving indigenous peoples in the control of the environment will assure nature-conservation within ancestral domain. The foundation of international policies on this assumption has made it advantageous to be indigenous, even if the label may be regarded with stigma in other

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<sup>1</sup> Previously published as Perez, P. (2007) Making and Breaking Boundaries: indigenous peoples and natural resource management in the Philippines and Indonesia' in Persoon, G. & M. Hsiao (eds) Transboundary Environmental Issues in Insular Southeast Asia (Asia Pacific Forum, 36: 171-205). Taipei: CAPAS, Academia Sinica.

social spheres. This has led to a proliferation of boundaries being drawn between the indigenous and the non-indigenous.

Two kinds of boundaries are of significance in this chapter: the physical boundaries of nations and ancestral territories in relation to the sovereignty of the state, and issues of autonomy within it and the social boundaries that are constantly restructured between people and “places of recognition” (Li 2001). The nation-state, as a geographical and bureaucratic entity, exists by virtue of boundaries. The boundaries between nation-states can be as solid as a guarded fence running across a stretch of land. However, between archipelagos such as the Philippines and Indonesia, the visibility of boundaries can be as ephemeral as the waves on the seas between them. The borders between nation-states are rendered palpable and maintained through policing, sanctions, and the regulation of the movements of people and goods across them. Moving with people and products, ideas can slip across political borders too, and develop new meanings and implications when they take root in different contexts. The physical boundaries of the Indonesian and Philippine nations are the backdrop to the human connections and actions that give rise to new relationships, opportunities, and movements. In government programs, “bounded categories of beneficiaries” (Barth 2000: 29) are identified and actors are expected to fit into these to qualify for certain services or benefits. Indigenousness has recently emerged as a new bounded category for beneficiaries in the Philippines, and may gain state recognition in Indonesia as well. While this social boundary puts indigenous actors in a discrete category separate from other state beneficiaries, it also connects indigenous peoples to the environment and the political economy in ways that reflect the nature-culture imaginaire. I will privilege and give closer scrutiny to the social boundaries around this category throughout this chapter.

I will begin with a discussion on the kinds of boundaries and boundary-crossings that this chapter explores. Then I give a brief account on the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA) and its impact on a village in the Philippine Cordillera, giving special attention to the outcomes of the law’s implementation. Following this, I turn to the continuing advocacy for a law on indigenous peoples’ rights in Indonesia, and I examine the boundary-breaking discourse of the indigenous movement therein.

I will offer an analysis of how an indigenous rights law such as that of the Philippines might be implemented at the local level in Indonesia. I transpose the outcomes and issues from the Philippine case study mentioned above, to a village in Indonesian Borneo, in the context of the intertwining of nature-conservation issues and indigenous rights to resources. Through this hypothetical exercise, I aim to contribute to the ongoing debate on the creation of such a law for Indonesia. I carry out this transposition with caution; taking into consideration the particularities of each country and case study, as well as the concerns of Indonesian advocates who are fully aware of the risks and foolhardiness of the wholesale transfer of the IPRA to Indonesia. Thusly, I situate this chapter squarely within the transboundary flow of ideas and advocacies between the Philippines and Indonesia.

### **Re-tooling boundaries and boundary-crossings**

In the last three decades, indigenous peoples all over the world have taken up an active role in breaking the social boundaries upheld by primitivist and/or romanticized images,

and bridging the gaps put in place by systematic distancing-practices or appropriation (see Hendry 2005, Niezen 2003).

Up until recently, both the Philippines and Indonesia have upheld policies of assimilation – not entirely benign – in dealing with their indigenous populations. Under the New Order in Indonesia, images of savagery and extreme poverty were attached to ‘masyarakat *terasing*’ (isolated communities) or ‘masyarakat terbelakang’ (backward communities), who were considered to be in dire need of saving from their uncivilized ways. Similarly, in the Philippines, ‘non-Christian tribes’, or ‘tribal communities’ were the easy subjects of relocation/resettlement, re-education, missionizing, and an externally determined form of development. These policies are examples of distancing practices that discriminated against indigenous peoples’ life ways and created boundaries between them and the rest of the nations’ citizens.

Now we are seeing a shift in these perspectives with the rise of the indigenous movement and the advocacy for the recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights across the globe. The Fourth World now exists as a new division of the world in which indigenous peoples have a solidarity based on shared struggles and causes. On the international level of this movement, activists from Indonesia and the Philippines are united in their struggle to gain recognition from the state. However, their ultimate goals remain bound to their own indigenous localities and socio-cultural units. Boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are still drawn as distancing practices, but this time they determine those who may reap certain benefits (the indigenous), and those who may not (the non-indigenous). There have been revitalizations of traditions that were thought to have been forgotten; there is evidence of bolstered pride and confidence among indigenous youth; demands for repatriation of cultural artefacts; linkages and networks made with international advocacy groups; and, most pertinent to this chapter, demands for control and decision-making powers in indigenous territories or ancestral domains that are also the sites of nature-conservation projects or advocacies.

In the international sphere of this advocacy, indigenous peoples’ demands have become intertwined with the dynamic of nature-conservation. This is partly because they occupy or live in proximity with forested areas that have been identified as threatened ecosystems in need of protection. In most cases they are heavily dependent on these threatened ecosystems for their daily survival and income. Indigenous peoples are often valorised as guardians of nature, or are stereotyped as being an intimate, inseparable part of nature (Colchester 2003). For example, this view is encapsulated in the preamble of the WWF’s Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples:

“The principles for partnership outlined in this statement arise from WWF’s mission to conserve biodiversity, combined with a recognition that indigenous peoples have been often stewards and protectors of nature. Their knowledge, social, and livelihood systems - their cultures - are closely attuned to the natural laws operating in local ecosystems. Unfortunately, such nature-attuned cultures have become highly vulnerable to destructive forces related to unsustainable use of resources, population expansion, and the global economy (WWF 2008: 1).”

This image has undeniably aided the cause of indigenous peoples. Conservation agendas allocate places of recognition to indigenous peoples (Li 2001: 657). However, the alliance between indigenous peoples and nature conservationists is an uneasy one and we are beginning to see a breakdown (Chapin 2004). This is partly due to what Li calls a

“compromise argument”: “social groups that are unique or different should have their knowledge and rights respected if and when it is instrumental to conservation objectives” (Li 2001: 657). If indigenous peoples do not perform the ecologically harmonious cultures they purportedly hold, then nature conservationists are disinclined to recognize or defend their rights to territories and natural resources. In this sense, an advocacy for indigenous peoples’ rights that is based on difference alone can become limiting for the indigenous communities themselves.

However, apart from giving emphasis to difference I have witnessed how, in everyday encounters and interactions, indigenous identity is declared verbally, while sameness and similarity with non-indigenous peoples are demonstrated. A politics of difference does not preclude experiences and desires that are held in common with those that indigenous peoples assert their difference from.

“Difference both enables claims to be made, and limits those claims by locating them within particular fields of power. This is the dilemma which, as Stuart Hall observes, besets the attempt to construct a politics ‘which works with and through difference, which is able to build those forms of solidarity and identification which make common struggle and resistance possible but without suppressing the real heterogeneity of interests and identities, and which can effectively draw the political boundary lines without ... fixing those boundaries for an eternity’ (1996: 444). Recall, moreover, that boundaries are fixed, not only by processes of political mobilization but by the places of recognition that others provide. In the unsettling of limits lie prospects for acknowledgement (Li 2001: 671 – 672).”

Therefore, in demanding recognition of their rights, indigenous peoples create social boundaries as well as break them, and make boundary-crossings in order to reach places of recognition. Thus, we see that boundaries are permeable. Barth asserts that human activities create ‘leakages’ in borders, and re-connect what has been separated (2000: 28). I do not treat physical boundaries as a de facto given around which people interact. Rather, I examine how the human interactions that create social boundaries re-define physical boundaries as well.

A recent indication of the success of these boundary-crossing efforts at the international level is the approval of the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the United Nations Human Rights Council, and its subsequent adoption by the UN General Assembly in 2007.<sup>2</sup> The Declaration is couched in the assumptions that characterize the nature-culture imaginaire. It asserts that control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their territories will enable them to pursue development according to their own aspirations and needs. Furthermore, it

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<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that in the UN Human Rights Council, Indonesia voted in favour of the Declaration, demonstrating how the policy towards indigenous populations is slowly shifting in the nation. Surprisingly, the Philippines abstained from voting for the Declaration’s adoption. This appears strange in the light of how the country has been lauded for its enactment of the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act in 1997 (UN Report to the General Assembly on the First Session of the Human Rights Council 2006: 28). Both countries voted in favor of the Declaration in the General Assembly (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/ga10612.doc.htm>, accessed 15 September 2009).

“... [recognizes] that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment” (Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Preamble).

In the following section I give a brief backgrounder on natural resource management and the Philippines’ IPRA, which, notably preceded the UN Declaration. Then I zoom in on the ongoing implementation of the IPRA in a village in the Cordilleran province of Benguet.

### **Making boundaries: the Philippine case study**

The power to control rights to utilize natural resources once rested fully with the central Philippine government. The state followed a policy of natural resource exploitation for economic growth. The central locus of this power made it possible for corruption to proceed unchecked when it came to the exploitation of resources and the distribution of resultant profits and benefits. For instance, during the martial rule of former President Ferdinand Marcos, this power was abused particularly with regard to forests. Logging concessions larger than 100,000 hectares a piece were granted as gifts to his closest political allies (Vitug 2000: 13). This made existing timber companies insecure about their position, leading them to reap profits in the shortest possible time, without regard for long-term sustainability.

A paradigm shift occurred in the Philippines in the late 1980’s and early 90’s (Bagadion et. al. 2000). Decentralization, devolution, and collaborative management have been the models for natural resource management in the country for over a decade now (Bagadion et. al. 2000, Malayang 2005, Snelder & Bernardo 2005). Decentralization has allowed for local government units serving the general citizenry to make decisions in their own provinces, municipalities and villages/barangays. Devolution, on the other hand, has involved the relocation of the functions and powers of central government to local governments (Malayang 2005). Collaborative management draws together various parties or stakeholders in creating cooperative arrangements for the use and preservation of natural resources (Snelder & Persoon 2005). In theory, these three policies together serve to diminish the gap between the general citizenry and the central government. They are also meant to allow room for more locally appropriate regulations on the development and utilisation of natural resources. This is evident in the creation of community-based forestry programs and strengthened laws and policies on protected areas.

The Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA) is an interesting example of an instrument that integrates the policy of sustainable natural resource management with the devolution of responsibility. It is one manifestation of environmentalism (Agrawal 2005) in that its implementation has brought new technologies of government to indigenous communities, and produces processes of regulation and subject-making with a view to sustainability. As was mentioned in previous chapters, the IPRA is a law that enables indigenous communities to obtain titles to their ancestral domains held in communal ownership, and ancestral lands held as private property by individuals or clans. This is a milestone in Philippine history, for it reverses what Filipino advocates have referred to as “centuries of injustice”, during which indigenous peoples were perceived as primitive, barbaric, and uncivilized. They were expected to give up their life ways and beliefs and be assimilated

(Persoon et. al. 2004). Often they were forced to give up their lands to the state (Gatmaytan 1992, Lynch and Talbott 1995, Perez 2000, Prill-Brett 1997 and 2001).

When it comes to the devolution of responsibility for natural resources, the IPRA rests on the presupposition that indigenous knowledge and cultural practices engender harmony with nature. Following on this assumption, the law recognizes indigenous peoples' right to develop their lands and natural resources as it enlists them to:

“... manage and conserve natural resources within the territories and uphold the responsibilities for future generations; ... negotiate the terms and conditions for the exploration of natural resources in the areas for the purpose of ensuring ecological, environmental protection and the conservation measures, pursuant to national and customary laws...” (R.A. 8317, Section 7)

Through this clause, the state continues to hold the power to determine the boundaries around socio-economic activities that may be deemed as either sustainable or unsustainable management of resources. However, the ways in which indigenous peoples on the ground articulate their identity and entitlements are ways of creating social boundaries that do not always correspond with environmentalist objectives or romanticized stereotypes of indigenous peoples. These social boundaries can work for or against the effective implementation of policies based on the premise that 'indigenous' is equal to 'sustainable' or 'ecologically harmonious life ways'. Another prevalent assumption on indigenous peoples equates indigenous life ways with peaceful and harmonious co-existence within homogenous societies. However, upon closer examination of the dynamics of claiming and asserting indigenous peoples' rights in the Philippine Cordillera a picture of relationships that are not exactly harmonious emerges.

In 2003, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) convened a meeting for indigenous leaders and local government representatives from all over the Cordillera Administrative Region. The purpose of this meeting was to create a consultative body for the region, which would review and communicate indigenous peoples' issues in the Cordillera to the Commissioner. The Commissioner, herself of indigenous Cordilleran descent<sup>3</sup>, explained that the mandate of the consultative body would be, among other things: to take stock of existing ancestral domains and applications for ancestral domain titles in the region, to consolidate and report on issues coming from the grassroots level, to disseminate information on indigenous peoples' rights and the benefits that indigenous persons can avail of through the IPRA.

Following her talk, one man representing the Bago peoples spoke: “We Bago are the first immigrants to Tabuk. Can we claim ancestral domains there if we have been settled there for more than 30 years prior to the IPRA?” The response of the Commissioner was that immigrant indigenous communities cannot make claims in lands that they migrated to, unless there was inter-marriage with the autochthonous people of that place. Then perhaps they could have ancestral lands by virtue of affinity.

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<sup>3</sup> Being of indigenous descent is one of the criteria for the selection of members of the Commission.

Many of the other questions addressed to her revealed a concern over “fake indigenous representatives” who might find their way into the consultative body and put forward their own agendas. This possibility would be addressed in the future, she said, through the accreditation of indigenous peoples’ organizations. Other NGOs that were not indigenous would not be recognised and could not participate in the consultation process. She called on the leaders present to determine for themselves who was genuine and who was not, and to elect representatives to the consultative body according to their own knowledge on whom among them were truly indigenous leaders. When some one asked about the use of the term “tribal” to describe indigenous society, she remarked, “That is an anthropological question. Forever and ever the anthropologists and sociologists will be stepping all over the question. They make problems for us. Let’s use the language of the IPRA. We are indigenous cultural communities or indigenous peoples.”

Clearly, boundary-maintenance is one of the emerging roles for the NCIP in the implementation of the IPRA. In the above exchanges between the Commissioner and indigenous representatives, four boundaries were being drawn: 1) between immigrant and non-immigrant indigenous peoples (apparently, one has more rights than the other); 2) between indigenous and non-indigenous (non-government) organizations; 3) between accredited and un-accredited indigenous organizations; and 4) between those entitled to participate in the discourse of indigenous peoples, and those who are not. Certain entitlements are attached to each of these boundaries, determining who can make claims to territory (and therefore, according to the law, who can make decisions on the use of land and natural resources), who is entitled to speak for indigenous peoples, and who can claim official legitimacy. In the latter aspect we see the potential for a multiplication of bureaucratic measures and practices revolving around accreditation and the determination of authenticity.

These forms of boundary making and maintenance suggest the complexities of identity and authenticity as felt by indigenous peoples themselves, and also the inadequacy of any attempt to encapsulate, fix, or contain identity in a boundary-making law. This is further exemplified by the contestation of ancestral domains among the Kalanguya peoples of Tawangan.

#### IPRA and the Kalanguya of Tawangan

In the discussion that follows, I will reiterate briefly the local-level issues and outcomes that arose during the implementation of the IPRA in the village of Tawangan. As has been shown in previous chapters, the case of the Tawangan Kalanguya reveals a complex situation in which there is a proliferation of overlapping boundaries. These delineations are attended by much contest and conflict between different actors, including local government units and residents themselves.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the traditional ways of life valorised by environmentalists, and also by the IPRA, have been transformed over time. These changes have led to a direct confrontation between the reality of the lives of indigenous peoples in transition and the way in which they are defined in the law.

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapters Two and Three.

In chapter three it was shown that the physical boundaries of the ancestral domain claim that includes the Kalanguya village of Tawangan are one and the same with the administrative boundaries of the municipality of Kabayan. Thus, this particular claim follows non-indigenous territorial boundaries, lumping together the Ibaloy, Kankanaeys, and Kalanguyas, rather than corresponding to an older history of movement and settlements by distinct indigenous groups. The Kalanguya of the village of Tawangan are perceived as an economic and political minority by the more dominant Ibaloy of Kabayan but many of them say that they have willingly chosen to be part of this ancestral domain.

The Kalanguya of the municipality of Tinoc, which is adjacent to the village of Tawangan, are opposed to this. They argue that Tawangan should be part of both the Tinoc local government, and the Tinoc ancestral domain. For their part, the Tawangan Kalanguya assert that the local government of Kabayan has always taken care of them and did what it could to deliver basic services. They claim that their closeness to Tinoc has not brought them any assistance from that municipality, thus their decision to become part of the Kabayan ancestral domain claim. During repeated attempts at negotiation, some elders lamented on how a law and its ensuing politics could break apart Kalanguya families, when in the past their ancestors were not so concerned with ownership of land and political boundaries. As they tell it, there was no contestation of ancestral domain until the government came with a law about delineating and settling the boundaries of ancestral domains. Further to this, an ancestral domain that follows the sizeable boundaries of a municipality that was established by the Philippine government does not correspond with an ancestral territory as settled, lived, and worked in by the Kalanguya of Tawangan. By claiming municipal territory as ancestral domain, the political leaders behind the claim have created overlapping political and indigenous territories.

Furthermore, the Tawangan Kalanguya assert that they have been swiddening in the area now known as the Mt. Pulag National Park since time immemorial. From the point of view of the Kalanguya farmers, the protected area is trespassing on their ancestral territories. They anticipate that when they receive their ancestral land titles, they will be able to expand their vegetable gardens without interference from agents of environmentalism.

Yet another government-made boundary exists in Tawangan. The Tawangan Kalanguya have acquired a mother Certificate of Land Ownership Award from the Department of Agrarian Reform. This Certificate declares a block of agricultural land as the private property of a list of Tawangan's farmer residents. The local residents and government officials perceive this certificate and the Tawangan farmers' status as an Agrarian Reform Beneficiary community, as a negation of the rules and regulations of the national park. However, officials of the Department on Environment and Natural Resources are positive that there is no legal basis for this certificate of ownership.<sup>5</sup>

The Kalanguya of Tawangan have taken hold of every land tenurial instrument available to them in order to gain some security in territory that they describe as ancestral in many

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<sup>5</sup> As was mentioned in Chapter Three, officials of the Department on Environment and Natural Resources believe that they can have the Certificate of Land Ownership Award cancelled in a court case. The question remains as to why this hasn't been done yet.



ways. Thus far, I have shown how this has resulted in an overlap of different legal instruments and boundaries, causing the rise of conflicts over land. In addition, the decisions that the Tawangan Kalanguya have made regarding their absorption in a larger ancestral domain dominated by other indigenous groups, directly confronts the definition of indigenous peoples as “homogenous” in the IPRA. Clearly, that definition is not part of the lived reality of indigenous peoples today that interact with other indigenous groups on a regular basis.

Apart from making permanent physical boundaries around ancestral domains, the IPRA also defines and limits developments that can take place within these domains. Under the IPRA, indigenous groups applying for an ancestral domain title must submit to the NCIP an Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan. As can be ascertained from the title alone, indigenous peoples are expected to subscribe to a sustainable brand of development. The Plan must contain an inventory of indigenous knowledge systems and practices, a profile of natural resources to be found within the domain, and development needs and plans. Furthermore, the Plan must demonstrate concrete guarantees for the maintenance of ecological balance. There have been cases in the formulation of various Plans in which indigenous leaders have asked whether logging and/or mining – considered vital sources of livelihood and cash – could be listed as part of their domain’s development program. NCIP officers dutifully informed these leaders that logging and mining, or allowing companies to enter the domain for logging and mining, were not examples of sustainable development. The indigenous knowledge systems that the Plans require have changed over time, and may no longer fulfil the environmental functions that they are assumed to have done since time immemorial. This indicates how the assumption of timeless indigeneness persists, even in supposedly progressive instruments of government such as the IPRA. It is through the processes and boundary-making interactions described above that the priority of environmental protection on paper and in the law, becomes trivialized in practice.

In terms of environmentality, IPRA does not have a strong enough legal basis to ascertain that indigenous peoples protect the environment in their ancestral domains, and choose sustainable economic development, or, to recognize “rights... conditional upon performance” (Li 2001: 657). Li takes the position that these conditions are limiting for indigenous peoples (*ibid.*). However, she notes that in Indonesia, “for activists who assume that masyarakat adat do indeed manage their resources sustainably, there is little risk and much gained in framing arguments for masyarakat adat in terms of conservation benefits (*ibid.*)”

Having outlined the issues that have arisen in the implementation of IPRA in a Cordilleran case study, I now turn to my Indonesian case study. In transposing the implementation-related issues of an indigenous peoples’ rights law from a Philippine community to an Indonesian one, my goal is to anticipate the possible localized implications of such a law. In addition, I aim to indicate to advocates and academicians alike, future “watch points” or focal issues to be alert for, to observe and study closely, or to be careful of as they may become crucial in Indonesia just as they have in the Philippines. In the following section, I explore the continuing advocacy for indigenous peoples’ rights at the national level, and its interplay with natural resource management and nature-conservation at the local level in Indonesia.



Photo 7.2: Pak Ardinan, a Kaharingan leader from Baun Bango, speaks at the 2005 gathering of adat leaders in Kasongan.

### **Breaking boundaries: advocating indigenous peoples' rights in Indonesia**

“What is the important fact about Indonesian development in the last 30 years? The fact is that it has not followed a path that leads to sustainable development. Indonesia’s development has been heavily dependent on natural resource extractions.” (Salim 2005: xxi)

So Emil Salim, a former Minister of the Environment, summarizes the Indonesian government’s policy on natural resource management. As with the Philippines, in the past, the power to make decisions on the exploitation of natural resources rested fully with the central Indonesian government. Logging and mining concessions, or extraction rights, were granted to individuals or companies that had close political ties with Former President Soeharto (Resosudarmo 2005, Moniaga 2007). There were no checks and balances in place to assure resource sustainability. Local communities and most of the Indonesian population did not get benefits from the extraction of natural resources in their respective regions. In turn, this gave rise to resource and distribution conflict (Guha and Alier 1997) between local people and large extractive operations. This policy of centrally controlled resource management and its emergent effects accelerated environmental degradation throughout the country (Resosudarmo 2005).

After the fall of President Soeharto in May 1998, decentralization was expected to reverse the downward slide of the country’s environmental situation. However, a combination of ambiguous new laws and weak implementation has not changed the pace

of environmental degradation significantly (Patlis 2005). Some local governments created their own regulations allowing destructive extraction of resources to continue unabated, seeing this as a means for increasing local revenue by, for example, taxing illegal timber.<sup>6</sup> Resosudarmo (2005) writes that an effect of decentralization has been an increase in disputes over rights to natural resources; particularly disputes between local communities and the state or large extractive companies over ownership to land that people claim as rightfully theirs under adat law.

In the Philippines, the IPRA sets out a legal procedure for indigenous people to claim ancestral territory and gain security of tenure. In Indonesia however, it remains to be seen how this struggle for rights will manifest itself in legal and political arenas. The government's policy since Former President Soeharto's time has always been that all Indonesians are indigenous (Li 2000, Moniaga 2007). The accepted label for indigenous groups was *masyarakat terasing*, or isolated community. The government's policy towards indigenous peoples has been one of assimilation along an externally prescribed path of development (Persoon et al. 2004). Subsequently, indigenous peoples had no control over the management of natural resources in their territories. Through the years of independent government, they have been officially labelled as isolated and backward and the only avenue for them for full participation in Indonesian society was through integration. They have been the objects of a government-directed civilizing mission. This is slowly beginning to change.

Indonesian advocates for indigenous peoples claim that in the past it was dangerous to say 'indigenous peoples' out loud, or to use the term in their documents and statements. It was considered subversive, especially under Former President Soeharto's rule (personal communication, member of Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara). In international spheres and in verbal discussions among themselves Indonesian advocates used the term openly. On paper, however, they would revert to the more accepted label of 'traditional communities' (*masyarakat tradisional* or *masyarakat hukum adat*). Nowadays, discussions and debates are "more open", signifying the breaking down of discursive boundaries. In the first Kongres Masyarakat Adat Nusantara<sup>7</sup> (roughly translated, Congress of Traditional Communities of the Archipelago) held in Jakarta in 1999, 231 representatives from different indigenous groups around the country gathered together (Down To Earth Special Issue 1999). They issued the unprecedented, fierce statement: "If the government will not recognize indigenous peoples, we will not recognize the government."

In my discussions and interviews with Indonesian activists, I picked up a general consensus that the biggest boundary to the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights was the absence of a law to protect indigenous interests. In reflecting on the process of gaining a foothold in Indonesian policy, a member of the Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) said, "The next step is a political game." In other words, advocates are now actively pursuing legal reforms, especially legislation that would uphold the

<sup>6</sup> See Casson 2001, McCarthy 2001, and Patlis 2005.

<sup>7</sup> In the media and in the writings of other scholars, this gathering is referred to as the "Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago." However, to be clear that the term "indigenous peoples" did not gain currency until recently, I have translated it as "traditional communities", above.

1945 Constitution, which, in turn, recognizes the right of ‘traditional communities’ to resources and development. The Indonesian government has chosen to heed this and other international calls to attend to issues raised by indigenous peoples. In 2005, the National Commission on Human Rights, the Constitutional Court, and the Department of National Affairs organized a historical National Workshop on “Stocktaking and Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”. Representatives of the Ministry of Forestry were also present.

During this workshop, “fatal conceptual mistakes” were pointed out in existing laws on land, forestry, and mining. Corrective legal measures were called for in instances where laws gave the State full authority to issue logging and mining concessions, and required land-holders to ‘allow’ these concessions to operate in their territories. Participants expressed concern for the rapid rate of deforestation and the ensuing loss of biological diversity. In the discussions on the recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights, it was stated that “the violations against Indigenous Peoples’ rights and existence has always been related to the State’s control over natural resources in the territory of Indigenous Peoples” (taken from the minutes of the meeting). In this regard, recommendations for corrective measures were made, directed to all levels of the government. Notably, it was asked that local governments cease to give new concessions or renew existing ones without the consent of indigenous peoples. Furthermore it was recommended that local governments become involved in the settlement of conflicts over customary lands (ulayat).

The creation of a “Bill of Indigenous Peoples” was raised and accepted by the workshop participants. The participation of indigenous peoples in the entire process was called for. In this regard, an anticipated problem would be the “criteria and standardized definition of indigenous peoples” (taken from the minutes of the meeting). Participants wanted an alternative and open definition that would suit the plurality of indigenous groups in Indonesia. In this regard, existent requirements or characteristics already set out in indigenous laws would be taken into consideration. For instance, the existence of traditional values as regulators of behaviour, the existence of traditional institutions which regulate membership and the life of the society, and the existence of boundaries of territorial jurisdiction. The possibility was recognized that the existence of fixed territorial boundaries might not apply to nomadic groups.

Anticipating the creation of “an IPRA for Indonesia”, some advocates in NGO circles have taken the initiative to learn directly from the Philippines. An exchange of information and lessons learned is currently taking place through NGO-networks in the Philippines and Indonesia. Active in this sphere are Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia, or the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI), the Association for Community and Ecologically-based Law Reform (HuMA), and the Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara which now calls itself, in English, the Indigenous Peoples’ Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) in Indonesia, and the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center – Kasama sa Kalikasan (LRC-KSK) in the Philippines. Indonesian advocates visited the Philippines to spend time with activists for indigenous peoples’ rights, and to travel to ancestral domains to get a feel for the implementation of the IPRA. Some of the impressions they took back home confirmed the feeling among their colleagues that the creation of a bill on indigenous peoples’ rights should be approached with extreme caution. For one, there was no question that the IPRA could not be transferred in toto to Indonesia. Furthermore, the implementation process was perceived to be too “intrusive” into the lives of indigenous peoples. They rejected the creation of another bureaucracy such as the Philippines’ National Commission Indigenous Peoples, which was created

specifically for indigenous peoples. They feared that this could lead to the “de-legitimization” of adat itself, and of “real” adat leaders in favour of a national law and new bureaucratic positions. Finally, they hope to address the need for a heightened awareness at the grassroots level on how such a law might change people’s lives and circumstances. They must be aware of the full implications of such a bill, and they must be asked: do they really want a law created to protect their rights?

Indonesian actors continue to watch developments at home as well as the implementation process in the Philippines. On the Indonesian homefront, the hallmark speech of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples in Jakarta, in August 2006, made explicit reference to indigenous peoples and the need for a law specifically on the recognition of their rights.<sup>8</sup> This has been hailed as the first time that an Indonesian president has acknowledged that indigenous peoples have been mistreated in the country. However, as has been stated above, an inevitable result of a legal recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights is the need for definitions and new boundaries between those who qualify as indigenous, and those who do not, and the accompanying entitlements of such a status.

A member of AMAN explained to me that it is indeed difficult to arrive at a definition that would distinguish indigenous peoples from other Indonesians, simultaneously emphasizing that they too are citizens of the nation. “All Indonesians are from Indonesia,” he said. Any definition of indigenous peoples would have to rest on the principles of self-determination and self-identification. Indigenous peoples should develop the criteria themselves. From his perspective, the crux of indigenous identity lies in a people’s continuing “traditional and spiritual” relationship with the land they inherited from their ancestors. He gave the example of his own life, saying: “I’m Batak but I don’t consider myself ‘indigenous’ because I don’t eat rice from the land that I come from.” This is a striking perspective, for while he invokes his own indigenous identity, he also draws a line between indigenous peoples who still work the land and those who don’t, parallel with the distinction made above between immigrant and non-immigrant indigenous peoples. If and when a “Bill of Indigenous Peoples” is legislated for Indonesia, how will this social boundary take shape in the law? It is a boundary that will have repercussions not only for different positionalities among individual members of indigenous groups, but also in actors’ varied relationships with, and perceptions of, the environment.

This is further illustrated in local venues for the expression of indigenous identity, and local assertion of rights to resources, as I will describe below.

#### An IPRA for the Ngaju of Baun Bango?

Diversity and difference within indigenous groups and among various peoples occupying the same territory was also highlighted at a government-organized gathering of Dayak adat leaders in Central Kalimantan, in 2005. The purpose of this meeting was to come up with a compilation of Dayak customary laws that could be recognized and implemented throughout the District of Katingan, alongside local government rules and regulations.

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<sup>8</sup> Jakarta Post: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/Archives/ArchivesDet2.asp?FileID=20060810.H08>

Leaders from Baun Bango were in attendance. All of the participants ascribed to Dayak identity, and were in agreement with one another that all people living in the District of Katingan, or conducting business within it, should respect traditional Dayak laws and be subject to traditional Dayak sanctions and fines, regardless of indigenous identity and/or nationality. However, there were heated debates on the subject of sanctions and fines, a distinction between tradition and religion, and the determination of traditional boundaries.

The debate on sanctions stemmed from a time in Ngaju Dayak history when slaves were taken. Often, slavery also served as a sanction on people who committed offences, or were unable to repay debts. Slaves were referred to as *jipen* (Scharer 1963). During the Adat consultative meeting held in 2005, discussions over traditional sanctions became explosive when the term *jipen* was brought up. There were those who wanted the word to be kept alive, in memory of the life ways of their ancestors, with the meaning of *jipen* changed from 'slave' to a fine with a fixed equivalent in Indonesian rupiahs. They wanted *jipen* fines to be imposed on environmentally destructive activities. Others, while agreeing to impose sanctions on environmental destruction, were strongly opposed to the idea of *jipen*. They preferred to forget about *jipen* and did not want the name of the Dayak to continue to be tainted with a 'shameful' history of slavery. Furthermore, they argued, modern Dayak society treated all people equally.

This angered the proponents of turning *jipen* into a fine, who countered that there was nothing shameful about this history and that there was nothing degrading about paying fines for one's offences. Those who were more open to the idea of making *jipen* a fine argued that the amount to be paid should be flexible in accordance with the gravity of the offence committed, and also in consideration of the capacity of individuals of different income brackets to pay. The kinds of comments and discussions that were raised over this issue hint at the stratified and divided aspect of society among the Ngaju Dayak, past and present. This links to a more general question on who has the power to influence the shaping of indigenous traditions in a so-called modern world, who has the wherewithal to use these traditions to influence life within indigenous territories, who will be able to see to it that even those who do not ascribe to them uphold traditions. Similar to the chain of bureaucratic accreditations set up by the IPRA and the NCIP in the Philippines, the Ngaju leaders in attendance at this meeting also drew up a set of guidelines of the establishment of adat councils throughout the district, and the selection of adat leaders.

In turn, the latter issue also opened up debates on the distinction between Dayak traditions and religion.<sup>9</sup> There was much opposition between Muslim and Christian leaders on one side, and Kaharingan leaders on the other. The official recognition of the Ngaju Dayak religion as a branch of Hindu has given some leverage to Ngaju leaders in Central Kalimantan, who make Kaharingan a platform for Dayak sovereignty in Dayak territories (Miles 1976, Schiller 1997). At the aforementioned meeting, Muslim and Christian leaders insisted that Kaharingan rituals should not be imposed on every one, because different Ngaju Dayak ascribed to different religions and practices of

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<sup>9</sup> For a lengthier account and a good overview of the debate surrounding religion and identity among the Ngaju Dayak, see Schiller 1997a.

spirituality.<sup>10</sup> They insisted that customary laws should consist only of ‘cultural practices’ (budaya) that had nothing to do with deities or spirits. This debate on the selection and transformation of identity markers such as jipen, and the separation between tradition and religion, reveals once again the proliferation of social boundaries that are created in interactions. Through people’s engagement with one another’s conceptions of adat, limits are set to what is acceptable, what is to be adhered to, who the adherents are and how they should behave.

It is interesting that the leaders gathered in Kasongan wanted to impose stringent fines on environmentally destructive practices. Many attested that this was to protect their villages from the encroachment of oil palm plantations. Others spoke of putting a stop to practices such as fishing with electricity, which benefitted only the practitioner and placed many other fishers at a disadvantage. Another form of protection that these leaders sought was the clear delineation of village territories and traditional lands. Government representatives pointed out that in national law, the villages were already given five kilometres of territory from the edges of the village. Some of the leaders agreed that this corresponded more or less with the actual traditional space occupied and worked by their ancestors.

However, one leader from Baun Bango pointed out that in the time of their ancestors, there was as yet no such thing as ‘kilometers’. He reminded his fellow leaders that in the past their ancestors considered their territory to spread as far as the sound of a gong, when struck at the village’s centre. He suggested that this practice be revived and sanctioned by the regional government. Furthermore, he said, village territories should be extended to the distance that the sound of a gong reaches across the river from the village, to protect forested areas, lakes, or river tributaries where they carried out their livelihood activities. One of the elderly leaders in attendance concurred that this was indeed the tradition that was followed many generations ago. However he did not think it would be practical to revive this rule, “because any one can just strike a gong anywhere they like,” he said in an interview.

Evidently, the absence of a law on indigenous peoples’ rights has not prevented the Ngaju Dayak, particularly of the district of Katingan, from creating their own forums for the negotiation and revitalization of adat, or customary law. The leaders assembled at the meeting described above were taking advantage of decentralization and the relatively new power vested in local government in Indonesia. As a fairly new district established by law only in the year 2002 (U.U. No. 5, 2002), there is still much room in Katingan for the development of new local laws and regulations. The results of this meeting were to be turned over to the local government as part of a recommendation that new laws and regulations should be developed in accordance with customary laws. As to the question of which customary laws should be enshrined in the rule of local government, a committee of local leaders was to be formed, in order to create a compendium of adat collected from all 11 sub-districts of Katingan. Another request that was explicitly

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<sup>10</sup> However, it should be pointed out that villagers of different religious denominations live together peacefully. In Baun Bango it was pointed out to me that Hindus, Christians, and Muslims could live under one roof or often attended one another’s celebrations. At these celebrations, one could not tell by looking alone, who belonged to a particular religion.

directed to the local government was for the speedy appointment of sub-district-level and village-level demang, or adat leaders to work closely with the local government officials in overseeing local juridical matters. The demang is an “officially recognized [subdistrict] level authority on [adat]...” (Schiller 1997b: 190) with its beginnings in the rule of the sultan of Banjarmasin (Klinken 2004: 111).

It will be immensely interesting to see what will come of this effort in the future. Should these Dayak leaders succeed in this particular goal, one might ask, what kinds of relationships will this create between Dayak and non-Dayak residents in the district of Katingan? What powers will be vested in the adat leaders, or the demang? What kinds of social boundaries and practices will emerge?<sup>11</sup>

If we look to the implementation of the IPRA in the Cordillera region and in the municipality of Kabayan, Philippines, a multiplication of bureaucracies dealing with issues of authenticity and representativeness may be expected in the codification of adat in the district of Katingan. I observed that at the Katingan meeting, there were no questions explicitly raised about the representativeness of leaders (be they Kaharingan Hindus, Christians, or Muslims). All present, with the exception of myself as an observer, were originally of Central Kalimantan. It appeared that the participants accepted each other’s presence in their capacity as community leaders, and as native Dayak of Central Kalimantan. However, at the first Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago, referred to above, the arrival of a delegation of Dayak leaders from Central Kalimantan was met with consternation and scepticism. An Indonesian activist deeply involved in indigenous issues narrated that eight representatives arrived from Central Kalimantan, uninvited. They were sponsored by the government and, in the eyes of the organizers of the Congress, “they did not have the mandate of the community”. The same member of AMAN mentioned above said that there were many so-called adat leaders in Central Kalimantan who did not originate from grassroots communities, but who were government-appointed instead.

Could it be that the split between government appointed leaders and “true grassroots leaders” is perceived only by outsider activists and is not seen as problematic in Central Kalimantan? Klinken asserts that “the demang are today regarded in Central Kalimantan as an authentic Dayak aristocracy” (2004: 111, citing Patianom, Ulaen et al. 1992: 13 - 14). Whether they are regarded as genuine and reliable leaders within their communities, however, is another question that is not covered in the Indonesian case study presented here since the appointment of such leaders was still awaited at the time of fieldwork. The emergence of the demang as the official adat leader among the Dayak was part of a process called “customization” (diadatkan) by the Dayak, also called the “development of custom” (adat ontwikkeling) by the Dutch. The demang was originally an aristocratic honorific awarded by the sultan of Banjarmasin to Dayak who brought tribute from upriver. When the Dutch abolished the sultanate they maintained the use of the title demang but “bureaucratized it into a permanent native civil service” responsible for the collection of taxes and political intelligence for the colonial government (ibid). Given this history, the demang is a traditional mediator in the sense used by Sardan (2005: 177-178). It is an official role institutionalized in colonization and which has become internalized

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<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of village dynamics when plural jural orders are in place, see K. Benda-Beckmann (1984).



by the Ngaju over time, so much so that the indigenous leaders I interviewed insisted that they could not have a *demang* without an official appointment from the government. Further research on governance and governmentality would do well to look into the contemporary development of the role of the *demang* as broker, a manager of relationships between the state and local actors (ibid), and possibly, a manager of relationships between development, nature-conservation, and local actors.

A future watchpoint in this regard would be the legitimization of the various *demang*, or village adat leaders. How will this figure be chosen or appointed once adat becomes encoded? Would it be possible for the *demang* to be accepted in grassroots communities as legitimate leaders and experts on adat? Would they gain the respect and recognition of their fellow-villagers in the ways that leaders traditionally emerged – through their demonstrated skills and knowledge? Would local people internalize and appropriate a government-sponsored position and government-regulated adat and turn these to their advantage in facing local issues? Or will the *demang* remain simply as government appointees selected in processes that take place outside of the locus of the *demang*'s responsibility, thereby confirming activists' assertions that it is a role created and maintained outside of local communities? In the Cordillera region, indigenous participants to the NCIP-organized meeting seemed to be more concerned with the accreditation of genuine leaders than with the actual performance of said leaders. They welcomed, rather than questioned the position of the NCIP to legitimize indigenous organizations. However, a similar bureaucratic solution will most likely be questioned by the national-level Indonesian advocates for indigenous peoples' rights, such as those in AMAN who did not trust the delegation of leaders from Central Kalimantan. In any case, both actor-groups (at the local and national levels) are and will continue to be involved in making and maintaining social boundaries around indigenous leadership.

Another future watchpoint would be a proliferation of overlapping physical and jural boundaries. Should a national law on indigenous peoples' rights be promulgated in Indonesia, then in the district of Katingan at least, this law will overlap with local government laws concerning adat, and adat itself. In addition, should the Katingan adat meeting result in local-level laws concerning indigenous peoples' rights, will it still be appropriate or useful to implement a national-level 'IPRA' over and above these local-level laws? In such instances, what purpose would a national law serve? Perhaps it could at least guarantee a nationwide recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. However this was not the case in the Philippines, where the implementation of IPRA has been dominated or even blocked by non-indigenous entities in some regions. There is a need to study the dynamics that led to the non-indigenous domination of the IPRA. A further complication is that laws on indigenous peoples' rights – be they regional or national – may also overlap or even conflict with forest laws and other land laws. For instance, how will actors deal with the overlap of the territories and properties of some villages in the district of Katingan, and the Taman Nasional Sebangau?

Members of WWF based in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, and local officials of the Ministry of Forestry are quick to point out that great care was taken to delineate the park so that no human settlements are inside it. However, they somehow overlooked the fact

that the Ngaju Dayak have customary fishing areas, hunting grounds, and swidden fields that are not within the immediate vicinity of their permanent settlements. If one were to transpose the definition of an ancestral domain<sup>12</sup> from the IPRA to the village of Baun Bango, for instance, then small river tributaries across the village that are regularly visited for fishing and gathering of non-timber forest products belong to the Ngaju Dayak. However, these are presently within the Taman Nasional Sebangau. The residents of Baun Bango have been assured that these areas will fall within the buffer zone or the use-zone of the park, and so they will still be able to carry out their livelihood activities there, albeit in a controlled manner.

Like the indigenous groups of the municipality of Kabayan and the Mt. Pulag National Park, the Ngaju Dayak along the Katingan River have mixed feelings about the Taman Nasional Sebangau. A handful of people, through interaction with international conservation agencies over the years, have developed positive outlooks and hopes about how conservation will bring benefits to their communities. Some are also certain that the park will eventually become a source of pride for Ngaju Dayak. At times, however, people openly express their opposition and a fierce territoriality towards international conservation agencies. Sometimes, these agencies are perceived as competitors to territories and natural resources,<sup>13</sup> and also as impediments to livelihood.

This brings me to a third watchpoint for the future of an indigenous peoples' rights law in Indonesia. Will the creation of environmental regulations based on adat effectively aid the cause of environmentalists working at local levels, particularly in Central Kalimantan? Would this lead to the kind of "positive aspects of power involved in government and the production of new subjects" (Agrawal 2005: 237-238, n. 49) that take up the green positionality? Or will this result in a proliferation of boundaries in the landscape, accompanied by a rise in conflict between different actors seeking to activate affordances in the environment? At one point, in the village of Baun Bango, villagers became extremely anxious about the presence of a group of 60 orang Negara in a portion of the forest that was still part of Baun Bango's territory. They were there to cut down trees and haul them out for the profit of an outsider who was funding the operation. Village leaders drew up a resolution that outsiders who were not residents of Baun Bango were prohibited from logging in the area of Baun Bango. They specified people coming from Madura, Palembang, and Negara as outsiders. Here is a clear example of insiders (majority of them indigenous Ngaju) being opposed to outsiders coming into their territory to exploit their resources. However, these were not boundaries being drawn up for the protection of the environment, as it may have appeared at first. Rather, to the dismay of agents of environmentalism working in the area, boundaries were being drawn up for the protection of local interests. Village leaders said they were taking action against the outsiders because they feared that there would be no trees left for the

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<sup>12</sup> As defined in the IPRA, ancestral domains include: "ancestral lands, forests, pasture, residential, agricultural, and other lands individually owned whether alienable and disposable or otherwise, hunting grounds, burial grounds, worship areas, bodies of water, mineral and other natural resources, and lands which may no longer be exclusively occupied by ICCs/IPs but from which they traditionally had access to for their subsistence and traditional activities, ..." (R.A. No. 8371, series of 1997: 2).

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps this is not so far from the truth. Given the fact that the funding of international agencies is hinged on their successful protection of the environment and sound natural resource management, they too are dependent on the environment for their livelihood and income.

community. In their opinion, only people who belonged to Baun Bango should benefit from resources within the territory of Baun Bango. One of the village leaders said, “We Dayak openly accept people who come peacefully and who can live with us in our own way of life. But when outsiders come to disturb us, we fight back.” With this kind of rhetoric existing among indigenous peoples at the grassroots level, there is a possibility that livelihood, the struggle for survival and self-determination – indigenous peoples’ rights – will become trivializing discourses against nature-conservation, as has happened in the Philippine case study.

### Discussion

As part of the transboundary flow of ideas and discourses on indigenous peoples’ rights between the Philippines and Indonesia, this chapter has pinpointed national-level and local-level watchpoints for the possible creation of an indigenous peoples’ rights law in Indonesia. On the national-level, as many Indonesian activists have already pointed out, a crucial watchpoint would be whether indigenous peoples truly want and need such a law, and whether they are fully aware of its possible repercussions. Actors who may be involved in the creation of “an IPRA for Indonesia” will also be faced with the challenge of developing an indigenous peoples’ law that will be inclusive of indigenous peoples’ diverse situations and realities, and yet unambiguous about the recognition of rights to territory, resources, and self-determination.

At the local level, there are at least three watchpoints for Indonesia based on the outcomes of the implementation of the IPRA in a Cordilleran village in the Philippines. First there is the question of who will benefit from the institutionalizing and legitimizing practices around indigenous leaders and indigenous groups, and who may be excluded in the process. Secondly, a proliferation of overlapping boundaries in the landscape is to be expected. Finally, in intertwining indigenous peoples’ rights with nature-conservation, there will always be the gamble that environmental concerns will become trivial in the face of livelihood struggles, or vice versa. All of these watchpoints have repercussions for the existence or demise of the nature-culture imaginaire.

The foregoing discussions have shown that the recognition accorded to indigenous peoples’ rights in the Philippines and in international spheres has engaged indigenous peoples in actively drawing new kinds of social boundaries around themselves. On the international level, indigenous peoples unite across state boundaries to assert shared causes and struggles. However, beneath this international solidarity, often the ultimate goals of indigenous peoples remain limited to their own localities and socio-cultural units. When indigenous peoples’ boundaries become affixed to territories, then a dynamic of inclusion and exclusion is set in motion with indigenous peoples as insiders with entitlements, and non-indigenous persons as outsiders with limited or no entitlements, reflecting the borders that are maintained around nation-states and citizenship. This social boundary belies the fact that there is also much differentiation within indigenous groups.

It would appear that boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are inevitable, particularly in the practices of delineation and identification of stakeholders and entitlements in nature-conservation. Therefore, this would mean too, that exclusion is inherent in the discourse of the nature-culture imaginaire. Attaching identity to physical boundaries around ancestral domains or territories has changed the way people articulate their relationship with their land, which is now primarily expressed as ownership or exclusive entitlement.

With this, some indigenous peoples express their opposition to environmental regulations imposed on them. They feel these regulations as an affront to their rights in their own territories, and as impediments to their desire for development.

The IPRA appears to draw a division between indigenous people who are thought to have and are required to maintain sustainable life ways, and the rest of the world that may freely continue along consumerist and industrialist paths to the future. This split is deeply embedded in the dynamic of nature-conservation where indigenous peoples are assumed to have and to perform ecologically harmonious cultures. It is a two-step disengagement described by Ingold (2000). First, human, social existence is cleaved from nature. Second, indigenous peoples are assumed to be more natural, timeless, and therefore separate from contemporary industrial society. Indigenous peoples and agents of environmentalism will continuously grapple with this two-step disengagement in their interactions with each other and when they actively draw boundaries around identities, territories, rights, and sustainable development vis-à-vis desirable standards of living. Indigenousness alone is no guarantee of ecological harmony (Ellen 2000, Croll & Parkin 1996). Thus the existence of the IPRA – and its definitions of indigenous identity, rights and responsibilities – fails as a guarantee for ecologically sound natural resource management by indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the recognition of rights to self-determination and control over ancestral domains does not in itself justify the imposition of limits to development and the costs of conservation on indigenous communities (Chapin 2004). Scholars and advocates alike have expressed concern that the alignment of indigenous peoples' rights with environmental objectives – the nature-culture imaginaire – may cause indigenous concerns to be swallowed up by or subordinated to conservation agendas (Chapin 2004, Persoon et. al. 2004, Zerner 2003). As I have shown here, this works both ways. We are already witnessing the disadvantages and conflict that each discourse has brought to the other in this uneasy alliance, even in Indonesia where a legal recognition of indigenous peoples' rights is still being developed. It remains to be seen whether this will be anticipated, and how Indonesian advocates and policy-makers will address this in the near future.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### **Conclusion: Old Assumptions, New Futures?**

How do indigenous peoples living in proximity with forests interact with laws and policies that are aimed at regulating their use of natural resources, their main source of livelihood? In seeking to address this research question, this dissertation developed within the context of the protected areas of the Mt. Pulag National Park in the Philippine Cordillera and the Taman Nasional Sebangau in Indonesian Borneo. I started out with wanting to understand what happens on the ground between various actors when conservation spaces are negotiated, and when these negotiations are intersected with issues of identity and indigenous peoples' rights. The preceding chapters have described in ethnographic detail the interactions of agents of environmentalism working for government and non-government agencies, with the Kalanguya of Tawangan in the Philippines, and the Ngaju Dayak of Baun Bango in Indonesia – in both cases within the context of implementing conservation laws and/or policies. What emerges from these case studies is a conflict-ridden picture of indigenous peoples and agents of environmentalism attempting to negotiate with and influence one another in the light of their respective, often disparate agendas.

In concluding this multi-sited ethnography, I will review the evidence and insights I have gathered and apply them to this question: Does the bundling together of indigenous peoples' rights and nature-conservation goals within the nature-culture imaginaire hinder or aid environmentalist causes and indigenous aspirations? I will begin by summarizing briefly the ways in which the Kalanguya and the Ngaju Dayak apprehend protected areas. I will discuss their perceptions alongside the rights and entitlements they claim as indigenous peoples, and the futures they envision for themselves. This will be followed by a summary of the perceptions of agents of environmentalism on indigenous peoples' life ways, alongside their own conservation goals and green visions. Finally I will re-examine the articulation of the discourses of indigenous peoples rights and nature-conservation through the actions and assumptions that the key actors bring to the nature-culture imaginaire. I will consider the articulation of these actors' positionalities with timescapes, boundaries, and the environment as a work in progress.

#### **Deep-rooted hopes verses nature-conservation?**

The ethnographic chapters of this dissertation have shown that the Kalanguya of the Philippine Cordillera and the Ngaju Dayak of Indonesian Borneo are indigenous peoples in transition. In no way can they be construed to be homogenous, noble green primitives living in timeless isolation and possessing homeostatic cultures. Although heavily dependent on their environments for subsistence as well as income-generation, they are not "ecosystem people". They are aware of globalization and international environmentalisms, both of which have an impact on their lives. They are capable of apprehending and discussing these two things, even as they aspire to a form of global citizenship that will give them greater access to new occupations and worldly goods produced beyond their villages, and beyond their nations.

Traditionally the Kalanguya of Tawangan and the Ngaju Dayak of Baun Bango established usufructuary rights to land and access to resources through the principle of

primi occupantes. They also upheld locally generated rules on the access and use of communal resources, such as water. Foremost of these locally generated rules was that of membership in the community. Basically, in order to have access to natural resources thought to belong to the community, or known to be within its territory, one had to be a member of that community. Usufructuary rights and ownership were recognized and upheld on a historical basis, handed down in the memories of local leaders and elders. This way of reckoning rights continues within both communities but it now exists within the context of different national legal frameworks some of which recognize indigenous rights and some of which do not leave room for locally-generated rules on resource-use. Of these, the one national policy that looms large in the lives of each community is that which concerns nature-conservation or more particularly the establishment of protected areas.

The Kalanguya experience the inclusion of their settlements in the boundaries of the Mt. Pulag National Park as an unjust form of environmentalism. On the one hand they are encouraged by the government to increase their participation and investments in commercial farming. On the other hand the work that they do in order to support their families is deemed illegal and their clearing of forestland to expand farms is condemned.

To counter this the Kalanguya of Tawangan make claims to their land through various legal means offered by different laws and government agencies. They joined the ancestral domain of the municipality of Kabayan under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA). The Act explicitly places the responsibility of environmental stewardship on indigenous peoples. However, this is not significantly deployed in the actual implementation of the law.

Beneath the surface of demands for economic development, networks of political involvement, and the question of livelihood and security of tenure, environmental threats and hazards continue to be generated at the very interface of indigenous peoples and agents of environmentalism, in the Philippine case represented primarily by indigenous persons in government. Tenurial security, access to, and control over natural resources is the main concern of indigenous peoples engaged in the implementation of the IPRA. To complicate things further the claims to territorial and social boundaries are beset with the political agendas of indigenous elite. Inasmuch as there are claims and assumptions about indigenous peoples protecting their environments, there is as well a collusion among indigenous groups clearing the forests within and around the Mt. Pulag National Park. Because of the complexity of the implementation process and the confusion of expectations, the Kalanguya of Tawangan experience the IPRA as a threat to their sociality as a people even as it offers the promise of their continued occupation and cultivation of their lands.

In contrast to the Philippine case study, the village of Baun Bango is not located within the bounds of the Taman Nasional Sebangau. However, much of the daily work of the Ngaju Dayak takes place in the tropical peat swamp forest beyond the immediate vicinity of the village. The vast network of rivers, forests, and swamps from which they draw their sustenance and income is well within the boundaries of the national park.

Before the park was established, the forests around Baun Bango were classified as production forest. The government had granted large logging concessions in the area. Ngaju Dayak and migrants alike competed with logging companies, extracting timber to sell to local sawmills. Illegal logging was rampant in the area at the time of fieldwork.

Some Ngaju Dayak expressed the sentiment that the migrants and logging companies were stealing resources from the people of Baun Bango, for they encroached on territories that belonged to the Ngaju Dayak. Therefore they were simply seeking to benefit from resources that they considered to belong to their community in the first place. Notably, however, before the arrival of large logging concessions, elders claim that logging was not considered a source of income by the Ngaju Dayak. When the Taman Nasional Sebangau was established, it was initially referred to by the Ngaju of Baun Bango as another encroachment on their territory. Like the Kalanguya, the Ngaju experience the creation of a protected area in their landscape as a new technology of government, geared towards regulating and transforming their relationship with the environment.

The national park brings with it a bundle of new regulations, which, if policed and implemented fully will profoundly transform the dynamic of work and interaction in the environment. Many express the fear that the many elements of their livelihood repertoire will become prohibited and that they will be prevented from accessing the natural resources that they have relied upon since the time of their ancestors. In Indonesia there is no indigenous peoples' rights act. However, the Ngaju Dayak of Baun Bango actively seek out recognition of their ownership of plots of land and canals that snake through the forests. Local leaders and indigenous elite present these claims in forums negotiating the zones and boundaries of the newly-formed Taman Nasional Sebangau.

Clearly, both indigenous groups hold a strong sense of entitlement to their territories based on a history of continuous occupation and active transformation of the landscape. Their timescapes, or practiced approaches to time, hold implicit within them their past life-ways, present livelihood repertoires, and future aspirations. These form part of a continuum of interactions with the environment that affords them the bases of their existence. In discussions about the futures of their settlements and their families they emphasize their right to pursue livelihood and raise their standard of living. When confronted with the possibility of exhausting the resources in their immediate environment, people express worry and frustration, pointing out that they do not have much choice. Although their identities are created out of the environments that they move through and the ways in which they shape the landscape, many express the hope that their children will find new professions that would not require them to work in the forests and rivers. For these actors, transformation and change are as much entitlements as are security of tenure and access to resources. These possibilities, too, are deeply ingrained in their timescapes.

In this respect, the Ngaju Dayak of Baun Bango share with the Kalanguya of Tawangan the same frustrations with nature-conservation, even if their contexts seem worlds apart and incomparable at first. Both indigenous groups experience nature-conservation as an impediment to their pursuit of livelihood and development. In each case too, indigenous elite, government officers, and local residents alike uphold the need to pursue livelihood as a reason to disregard regulations on resource-use, or as an excuse for the failure to police illegal extraction of resources from protected areas. Thus, instead of complementing one another, as is ideally presented in the nature-culture imaginaire, work or livelihood and economic needs become trivializing arguments against environmental conservation.

### **Green aims furthering indigenous peoples' rights?**

Conversely, the agents of environmentalism in this study view nature-conservation as a means to secure a better future not only for local communities, but for humanity's global heritage. Conserved forests, in their point of view, provide both healthy environs and economic gain. Agents of environmentalism regard indigenous communities as crucial partners in the delineation and management of spaces for nature-conservation. They cite at least two reasons for this partnership. First, indigenous peoples' cooperation is needed for they live in, or near, the areas identified as environmentally-critical. Secondly, indigenous peoples are assumed to possess traditions that effectively make them environmental stewards. In forging these partnerships, agents of environmentalism are faced with the conflict of interests between their own perceptions on the dangers/costs of unchecked exploitation of nature, and locally-defined futures of progress, modernization, and security. This effectively places them at odds with indigenous people. The latter thrive by working within the environment, while agents of environmentalism are constantly positioned as working for the environment from a separate, socio-political sphere. Agents of environmentalism, perhaps inadvertently, create the same separation for indigenous peoples, which is paradoxical because they also approach indigenous peoples on the assumption that they are more connected with the environment than other actors.

In the Philippine case study, indigenous community leaders and indigenous government officials act as brokers and mediators for an environmentality embedded within state laws such as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) and the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS). The NIPAS contains the assumption of static indigenous communities frozen in time in the provision that communities living within protected areas should keep their livelihood activities at a subsistence level. Thus it is the IPRA, more than the NIPAS, that approximates the creation of a nature-culture imaginaire in its recognition of indigenous rights to territory, which goes hand-in-hand with the responsibility to develop that territory sustainably. However, the actors responsible for the implementation of both these laws, acted in their capacity as combined entities and/or incidental environmentalists, themselves being indigenous too. Often, their indigenous identity, and the attachment of this identity to historical injustice and the right to self-determination, took precedence over their potential effectiveness as agents of environmentalism. Thus, when these actors stand in their capacity as agents of environmentalism, Ili-based indigenous people expect them to make ameliorative measures and soften the regulations entrenched in the law, in direct opposition to their mandate to prevent environmental exploitation. When they stand in their capacity as indigenous politicians they echo the rhetoric of their local counterparts, saying that their people have been protecting the forests since the time of their ancestors and it is wrong that they are now being criminalized for doing what they have always done.

The positionality of the agents of environmentalism in the Indonesian case study is quite different. In the context of the Mt. Pulag National Park the boundaries between environmentalist agent, local or indigenous participant, supporter, and offender, are blurred. In the case of Taman Nasional Sebangau a clear line is drawn between



environmentalist actors as facilitators for conservation efforts, and local or indigenous participants.

The most visible and active environmentalists were the team-members of the World Wildlife Fund – Indonesia, which, as an organization, originated from outside of the locale even as it was based in Palangkaraya.<sup>1</sup> The WWF team was faced with many misconceptions as to their role in the formation and management of the Taman Nasional Sebangau. Their high profile in the campaigns and activities for the park led some people to mistakenly believe that the WWF was claiming the park as its territory. On the other hand, few people were aware that the park was in fact under the jurisdiction of the Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam (BKSDA), under the Ministry of Forestry. Still others felt that the WWF should give financial aid for local development. This is one among many entitlements that are claimed alongside indigenous peoples' rights to territory and self-determination.

In cooperation with the local government the WWF addressed the question of economic development by studying and encouraging alternative livelihood options. The WWF emphasized their role as facilitators of process, thereby obscuring the fact that they were also the initiators of new physical and social boundaries, and also setting the stage for their eventual departure. To a certain extent the WWF and the BKSDA were successful in slowly changing the way the Ngaju Dayak perceived the park and their presence. Over time the Ngaju Dayak were less wary and some even became hopeful about the benefits that might be reaped from the protected area

However, even as the Ngaju Dayak change their perceptions of nature-conservation in their area, agents of environmentalism continue to insist, in their literature and in their discourses, that indigenous peoples should be stewards of the environment. Thus, although they try to be sensitive to indigenous entitlements from the beginning, they still lack an understanding of the local contexts in which they operate.

Although the agents of environmentalism in both case studies are shown making an effort to establish close working relations with indigenous leaders and communities, both sets of actors meet with a dissonance between verbal agreements and the actual actions of people on the ground. These agents of environmentalism work from the premise that rights to resources should be controlled by ecological considerations, or that indigenous peoples should take on the responsibility of conservation in exchange for the recognition of their rights to territory and resources. However, in neither of the case studies was there much success in implementing this notion among indigenous groups in and around the protected areas.

### **Green entanglements in the nature-culture imaginaire**

Could the Taman Nasional Sebangau and the Mt. Pulag National Park be considered sites of the nature-culture imaginaire? In both spaces local needs and visions intersect with internationally-funded conservation missions. Indigenous customs are considered to be aligned with, and integral to, conservation. Thus agents of environmentalism take care to

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<sup>1</sup> The WWF project in the Taman Nasional Sebangau has since ended.

respect the rights of indigenous communities and involve them in the management of the protected areas. In this respect, these two protected areas could indeed be taken as manifestations of the nature-culture imaginaire, where “progressive social schemes and green dreams are aligned but in tension and sometimes in contradiction” (Zerner 2003: n. 18).

However, the nature-culture imaginaire is a vision of an ideal mode of existence inside a defined, ideal space. While this conceptual aggregate is a space in which justice, culture, and nature are intertwined, the picture that emerges from this study is not one of harmonious co-existence between indigenous peoples, agents of environmentalism, and their immediate environments. In this study, I have been concerned with the departures from the ideal, and the interfaces in which social schemes and green dreams have stood in contradiction with each other.

In both case studies, the proliferation of legal, social, and physical boundaries served to undermine the nature-culture imaginaire. When it comes down to the details of implementation and local realities, the hegemonic discourse that associates cultural difference with ecological harmony becomes ridden with conflict. Different government agencies and non-government organizations push their own agendas, some of them in direct contradiction of each other’s mandates. Indigenous actors respond to this by hedging their bets, hoping to reap benefits and gain security on all fronts. In the process, the aims of agents of environmentalism to encourage people to orient their thinking and actions towards the protection of the environment are not realized. Additionally, they are unable to deliver their own guarantees of social, tenurial, and economic security to indigenous actors. This is partly due to the disparity between the long-term continuum of local timescapes and the limited time horizons of project cycles. The question remains as to whether the agents of environmentalism in this study will constantly operate as short-term guests of indigenous communities, or if they will be able to transcend this, breach the limits of environmental etiquette, and foster deeper relationships with indigenous communities.

Finally, the contradictions between the contemporary livelihood repertoires of indigenous peoples and the valorized green traditions attributed to them create a rift between agents of environmentalism and their supposed allies. Nevertheless, indigenous actors join agents of environmentalism in speaking of their way of life as being in harmony with nature. Do these claims to closeness to and harmony with nature constitute the green positionality? The formation of green positionalities, I argue, is a necessary part of the nature-culture imaginaire. The nature-culture imaginaire and green positionalities are mutually-constitutive, just as “persons and environment are mutually constitutive components of the same world” (Ingold 1992: 51-52). Taking off from Agrawal’s (2005: 18) definition of environmental subjects, actors who take up the green positionality are “individuals who see the generalized need for environmental protection in some form and whose practices and words bear the mark of this acceptance.” While some of the indigenous actors in this study, particularly those who spoke in their capacity as leaders, pronounce a harmonious relationship with the environment that stretched back to time immemorial or the times of their ancestors, contemporary practices do not reflect the environmental stewardship they claim.

The traditions that agents of environmentalism interpret as ecologically harmonious still exist. However, these beliefs and practices do not work in the way that agents of environmentalism expect. The contemporary practice of traditions in the context of

livelihood provide neither a blueprint for ecological conservation, nor explicit taboos on ecological destruction. Instead, they are practiced as a means through which actions in the environment – including the bulldozing or logging of protected forests – can be negotiated.

Already, the nature-culture imaginaire has fallen apart, both as another kind of reality that actors aim to bring about, and as a discourse among environmentalist advocates, indigenous advocates, and scholars. In the contexts shown in this study, the nature-culture imaginaire falls apart on five points. First and most basic of these is the imagined existence of noble green savages. This study shows that the relationships of the Kalanguya and the Ngaju Dayak with their environments cannot be fully defined or encapsulated by the frame of nature-conservation and government regulations, or by debates over legality and illegality. Their feeling of connectedness with the environment comes not from standing outside of nature and seeing it as a bounded, pristine space to be protected from human activity. Rather, their relationships with their environments are founded on their daily work in transforming landscapes to generate sustenance and income. The Kalanguya and the Ngaju Dayak claim this as their right to live, work, and prosper in their indigenous territories.

Second, the creation of protected areas as well as the recognition of indigenous rights brings about a proliferation of boundaries that in turn produce new layers of power relationships that come hand in hand with various forms of exclusion. Boundaries affixed to protected areas threaten to separate indigenous peoples from their sources of livelihood. Boundaries affixed to indigenous territories lead to conflict, with indigenous peoples as insiders with entitlements, and outsiders with limited or no entitlements. This social boundary belies the fact that there is also much differentiation within indigenous groups. For example, some indigenous groups, families, and/or individual actors become even more marginalized when they are excluded from ancestral domain claims because of unresolved conflict over boundaries.

Third, the boundedness in time of environmental venues or interactions is such that they make up only a fraction of the life of the indigenous communities and their environments. The etiquette of environmentalism at these venues supports the formation and maintenance of cordial relationships between the permanent hosts of environmentalist projects (local communities) and the guests that bring them (agents of environmentalism). However, the etiquette also hampers the deepening of relationships and prevents meaningful agreements on complicated, gritty, and even dangerous issues. Indigenous participants see agents of environmentalism as absentee- or long distance managers, appearing only for occasional meetings or workshops. Because of the fleeting nature of these relationships, agreements are deemed superficial in the eyes of the indigenous, permanent hosts to the environmental projects. Thus, it is a grave error for environmentalist agents to conflate local participation with consent, and to expect this to translate into the kinds of ecologically-sound actions they had hoped to encourage. Furthermore, it becomes apparent in this study that agents of environmentalism, indigenous people, donors, and government agencies operate from highly divergent timescapes. Agents of environmentalism worked under the pressure of temporal disciplines such as targets, project cycles, and fiscal years. Indigenous people worked under the pressure of the next meal, the next school year, the next harvest, or the next rains. Given that environmentalist projects are all about the long-term future, it is unfortunate and ironic that they operate within very limited time horizons. The differences in timescapes is also evident in the different versions of the future that the key

actors envision. This goes for both the imagined future state of the environment as well as the desired future aspirations of the key actors.

The fourth point upon which the nature-culture imaginaire falls apart is the imbalance of power in shaping the future and regulating the present upon which it is contingent. Agents of environmentalism appear to draw a division between indigenous people who are thought to have, and required to maintain, sustainable life ways, and the rest of the world that may freely continue along consumerist and industrialist paths to the future. This split is deeply embedded in the dynamic of nature-conservation.

Given these four points that emerge from this multi-sited ethnography, it is evident that the bundling together of indigenous peoples' rights and nature-conservation goals is experienced by key actors on the ground as an impediment to both environmentalist causes and indigenous aspirations. There is a fifth aspect of the nature-culture imaginaire that must be considered here, and that is its existence and deployment as a discourse, particularly in critiques and analyses such as this study.

As I stated in chapter one, this dissertation is one text among many scholarly discourses on the environment and human-environment interactions. Throughout this study I have tried to be aware of my positionality as "one kind of cultural producer among others" (Marcus 1998: 17), and as a critic of the on-the-ground implications of the discourses of indigenous peoples' rights and nature-conservation, I have tried to demystify what is taken for granted and question the things actors say and do. The nature-culture imaginaire in itself, as defined by Zerner, is a conceptual tool that I have used in my analyses here. In the process of writing this dissertation, however, the question came to me as to whether it is in fact pointless to seek out successful manifestations of the nature-culture imaginaire across the different field sites. By looking in seemingly worlds apart locales at the intertwined discourses of nature-conservation and indigenous peoples' rights, it has become apparent that conflict and negotiations at the interface are pervasive and inevitable, especially where harmonious human-environmental relations are assumed. While Zerner points out that contradictions are inherent in the nature-culture imaginaire, the analytical concept, the discourse, and the practices attached to it, need to be expanded further so as to make room for the inevitability of conflict and disputes, and to approach a nature-culture imaginaire in which dialogue and conflict-management are explicitly included.

### **Challenges for the future**

This study has dissolved the vision of a harmonious intertwining of the discourses of agents of environmentalism with those of local communities, and of indigenous peoples with their environments. In place of this vision is a thorny thicket of deep-rooted hopes and green entanglements angling towards the future sun. Should nature-conservation goals and indigenous peoples' rights be cleaved from each other then? Indigenous peoples continue to claim rights in both local and international arenas on the basis of their relationships with the environment, presented in terms of environmental wisdom and ecological harmony since time immemorial. These rights are also claimed on the basis of historical injustices, which, more often than not, severed indigenous peoples from their territories and the life-ways they cultivated in those landscapes. Given the extent to which the two discourses have become intertwined, it might be better to imagine a future in which they grow together to become a dense, formidable thicket of healthy community-environment interactions, constant dialogues, and conflict or dispute management.

Agents of environmentalism will have to take into consideration the futures envisioned by indigenous peoples and put these on equal footing with their own visions. Instead of insisting that they are mere facilitators and that they are not development workers, agents of environmentalism will have to be prepared to deal with indigenous aspirations to modernization and progress and take these as coeval with their own visions of green futures.

Both indigenous communities and agents of environmentalism need a better understanding of livelihood as an environmental activity, not just an economic activity. There is a need for more exchanges between local/indigenous knowledge and technical-scientific knowledge on the long-term repercussions of human action in the environment. The key actors will also have to stretch their time horizons to reach farther into the future. Agents of environmentalism must be enabled by their organizations and donors to work with indigenous communities at close range and for a longer period of time than is currently possible, for nature-conservation is a social intervention that seeks to transform actors.

Finally, policy-makers, government and non-government agencies, advocates, scholars, and indigenous peoples need to problematize the existing contingency of special rights upon the performance of ecological responsibilities. On the one hand, given the unpredictability and the global spread of today's environmental hazards, ecological responsibility and the cultivation of green positionalities should be imperative for all societies, regardless of indigeneness or the lack thereof. However, if rights continue to be claimed and/or recognized on the basis of assumed sustainable, indigenous life-ways, then it is time that the actors involved explore how to create new futures that can bring about the fruition of both green visions and indigenous aspirations.



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## Deep-Rooted Hopes and Green Entanglements

### SUMMARY

This study is rooted in the places where daily struggles to make a living in the environment coincide and collide with efforts to save nature through the delineation of protected areas. In this dissertation I explore the intertwining of the causes of environmentalism and indigenous peoples rights. Collectively, the chapters and published papers assembled here have a tri-fold purpose. They provide: 1) a comparative, multi-site ethnography of the on-the-ground dynamic of environmentalist action; 2) a description and analysis of common implementation practices of nature-conservation projects that work in cooperation with, or through co-optation of, indigenous peoples; and 3) a description and analysis of the practical, on-the-ground implications of indigenous peoples' rights as an emergent form of social-environmental justice that takes identity and tradition as its basis. To accomplish this on an empirical base, I draw on case studies and insights that have been built up through fieldwork among the Kalanguya of Tawangan, Benguet province, in the Cordillera Administrative Region of the Philippines, and the Ngaju Dayak of Baun Bango, district of Katingan, Central Kalimantan province, in Indonesian Borneo.

#### The case studies

Tawangan is one of 13 barangays within the municipality of Kabayan, Benguet Province. The Municipality of Kabayan lies on the slopes of the Mt. Pulag National Park in Benguet Province. It is 85 kilometers northeast of Baguio City and 335 kilometers north of Manila. Kabayan is bounded by five other municipalities, two of which belong to neighboring provinces. One is the Municipality of Tinoc, Ifugao Province on the northeastern side of Kabayan, and the other is the Municipality of Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya on the southeastern side of Kabayan. The other three municipalities belong to the province of Benguet. As of 2004 there were 736 Kalanguyas living in Tawangan.

The barangay is spread out across several sitios, or clusters of households, on the eastern slopes of Mt. Pulag. In its entirety, the settlement falls within the boundaries of the Mt. Pulag National Park. This has created unresolved issues in which development projects and nature-conservation are framed as though the two goals were completely incompatible. The DENR, its Bureau of Forestry, and the Protected Areas and Wildlife Service are the government agencies responsible for the policing of the park. A Protected Areas Management Board, composed of local government officials, barangay representatives, and 'tribal representatives' is mandated to create policies for the park. Indigenous peoples affected by the park's regulations, namely the Kalanguya, Ibaloy, and Kankana-ey, have a strong sense of entitlement that comes with a discourse running along the lines of: 'We have been protecting these forests even before they came with the park boundaries. How can they tell us that we can no longer do what we want with our land?' Tawangan is also a site of disputed ancestral domain claims between multi-ethnic Kabayan, which is predominantly Ibaloy, and the municipality of Tinoc, which is predominantly Kalanguya. Thus, in Tawangan seemingly conflicting objectives and programs of the state come to a head. This places the Kalanguya of Tawangan in the center of a tug-of-war involving issues of territory, resources, politics, and identity.

Baun Bango lies on the western bank of the Katingan River, 138 kilometers from the coast of Central Kalimantan, as the crow flies. The majority of the people of Baun Bango identify themselves as "Ngaju Dayak", but they are also inter-married or co-residents

with people from Java, Banjarmasin, and other parts of Indonesian Borneo. Houses are situated in two rows parallel to the river, bisected by one main path that runs the length of the village. Beyond the immediate vicinity of the village is tropical peat swamp forest. It is in the vast network, of rivers, swamps, and forests surrounding the village that much of daily work takes place. In 2005 the village had 735 residents spread out in 174 households. Despite Baun Bango's small population it is the seat of government for Kecamatan Kamipang, which is comprised of 13 other villages. In turn, Kamipang is one of 11 sub-districts belonging to the young regency of Katingan, which was officially created in 2002 (U.U. No. 5, 2002). Owing in part to the relative newness of the Katingan regency and the ensuing flurry of government-initiated activity, people had high hopes for kemajuan, or progress and modernity, during my fieldwork there in 2003 and 2005.

Following close on the heels of the establishment of Kabupaten Katingan, the World Wildlife Fund initiated a campaign for the protection of the orangutan and the establishment of the Sebangau Watershed as a protected forest, a vast area contiguous with the districts of Katingan and Pulang Pisau. The Taman Nasional Sebangau was established in 2004 through the efforts of agents of environmentalism from international non-government organizations working in partnership with the government and local communities. The Ngaju of Baun Bango and other villages were initially suspicious of this internationally supported campaign in Kabupaten Katingan. Many feared that the campaigns of WWF would lead to a curtailment of their livelihood, much of which is derived from natural resource use. This doubt brought to the surface a tension in Baun Bango between membership and non-membership in a community, and how this is related to access to natural resources.

The sites for this study are not confined to the immediate spaces of territories, villages, or protected areas. Rather, any interaction that concerns or involves the environment, indigenous peoples, agents of conservation, and green positionalities (be it a meeting in a board room or government office in the city, or a confiscation of illegal logs on the river, or negotiations on a road-building project in the mountains) is treated as potentially significant and revealing of how different actors' interests are played out, and of how knowledge, power and cultural interpretations are negotiated, reproduced, and transformed. I look at the way understandings and misunderstandings between actors evolve in face-to-face interactions, as well as the maintenance of long-distance relationships. I pay attention to how actors negotiate and internalize meanings as well as affordances.

### **Research questions and environmental interfaces**

In the past the interface between the discourses of indigenous peoples rights and nature-conservation was treated as an unproblematic, essentialized relationship wherein indigenous peoples were considered to be stewards of nature. Many environmentalist projects, policies, and laws have been designed or written around this premise. However, we have begun to see the breakdown of this tenuous association, and so it becomes necessary to study more than just indigenous peoples' activities and their impact on biological diversity. We need to know: How do indigenous peoples living in proximity with forests, interact with laws and policies that are aimed at regulating their use of natural resources, their main source of livelihood? More to the point, how do indigenous peoples and the implementors and/or advocates of environmentalisms interact?

The dynamic of implementing nature-conservation and indigenous peoples' rights on-the-ground is embedded within issues of identity, of standards of living and survival, of

development and of the future. This dynamic is created by the interactions and negotiations of key actors, who may be agents of environmentalism, indigenous persons, or both, each with an array of positionalities.

The separation of nature and culture underwrites much of environmentalist action. It persists in environmentalist projects that aim to insulate nature from the productive practices of local, indigenous peoples perceived as traditional communities or, in less drastic measures, to modify the productive practices of local communities. The paradox of this environmentalist line of thought is that, by situating modern humans here and nature ‘out there’, it becomes an option not only for humans to intervene with nature (and the ‘traditional’ indigenous peoples in it), but also to deny any responsibility or connection with the environment. In the theoretical frame of this dissertation environments are considered to be forged through the activities of beings living and tampering with the flow of natural processes and events. Human actions, products and creations are part of the environment, and are released into it. This is quite different from the assumption – indeed, the belief – that human creations remain in the realm of society. Agents’ perception of indigenous peoples’ lives and traditions as being aligned with the objectives of nature-conservation and sustainable development are part of the creation of a nature-culture imaginaire, an aggregate of nature, culture and human productivity. In the nature-culture imaginaire, internationally funded nature-conservation projects intersect with local needs and visions of progress and the regional political economy. The nature-culture imaginaire is politically potent. It is now part of the arena of political debates at local, regional, national, and international levels that are concerned with environmentalism, sustainable development, indigenous peoples’ rights, and natural resource management.

A focus on shifting timescapes and landscapes is vital to an understanding of the Kalanguya and Ngaju Dayak as indigenous groups in transition. A landscape is a totality of actions and interactions. It is the unfolding relations of beings and the environment, in congealed form. On the other hand, a timescape embodies different actors’ practiced approaches to time. Landscapes and timescapes hold future affordances that are yet to be drawn into the actions of various entities. Affordances can be both physical objects and embodied meanings. They are properties of the environment that actors perceive in the context of practical action. Different species, beings, or actors may attend to different affordances in the environment, and draw these into their experiences and their lives. Although ethnographies today manage to show how indigenous peoples’ lives have changed over time, the challenge remains as to how to show that they continue to transform by their own impetus, and that they desire (and fear) particular changes in their lives. The timescape is a useful analytical tool for creating a space – or time – in social analysis for people’s unpredictable, yet anticipated futures.

It is important to note that the social and conceptual boundary that places agents of environmentalism on one side and indigenous peoples on the other, is not only artificial, but also permeable. This study presents an image of indigenous peoples and agents of environmentalism in flux, passing through one another’s lives and lifeworlds in the context of particular agendas. I show how the conceptual boundary between the noble green primitive and the civilizing mission of agents of environmentalism and development is criss-crossed on a daily basis by combined entities; actors who, at various times, embody the positionalities of both agents of environmentalism and indigenous persons.

Boundaries do not exist in and of themselves in the world. Boundaries are purposively made by people to separate themselves or to separate matter or certain objects from the rest of the environment. In the dynamic of environmental action, boundaries are ubiquitous. Boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are also drawn around who qualifies as indigenous, and who does not. They are sites of enforcement, regulation, resistance, and negotiation but people can reconceptualize boundaries based on the events that take place around them, and the affordances that actors are able to harness. Thus, social and physical boundaries not only serve to separate, but also to connect. One of the emergent results of the creation of all the boundaries discussed in this study, is a complex layering and intersecting of borders at the site of any environmental project.

I focus on environmental interfaces as they take place within the context of the environment that holds the bases of existence of indigenous peoples and other local communities, and that agents of environmentalism work to protect. Like boundaries, interfaces are ripe with negotiations. Even though interfaces bring together actors with some degree of common interest, they usually generate conflict because of unequal power relations or actors' contradictory agendas and objectives.

### **The Philippine case study**

Chapter Two is an ethnographic account of the Kalanguya of Tawangan, the formation and transformation of their settlement, and how their everyday lives articulate with the present inclusion of Tawangan in a national park and an ancestral domain, and its status as an agrarian reform community. In looking into everyday life in Tawangan, I focus on various sources of income and sustenance available to the Kalanguya – their livelihood repertoire, and their cultural practices. This includes their experience of, and expectations on forms of governance that have sought to control or transform their way of life. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, the National Integrated Protected Areas System, and the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program are three such laws that are being implemented in Tawangan.

Looking into the timescapes of the Tawangan Kalanguya illuminates the transitional quality of their lives. Rather than reifying them as an indigenous group living as ecological stewards frozen in time, the timescape perspective shows that they selectively maintain certain traditions as they change their way of life. They particularly favor those that enable them to attain desired changes, and that effectively mediate certain interactions with the environment and other people in it. The timescape perspective also reveals that the Kalanguya-environmental interactions can hardly be expected to remain ecologically-balanced or harmonious. The actions of the Kalanguya in their environment are aimed at survival and a sought-after quality of life, fuelled in part by government-driven programs for economic development. Their notion of just governance is a bottom-up conceptualization of the social contract. It is a notion that rests less on the foundations of state law, than on a strong sense of what really matters in everyday life, and a fierce desire for the recognition that the daily life of a stigmatized indigenous people matters. Interactions between the Tawangan Kalanguya and government representatives become couched in negotiations revolving around visible livelihood development and income-generation, which are further rationalized as owed to the Tawangan Kalanguya who have lived at the margins of the state since "time immemorial". Even though state laws and institutions with a presence in Tawangan already hold the kernel of effective, local-level environmental regulation and the potential for creating a healthy nature-culture imaginaire, the cooperation between government representatives and indigenous peoples over environmental matters remains conflict-ridden. Beneath the surface of economic



development, political involvement, and the question of livelihood and security of tenure, environmental threats and hazards continue to be generated at the very interface of indigenous peoples and agents of environmentalism, in this case represented primarily by indigenous persons in government.

These governing indigenous individuals, or professional indigenous persons, are agents in state processes of boundary-maintenance, inasmuch as they are engaged in renegotiating the very boundaries their government posts are designed to implement. They move between deploying power and being subjected to power; between being agents of the state implementing national laws and policies in the Cordillera, and being Cordilleran natives asserting the distinctiveness of being indigenous and creating spaces for a measure of indigenous self-determination. This agency that they possess becomes quite apparent in the spaces and times when ancestral domain claims are negotiated under Republic Act No. 8371 of 1997, also known as the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA). The implementing agency for the IPRA is the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). It is distinct from other national government agencies because it is composed entirely of indigenous commissioners and officers. NCIP officers are mandated to protect indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination even as they assert the national culture of the state at local levels and often in remote, or marginal areas of Philippine political geography and ideology. The assumption they operate on is that the IPRA would give people security by issuing land titles to groups over areas that were formerly classified as public land. However, it has also created insecurity and fissures in indigenous groups such as the Kalanguya, as is discussed in Chapter Three.

Indigenous people based in home-villages assert their knowledge of and rights to boundaries by invoking pathways used by ancestors, burial places of ancestors, inherited farmlands, water sources, forests, former sites of swidden fields, and hunting areas. On the other hand, indigenous government officials make statements and claims of a different nature. They speak of ancestral domains in terms of national law and in the general context of a nation-state. The Kalanguya intelligentsia and public government officials invoked Kalanguya sovereignty and unity as well as national sovereignty and the place of the Kalanguya in the nation. This rhetoric was put forward as a means to protest other claims that they thought to be engulfing Kalanguya territory, and to press for their envisioned Kalanguya domain.

However, indigenous identity in people's daily lives is not exactly concurrent with the IPRA's definition of indigenous peoples, which binds identity to land and homogenous communities. While the connection between land and identity is partly correct, the IPRA fails to deal with the fact that being indigenous is often brought to the fore as something with political meaning, and not just meanings of affinity, consanguinity, or placedness.

The creation of a class of educated and politically active indigenous elite has positive and negative aspects to it. On the one hand, as I have shown here, the visions of 21<sup>st</sup> century indigenous leaders tend to be divorced from local needs and realities. On the other hand, they are instrumental in the maintenance of local control over vital resources. Furthermore, they have protected the interests of indigenous people in the Cordillera far more effectively than in other parts of the Philippines, where indigenous peoples have virtually no voice in governance. This case of indigenous dominance in their own territories is unique in the Philippines. "Indigenous" as a general category forms part of today's pan-Cordilleran unified identity. However, indigenousness or ethnic identity as a specific category is itself a shifting social boundary among indigenous intelligentsia who

have made a choice to be known as such and to remain as such, and who constantly re-draw the line between insider or outsider, and included or excluded.

### **The Indonesian case study**

In Chapter Four I discuss two tensions at play in Ngaju riverscapes: 1) the tension between insiders and outsiders that is embedded in the control over access to natural resources, and 2) a conflicted and shifting positionality in the nature-culture imaginaire that is registered in the tensions between Ngaju claims to traditions of ecological harmony and their environmental practices that are deemed destructive by agents of conservation. These tensions are interconnected and push and pull against each other in everyday village life and in ongoing changes and transitions. They articulate with Ngaju work, tradition, identity, the environment, and change. For the Ngaju of Baun Bango the environment is a constant domain of action. They depend on the environment for the resources that enable them to survive and earn an income, and they move through the rivers and forests on a regular basis.

The creation of the Taman Nasional Sebangau was experienced by the Ngaju of Baun Bango as a new technology of government, although they quite often confused it for a WWF project due to the high visibility of the organization. The national park brought with it a bundle of new regulations, which, if policed and implemented fully would profoundly transform the dynamic of work and interaction in the environment. This would necessitate changes in the livelihood repertoire of Baun Bango, and the ways in which agents of environmentalism go about building green positionalities among the Ngaju Dayak.

This is the issue upon which the expectations of the Ngaju of Baun Bango come to a head with those of agents of conservation. The latter misconstrue the Ngaju pursuit of *kemajuan* (“modernity” or “advancement”) as evidence of their lack of concern for the environment, while the Ngaju misinterpret environmentalist objectives as placing constraints on their way of life and threatening their access to their bases of existence.

By intertwining ethnographic data with the articulations of Ngaju Dayak about their history and their way of life, it becomes clear that the declaration of oneness with nature is tenable in the context of Ngaju interaction with the Baun Bango environment. Ngaju connect with the environment through their work. In turn, their work or their livelihood repertoire is considered by them to be part of their identity. Their present forms of natural resource utilization and their interactions with the environment are a continuation of their traditional heritage and history, even though some aspects of their livelihood repertoire are relatively new.

The latter’s feeling of connectedness with nature comes not from standing outside of nature and seeing it as a bounded space. Their relationships with the environment are not fully enclosed by the frame of government regulations and questions of legality/illegality. For the Ngaju of Baun Bango the environment is imbued with local meanings and is an inextricable part of their array of daily activities, from bathing on the riverbanks to logging in the forest. It is the persistence of agents of environmentalism in separating Ngaju work – or work in general – from the environment that leads to the disjunctions and tensions discussed in Chapter Four. However, the destructive effects of illegal logging in particular cannot be justified by this argument, and there lies the crux of the Ngaju’s conflicted experience of the nature-culture imaginaire.

In Chapter Five I engage with various images of the future within the context of the large-scale conservation project that is the Taman Nasional Sebangau. Prior to the declaration of Sebangau as a protected area, it was classified as production forest. Logging companies held large concessions therein. The deforestation brought about by their operations was, and continues to be, compounded by widespread illegal logging, forest fires, and the opening up of oil palm plantations. With the establishment of the 568,700-hectare national park, agents of environmentalism envisioned a future shaped and sheltered by the ideals of nature-conservation and hoped that the destruction of the forest would come to an end.

While this chapter focuses on people's images of the future, it is not about futuristics, or skills and methods for accurately predicting the future. What is more urgently needed in anthropology is to understand how views of the future – including utopian world views – function in present day life, how they influence and direct human behaviour one way or another. The analytical key here is not forecasting, but rather, backcasting: examining the effects of an image of the future on present day behaviour. From this vantage point, the future does not simply come about, but is created.

Different actors speak of very different images of how the Taman Nasional Sebangau in particular, and the forests and rivers in general, will change over time and how they are to deal with these changes. The Ngaju of Baun Bango, agents of environmentalism and scientists, government officials and numerous others are engaged in imagining and determining the future of the area and the preservation or depletion of its biodiversity.

Asking local people about their envisioned futures led into discussions with them about how this future might look, and more importantly, who could prevent it or realize it. Usually, that future was spoken of as being shaped by others, like the government and conservation organizations like WWF. Or, in most cases, by “those who are cutting trees”, “those who are making canals,” “those who are using batteries for their electro-fishing,” or “the community”. In the envisioned futures, people didn't speak of themselves as personally engaged in the creation of the futures of the forest and river. The future of the village was also spoken of as being shaped by an unclear other. However, the futures of their own families and their attainment of *kemajuan* depended on the work that they did in the present.

In the ‘real world’ of natural resource management, these various time perspectives, including the ‘native visions’ of temporal contexts, and the visions of environmental futures, collide and coalesce in a dynamic but chaotic manner. Placed within the context of a concrete nature conservation project such as the Sebangau Watershed Area, it is clear that economists, nature conservationists, representatives of local people, donor agencies and bureaucracies operate from highly divergent timescapes. Projects are future oriented and are intended to incorporate future interests. Divergent timescapes impact on projects during the implementation phase and in the flow of everyday life, though often in hidden ways. The outcome of this process of interaction often gives rise to a variety of interpretations. These interpretations are part and parcel of present day realities, which are a combination of the planned and unintended outcomes of past actions as well as the result of activities intended to bring about another kind of reality.

### **Comparisons between the case studies**

Chapter Six focuses on interactions where environmentalists aim to enlist indigenous peoples and other local people to the green cause, on the premise that indigenous cultures

engender ecological harmony or that locals possess an intimate knowledge of the environment, and that their cooperation is necessary for the success of an environmentalist project. It is interesting to note that even those projects within the scope of this study that aim to be highly participative and sensitive to indigenous cultures and indigenous peoples' rights eventually meet with a dissonance between spoken or written agreements, and the actions of people. Why so?

In both case studies, agents of environmentalism were observed to be working towards modifications of the actions and attitudes of the people that they perceived to be stakeholders in bounded protected areas. It is commonly assumed within conservation circles that the creation of environmental venues – scheduled encounters that gather particular people together at a time and place decided upon by at least one of the key actors concerned – help to further environmentalist objectives, or to negotiate them.

Through these two case studies in Southeast Asia, I have shown that these participative venues, with their intermittent schedules and clear-cut beginnings and endings, set the stage for environmentalist performances and cultivate an etiquette of environmentalism. The etiquette of environmentalism supports the formation and maintenance of cordial relationships between the permanent hosts of environmentalist projects (local communities) and the guests that bring them (agents of environmentalism). However, the etiquette also serves to maintain a distance between these two actors; hampering the deepening of relationships and preventing meaningful agreements on complicated, gritty, and even dangerous issues. Thus, it is a grave error for environmentalist agents to conflate local participation with consent, and to expect this to translate into the kinds of ecologically-sound actions they hope to encourage.

Chapter Seven focuses on the flow of resource management styles and indigenous peoples' rights discourses – ideas on the move – between the Philippines and Indonesia. The ongoing implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act in the Philippines serves as a resource for Indonesians advocating indigenous empowerment in their own country. At the heart of this advocacy is the issue of access to and control over natural resources within indigenous territories. It is often assumed, or even argued, that involving indigenous peoples in the control of the environment will assure nature-conservation within the bounded space of ancestral domains. The foundation of international policies on this assumption has made it advantageous to be indigenous, even as the label may be regarded with stigma in other social spheres.

As part of the transboundary flow of ideas and discourses on indigenous peoples' rights between the Philippines and Indonesia, this chapter pinpoints national-level and local-level watch points for the possible creation of an indigenous peoples' rights law in Indonesia. On the national-level, as many Indonesian activists have already recognized, a crucial watch point would be whether indigenous peoples truly want and need such a law, and whether they are fully aware of its possible repercussions. At the local level, there are at least three watch points for Indonesia based on the outcomes of the implementation of the IPRA in a Cordilleran village in the Philippines. First there is the question of who will benefit from the institutionalizing, legitimizing practices around indigenous leaders and indigenous groups, and who may be excluded in the process. Secondly, a proliferation of overlapping boundaries is to be expected. Finally, in intertwining indigenous peoples' rights with nature-conservation, there will always be the gamble that environmental concerns will become trivial in the face of livelihood struggles.

## Conclusions

The recognition of rights to self-determination and control over ancestral domains does not by itself justify the imposition of limits to development and the costs of conservation on indigenous communities. Scholars and advocates alike have expressed concern that the alignment of indigenous peoples' rights with environmental objectives may cause the former to be swallowed up by or subordinated to conservation agendas. We are already witnessing the disadvantages and conflict that each discourse has brought to the other in this uneasy alliance.

Could Baun Bango and the Taman Nasional Sebangau, and Tawangan and the Mt. Pulag National Park be considered examples of the nature-culture *imaginaire*? In both spaces local needs and visions intersected with internationally-funded conservation missions. Indigenous customs were considered to be aligned with, and integral to, conservation. Thus agents of environmentalism took care to respect the rights of indigenous communities and involve them in the management of the protected areas. However, the nature-culture *imaginaire* is a vision of an ideal mode of existence inside a defined, ideal space. While this conceptual aggregate is a space in which justice, culture, and nature are intertwined, the picture that has emerged from this study is not one of harmonious co-existence between indigenous peoples, agents of environmentalism, and their immediate environments. In this study I have been concerned with the departures from the ideal, and the interfaces in which social schemes and green dreams have stood in contradiction with each other.

In this study, the nature-culture *imaginaire* falls apart on four points. First and most basic of these is the imagined existence of noble green savages. Second, the creation of protected areas as well as the recognition of indigenous rights brought about a proliferation of boundaries. Third, the boundedness in time of environmental venues or interactions was such that they made up only a fraction of the life of the indigenous communities and their environments. This brings me to the fourth point upon which the nature-culture *imaginaire* falls apart: the imbalance of power in shaping the future and regulating the present upon which it is contingent. Agents of environmentalism appear to draw a division between indigenous people who are thought to have, and required to maintain, sustainable life ways, and the rest of the world that may freely continue along consumerist and industrialist paths to the future. This split is deeply embedded in the dynamic of nature-conservation. Given these four points that emerged in this multi-sited ethnography, it is evident that the bundling together of indigenous peoples' rights and nature-conservation goals is experienced by key actors on the ground as an impediment to both environmentalist causes and indigenous aspirations.

This study has dissolved the vision of a harmonious intertwining of the discourses of environmentalism and indigenous peoples rights. On the one hand, given the unpredictability and the global spread of today's environmental hazards, ecological responsibility and the cultivation of green positionalities should be imperative for all societies, regardless of indigenousness or the lack thereof. However, if indigenous peoples rights continue to be claimed and/or recognized on the basis of sustainable indigenous life-ways, then it is time that the actors involved explore how to create new future possibilities that can bring about the fruition of both green visions and indigenous aspirations.



## SAMENVATTING

### Diepgewortelde hoop en groene verstrengeling

Deze studie is geworteld in plaatsen waar de dagelijkse strijd om een bestaan op te bouwen in de omgeving zowel overlapt als strijdig is met pogingen om de natuur te beschermen door het afbakenen van beschermde gebieden. In deze dissertatie verken ik de verwevenheid van de oorzaken van het milieugericht denken met de rechten van inheemse volken. De hoofdstukken en gepubliceerde artikelen die hier gebundeld zijn hebben een driedelig doel. Ze geven ten eerste een vergelijkende etnografie van meerdere plaatsen van de dynamiek van milieuactie. Ten tweede geven ze een beschrijving en analyse van de gemeenschappelijke implementatie van natuurbeschermingsprojecten die samen werken met inheemse volken. Ten derde geven ze een beschrijving en analyse van de praktische implicaties op lokaal niveau van rechten van inheemse volken als een opkomende vorm van sociale en milieugerelateerde rechtvaardigheid die identiteit en traditie als basis neemt. Om dit op een empirische basis te doen, maak ik gebruik van case studies en inzichten die zijn opgebouwd aan de hand van veldwerk onder de Kalanguya van Tawangan, in de provincie Benguet in de Cordillera Administrative Region in de Filippijnen, en de Ngaju Dayak van Baun Bango, in het district Katingan, provincie Centraal Kamilantan, in Indonesisch Borneo.

#### De case studies

Tawangan is een van de dertien dorpen (barangay) binnen de gemeente van Kabayan, in de provincie Benguet. De gemeente van Kabayan ligt op de heuvels van Mount Pulag National Park in de provincie Benguet. Tawangan ligt op een afstand van 85 kilometer noordoost van de stad Baguio en 335 kilometer ten noorden van Manila, de hoofdstad van de Filippijnen. Kabayan is omringd door vijf andere gemeenten, waarvan er twee behoren tot buurprovincies. De eerste is de gemeente Tinoc, in de provincie Ifugao aan de noordoost zijde van Kabayan, en de tweede is de gemeente van Kayapa, in de provincie Nueva Vizcaya aan de zuidoost zijde van Kabayan. De andere drie gemeenten behoren tot de provincie Benguet. In 2004 leefden er 736 Kalanguyas in Tawangan.

De barangay bestaat uit verschillende sitio, of clusters van huishoudens, op de oostelijke uitlopers van Mount Pulag. De hele nederzetting valt binnen de grenzen van het Mount Pulag National Park. Dit heeft geleid tot enkele onopgeloste problemen waarin ontwikkelingsprojecten en natuurbeschermingsactiviteiten waren geformuleerd maar waar de twee doelen totaal onverenigbaar waren. De DENR (Ministerie voor Milieu en Natuurlijke Hulpbronnen), via het Bureau voor Bosbouw en de Dienst voor Beschermde Gebieden en Natuur, zijn de overheidsinstanties die verantwoordelijk zijn voor de controle van het park. Een raad voor het beheer van het beschermde gebied, samengesteld uit ambtenaren van de lokale overheid, barangay-vertegenwoordigers en 'tribale vertegenwoordigers' is gemandateerd om het beleid voor het park te formuleren. De inheemse volken die te maken hebben van de regels van het park, namelijk de Kalanguya, Ibaloy, en Kankana-ey, hebben een sterk ontwikkeld gevoel van verstrengeling dat samen valt met een redenering die ongeveer langs deze lijn loopt: "We hebben deze bossen al beschermd voordat ze binnen de parkgrenzen vielen. Hoe kunnen ze ons nu vertellen dat wij niet langer met ons land kunnen doen wat wij willen?" Tawangan is ook een plaats met betwiste claims van voorouderlijke grond tussen de multi-etnische Kabayan, die overwegend Ibaloy zijn, en de gemeente Tinoc met overwegend Kalanguya. Zodoende openbaren zich in Tawangan conflicterende doelen en programma's van de staat. Dit

plaatst de Kalanguya van Tawangan in het centrum van het strijdtoneel rond zaken als territorium, hupbronnen, politiek en identiteit.

Baun Bango ligt op de westelijke oever van Katingan River, en hemelsbreed 138 kilometer van de kust van Centraal Kalimantan. De meerderheid van de mensen van Baun Bango identificeren zichzelf als 'Ngaju Dayak', maar zij zijn ook getrouwd met of wonen samen met mensen uit Java, Banjarmasin en andere plaatsen van Indonesisch Borneo. De huizen staan in twee rijen parallel aan de rivier, gescheiden door een pad dat over de hele lengte van het dorp loopt. Een tropisch veenmoerasbos ligt vlak naast het dorp. In dit uitgestrekte netwerk van rivieren, moerassen, en bossen om het dorp heen vindt veel van het dagelijkse werk plaats. In 2005 had het dorp 735 mensen verspreid over 174 huishoudens. Ondanks Baun Bango's kleine bevolking was het centrum van het sub-district Kamipang, dat verder nog bestaat uit 13 andere dorpen. Kamipang is op zijn beurt weer een van de 11 sub-districten van het nieuwe district Katingan, dat officieel in 2002 tot stand kwam. Doordat het district nog nieuw is en de opwindende door de overheid in gang gezette activiteiten, hadden de mensen hoge verwachtingen van de vooruitgang en de modernisering gedurende mijn veldwerk in 2003 en 2005.

Snel na de vestiging van het district Katingan, startte het Wereld Natuur Fonds met een campagne voor de bescherming van de orang utan en de vestiging van het Sebangau gebied als een beschermd bos. Dit is een groot gebied dat binnen de grenzen van de districten Katingan en Pulang Pisau valt. Het Nationale Park Sebangau was uitgeroepen in 2004 door de inspanningen van de medewerkers van de internationale natuurbeschermingsorganisaties in samenwerking met de overheid en lokale gemeenschappen. De Ngaju van Baun Bango en andere dorpen waren aanvankelijk achterdochtig ten opzichte van deze internationaal gesteunde campagne in het district Katingan. Velen vreesden dat de campagnes van het Wereld Natuur Fonds zouden leiden tot een beperking van hun bestaansmogelijkheden, waarvan veel afkomstig is uit de natuurlijke omgeving. Deze twijfel bracht een spanning aan het licht in Baun Bango tussen hen die deel waren van de gemeenschap en hen die dat niet waren en hoe dit verschil gekoppeld was aan de toegang tot natuurlijke hulpbronnen.

De locaties voor deze studie zijn niet beperkt tot de onmiddellijke omgeving van de territoria, dorpen of beschermde gebieden. Iedere interactie die betrekking heeft op de omgeving, inheemse volken, natuurbeschermers, en 'groene posities' (hetzij in een bijeenkomst in een overheidskantoor in de stad, of de confiscatie van illegale stammen op de rivier, of onderhandelingen over een project omtrent een nieuw aan te leggen weg in de bergen) wordt behandeld als potentieel significant en kan onthullen hoe de belangen van verschillende actoren worden uitgespeeld, en hoe kennis, macht en culturele interpretaties worden besproken, gereproduceerd en getransformeerd. Ik kijk naar hoe begrip en misverstanden tussen actoren zich ontwikkelen in rechtstreekse interacties, evenals het handhaven van relaties op grotere afstand. Ik besteed aandacht aan de manier waarop actoren onderhandelen en betekenissen internaliseren.

### **Onderzoeksvragen en raakvlakken omtrent het milieu**

In het verleden werd het raakvlak tussen de discussie over rechten van inheemse volken en natuurbescherming behandeld als een onproblematische, wezenlijke relatie waarbij inheemse volken werden beschouwd als de rentmeesters van de natuur. Veel milieubeleid, projecten en wetten werden ontworpen op grond van deze aanname. Echter, we hebben het verval van deze gedachte gezien en dus is het noodzakelijk geworden om



meer dan alleen maar de activiteiten van inheemse volken te bestuderen en hun impact op de biologische diversiteit. We moeten weten hoe inheemse volken die in de nabijheid van bossen wonen, omgaan met wetten en beleidsmaatregelen die gericht zijn op het reguleren van hun gebruik van de natuurlijke hulpbronnen, hun belangrijkste bron van bestaan? Of nog preciezer: hoe gaan inheemse volken en uitvoerders en/of voorstanders van natuurbescherming met elkaar om?

De dynamiek van het implementeren van natuurbescherming en lokale toepassing van rechten van inheemse volken is doortrokken van kwesties als identiteit, van levensstandaard en overleving, van ontwikkeling en van de toekomst. Deze dynamiek wordt geschapen door de interacties en onderhandelingen van sleutelactoren, die natuurbeschermers kunnen zijn, of inheemse personen, of beide, ieder met een reeks van karakteristieken.

De scheiding van natuur en cultuur ondersteunt veel van de actie op het gebied van natuurbescherming. Het blijft een basis in milieuprojecten dat natuur tracht te isoleren van de productieve praktijken van lokale, inheemse volken die als traditionele gemeenschappen worden gezien of, in minder drastische manier de productieve praktijken van lokale gemeenschappen probeert te veranderen. De paradox van deze gedachtlijn is dat door het situeren van moderne mensen hier en natuur daar, het een mogelijkheid wordt niet alleen voor mensen om te interveniëren in de natuur (en de 'traditionele' inheemse volken daarbinnen), maar ook om enige verantwoordelijkheid of verbinding met de natuur te ontkennen. In het theoretische raamwerk van deze dissertatie ga ik er van uit dat het milieu wordt gevormd door de activiteiten van de wezens die leven en omgaan met de stroom van natuurlijke processen en gebeurtenissen. Menselijke acties, producten en scheppingen zijn deel van de omgeving, en zij worden erin geplaatst. Dit is verschillend van de aanname – inderdaad het geloof – dat menselijke scheppingen binnen de sfeer van de samenleving blijven. De perceptie van actoren over het leven en de tradities van inheemse volken als verbonden met de doeleinden van een natuurbescherming en duurzame ontwikkeling zijn deel van de schepping van de natuur-cultuur verbeelding, een samenvoeging van natuur, cultuur en menselijke productiviteit. In de natuur-cultuur verbeelding, kruisen internationaal gefinancierde natuurbeschermingsprojecten met lokale behoeften en visies op vooruitgang en regionale politieke economie. De natuur-cultuur verbeelding is politiek effectief. Het is nu deel van de arena van politieke debatten op de lokale, regionale, nationale en internationale niveaus die zich bezig houden met natuurbescherming, duurzame ontwikkeling, rechten van inheemse volken en beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen.

Het is belangrijk op te merken dat de sociale en conceptuele grens die actoren van natuurbescherming aan de ene kant plaatsen en inheemse volken aan de andere kant, niet alleen kunstmatig is maak ook niet houdbaar. Deze studie presenteert een beeld van inheemse volken en natuurbeschermers in verandering, ze vormen een deel van elkaars leven binnen de context van specifieke agenda's. Ik toon aan hoe de conceptuele grens tussen de 'edele groene en primitieve mens' en de beschavende missie van natuurbeschermers en ontwikkelaars dagelijks wordt overgestoken door actoren die, op verschillende momenten de posities van inheemse personen en van natuurbeschermers of ontwikkelaars in zich verenigen.

Grenzen bestaan niet in zichzelf in de wereld. Grenzen worden doelbewust gemaakt door mensen om zichzelf te scheiden of zaken of objecten te scheiden van de rest van de omgeving. In de dynamiek van milieuactie zijn grenzen overal. Grenzen van insluiting en

uitsluiting worden getrokken rond mensen die als inheems kwalificeren, en zij die dat niet doen. Ze zijn plaatsen van versterking, regulering, verzet en onderhandeling maar mensen kunnen grenzen opnieuw conceptualiseren op basis van de gebeurtenissen die er rondom heen plaatsvinden en de mogelijkheden die actoren kunnen gebruiken. Zodoende dienen sociale en fysieke grenzen niet alleen om te scheiden maar ook om te verbinden. Een van de resultaten van het scheppen van alle grenzen die in deze studie besproken worden is een complexe gelaagdheid en het doorkruisen van grenzen op de plaats van ieder milieuproject.

Ik focus op de raakvlakken zoals die aanwezig zijn binnen de context van het milieu die de basis van het bestaan vormt van de inheemse volken en andere lokale gemeenschappen, en de actoren van natuurbescherming die werken om het milieu te beschermen. Net als grenzen zijn deze raakvlakken vol van onderhandelingen. Hoewel deze raakvlakken actoren met een zekere mate van gemeenschappelijk belang samen brengt, genereren ze gewoonlijk conflicten vanwege ongelijke machtsrelaties en omdat de agenda's en doeleinden van actoren vol tegenstellingen zitten.

### **De Filippijnse case study**

Hoofdstuk twee is een etnografisch verslag van de Kalanguya van Tawangan, de structuur en de transformatie van hun nederzetting, en hoe hun dagelijkse levens het feit benadrukken dat Tawangan in een nationaal park ligt, een voorouderlijk gebied omvat en de status heeft als een agrarische hervormingsgemeenschap. Met het oog gericht op het dagelijkse leven in Tawangan, focus ik op verschillende bronnen van inkomen en bestaan die de Kalanguya ter beschikking staan, hun totaal aan mogelijkheden en hun culturele praktijken. Dit sluit ook hun ervaringen en verwachtingen in van de manieren waarop ze getracht hebben hun manier van leven te beheersen en te veranderen. De Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, The National Integrated Protected Areas System, en de Comprehensive Reform Program zijn drie van de wetten die worden uitgevoerd in Tawangan.

De blik of de timescape van de Tawangan Kalanguya verheldert de veranderende kwaliteit van hun levens. In plaats van hen te verheffen als een inheemse groep die als ecologische rentmeesters oude tradities voortzetten, toont het timescape-perspectief dat zij op selectieve wijze bepaalde tradities handhaven terwijl zij ook hun leven veranderen. In het bijzonder hangen ze aan die tradities die hen in staat stellen bepaalde gewenste veranderingen te bereiken, en die effectief ingezet kunnen worden in interactie met de omgeving en met andere mensen. Het timescape-perspectief laat ook zien dat van de Kalanguya-milieu interacties nauwelijks verwacht kan worden dat ze ecologisch in evenwicht of harmonieus blijven. De acties van de Kalanguya in hun omgeving zijn gericht op overleven en doelgerichte levenskwaliteit, die deels gevoed wordt door programma's voor economische ontwikkeling van de overheid. Hun opvatting van rechtvaardig bestuur is een bottom-up versie van het sociale contract. Het is een opvatting die minder gebaseerd is op de grondslag van staatsrecht dan op een sterk gevoel van wat in het leven van alledag belangrijk is, en een krachtig verlangen naar de erkenning dat het dagelijkse leven van gestigmatiseerde inheemse mensen er werkelijk toe doet. Interacties tussen de Tawangan Kalanguya en overheidsvertegenwoordigers komen tot uitdrukking in onderhandelingen over de ontwikkeling van bestaansmogelijkheden en het genereren van inkomen, die verder worden gerationaliseerd door de Tawangan Kalanguya die hebben geleefd aan de randen van de staat sinds onheugelijke tijden. Hoewel staatswetten en instituties die in Tawangan aanwezig zijn al de kern van effectief, lokale milieuregeling controleren en het potentieel voor het scheppen van een natuur-cultuur

verbeelding, is de samenwerking tussen overheidsvertegenwoordigers en inheemse volken met betrekking tot milieuzaken belast met conflicten. Achter de economische ontwikkeling, politieke betrokkenheid en de vraag van bestaansmogelijkheden en rechtszekerheid, blijven milieubedreigingen en rampen een belangrijke rol spelen in het raakvlak tussen de inheemse volken en de actoren van de milieubeweging, die in dit geval primair vertegenwoordigd worden door inheemse personen in de regering.

Deze besturende inheemse individuen, of professionele inheemse personen, zijn spelers in staatsprocessen van grenshandhaving, net zozeer als dat zij betrokken zijn in het overleg over de grenzen die zij als overheidsdienaren moeten implementeren. Zij bewegen zich tussen de spanning van het uitoefenen van macht en het aan macht onderworpen zijn; tussen overheidsdienaren zijn die de nationale wetten implementeren in de Cordillera en zelf inheemse mensen uit Cordillera zijn die het onderscheid tussen inheems zijn en het scheppen van ruimte voor een zekere mate van inheemse zelfbeschikking. De taak die zij hebben komt duidelijk naar voren tijdens de onderhandelingen onder de Republic Act No. 8371 van 1997, die ook bekend staat als de Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA). De instantie die belast is met de uitvoering van de IPRA is de National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). Deze commissie verschilt van andere nationale overheidsinstanties omdat het helemaal is samengesteld uit inheemse bestuurders en ambtenaren. NCIP ambtenaren zijn gemandateerd om de rechten van de inheemse volken op zelfbeschikking te beschermen op het lokale niveau en dikwijls in afgelegen of marginale gebieden van de Filippijnse politieke geografie en ideologie. De veronderstelling op grond waarvan zij handelen is dat de IPRA mensen bescherming zou geven door uitgifte van recht op grond voor de gebieden die vroeger waren geclassificeerd als publieke gronden. Echter de uitvoering van de wet heeft ook onzekerheid en scheuren veroorzaakt in inheemse groepen zoals onder de Kalanguya die beschreven in Hoofdstuk drie.

Inheemse mensen in hun thuisdorpen bevestigen hun kennis van en rechten op grenzen door verwijzing naar het gebruik van het gebied door hun voorouders, de begraafplaatsen van de voorouders, overerfde boerderijen, waterbronnen, bossen, voormalige velden van zwerfvlambouw en jachtgebieden. Aan de andere kant geven inheemse overheidsdienaren verklaringen af en maken zij claims van een andere aard. Zij spreken over het gebied van hun voorouders in termen van nationale wetten en in de algemene context van een natie-staat. De intelligentsia van de Kalanguya en de publieke overheidsdienaren spreken zowel over Kalanguya soevereiniteit en eenheid als over nationale soevereiniteit en de plaats van de Kalanguya in de natie. Deze retoriek werd naar voren gebracht als een middel om te protesteren tegen andere claims die op het territorium van de Kalanguya gelegd zouden kunnen worden en om hun beoogde Kalanguya domein te benadrukken.

Echter, inheemse identiteit in het dagelijkse bestaan van mensen is niet helemaal in overeenstemming met de IPRA definitie van inheemse volken, die identiteit verbindt met land en homogene gemeenschappen. Terwijl de verbinding tussen land en identiteit gedeeltelijk correct is, slaagt de NCIP er via de IPRA niet in om een antwoord te geven op de verbinding die vaak gelegd wordt tussen de inheemse status en de politieke betekenis die eraan gehecht wordt. Die gaat uit boven de betekenis van affiniteit, bloedverwantschap en lokaliteit.

Het ontstaan van een eliteklasse van opgeleide en politiek actieve inheemse mensen heeft positieve en negatieve aspecten. Aan de ene kant, zoals ik hier heb aangetoond, tenderen de visies van 21<sup>e</sup> eeuwse inheemse leiders steeds verder af te komen staan van lokale

behoefte en realiteiten. Aan de andere kant zijn ze instrumenteel in het handhaven van lokale controle over vitale hulpbronnen. Daarnaast hebben ze de belangen van inheemse mensen in de Cordillera veel effectiever beschermd dan in andere delen van de Filippijnen, waar inheemse volken praktisch gezien geen stem hadden binnen de overheid. Deze case van inheemse dominantie binnen hun eigen territoria is uniek binnen de Filippijnen. 'Inheems zijn' als algemene categorie maakt deel uit van de pan-Cordillera verenigde identiteit van dit moment. Echter het inheems zijn of de etnische identiteit van een speciale categorie is zelf een schuivende sociale grens binnen de inheemse intelligentsia die een keuze hebben om zo bekend te willen staan en zo te blijven, of die lijn tussen insider en outsider, en ingesloten en uitgesloten opnieuw te trekken.

### **De Indonesische case study**

In hoofdstuk vier bespreek ik twee spanningen die heersen in het rivierenlandschap van de Ngaju: 1. de spanning tussen de insiders en outsiders die er is over de controle en toegang tot de natuurlijke hulpbronnen; en 2. een conflictueuze en veranderende positie in de tegenstelling tussen natuur en cultuur die wordt gereflecteerd in de spanningen tussen de Ngaju claims op tradities van ecologische harmonie en hun omgang met de omgeving die door de natuurbeschermers als destructief wordt gezien. Deze spanningen zijn met elkaar verbonden in het alledaagse leven en de continue veranderingen en transitie. Zij zijn verbonden van het werk van Ngaju, hun tradities, hun identiteit, hun omgeving en de veranderingen. Voor de Ngaju van Baun Bango is de natuur of de omgeving een permanent domein van actie. Zij zijn afhankelijk van de omgeving voor de hulpbronnen die hen in staat stellen te overleven en een inkomen te verdienen, en zij bewegen zich regelmatig over de rivieren en door de bossen.

Het uitroepen van het Nationale Park Sebangau werd ervaren door de Ngaju van Baun Bango als een nieuwe ingreep van de overheid, hoewel zij het park zeer regelmatig verwarren met een WWF project vanwege de grote mate van zichtbaarheid van de organisatie. Het nationale park bracht een heel stel nieuwe regels met zich mee, die, indien ze volledig uitgevoerd en gecontroleerd zouden worden, de dynamiek en interactie met de omgeving ingrijpend hadden veranderd. Dit zou veranderingen in de bestaansmogelijkheden van Baun Bango noodzakelijk hebben gemaakt.

Dit is een punt waarop de verwachtingen van de Ngaju van Baun Bango strijdig zijn met die van de natuurbeschermers. De laatste beschouwen het streven van de Ngaju naar vooruitgang als bewijs van hun gebrek aan zorg voor het milieu, terwijl de Ngaju Dayak de doeleinden van de natuurbeschermers interpreteren als het opleggen van beperkingen voor hun manier van leven en het bedreigen van de toegang tot hun bestaansbasis.

Door het met elkaar in verband brengen van etnografische gegevens met de articulatie van de Ngaju Dayak van hun geschiedenis en levenswijze, wordt het duidelijk dat de verklaring van eenheid met de natuur te begrijpen is binnen de context van de Ngaju interactie met het milieu van Baun Bango. Ngaju zijn met hun omgeving verbonden via hun werk terwijl hun werk of hun bestaansmogelijkheden door hen beschouwd worden als deel van hun identiteit. Hun huidige vorm van gebruik van natuurlijke hulpbronnen en hun interacties met de omgeving zijn een continuering van hun traditionele erfenis en geschiedenis, hoewel sommige aspecten van hun bestaanswijzen relatief nieuw zijn.

Hun relaties met de omgeving worden niet volledig omvat door het raamwerk van overheidsreguleringen en kwesties van legaliteit of illegaliteit. Voor de de Ngaju van Baun Bango is de natuur of omgeving vol lokale betekenissen en is het een onvervreemdbaar deel van het scala aan dagelijkse activiteiten, van het baden op de rivieroever tot aan het kappen in het bos. Het is het benadrukt door de natuurbeschermers van het scheiden van Ngaju werk – of werk in het algemeen – van de omgeving dat leidt tot de conflicten en spanningen zoals besproken in hoofdstuk vier. Echter de destructieve effecten van illegale houtkap in het bijzonder kan niet worden gerechtvaardigd door dit argument, en daar ligt de kern van het conflict dat de Ngaju ervaren in de veronderstelde verbinding van natuur en cultuur.

In hoofdstuk vijf worden verschillende beelden van de toekomst besproken binnen de context van het grootschalige natuurbeschermingsproject van het Nationale Park Sebangau. Voordat Sebangau tot beschermd gebied werd verklaard, was het geclassificeerd als een productiebos. Grote houtkapmaatschappijen hadden er concessies. De ontbossing die door hun activiteiten werd veroorzaakt, werd nog verergerd door de wijdverspreide illegale houtkap, bosbranden, en het openleggen van het gebied voor de oliepalmplantages. Met de vestiging van het 568.700 hectare grote nationale park, voorzagen de activisten een toekomst die werd gevormd en beschermd door de idealen van de natuurbescherming en zij hoopten dat de vernietiging van het bos tot een einde zou komen.

Terwijl dit hoofdstuk zich primair richt op de beelden van mensen over de toekomst, gaat het niet over toekomstkunde of methoden om nauwkeurig de toekomst te voorspellen. Waar in de antropologie meer behoefte aan bestaat, is om te begrijpen hoe beelden van de toekomst – inclusief utopische wereldbeelden – momenteel functioneren, en hoe zij op de een of andere manier menselijk gedrag beïnvloeden en er richting aan geven. De analytische sleutel is hier niet het voorspellen maar eerder terug redeneren: het onderzoeken van effecten van beelden van de toekomst op het dagelijkse gedrag. Vanuit dit perspectief komt de toekomst niet over mensen heen, maar wordt die gecreëerd.

Verschillende actoren spreken over zeer verschillende beelden over hoe het Nationale park Sebangau in het bijzonder en de bossen en rivieren in het algemeen, zullen veranderen over de tijd en hoe zij met die veranderingen zullen omgaan. De Ngaju van Baun Bango, de natuurbeschermers en wetenschappers, overheidsdienaren en talloze anderen zijn betrokken in het verbeelden en bepalen van de toekomst van het gebied en de bescherming of uitputting van zijn biodiversiteit.

Het vragen aan lokale mensen naar hun verwachte toekomst leidde tot discussies met hen over hoe deze toekomst eruit zou kunnen zien, en belangrijker nog, wie het kon voorkomen dan wel realiseren. Gewoonlijk werd over die toekomst gesproken alsof die door anderen werd gevormd, zoals de overheid en natuurbeschermingsorganisaties zoals WWF. Of, in de meeste gevallen door ‘zij die de bomen kappen’, ‘zij die de kanalen graven’, ‘zij die de accu’s gebruiken bij het vissen met elektriciteit’, of ‘de gemeenschap’. In de toekomst dichten de mensen zichzelf niet een actieve rol toe als het gaat om de toekomst van het bos en de rivier. Ook over de toekomst van het dorp werd gesproken in termen van een onduidelijke ‘ander’. Echter de toekomst van hun eigen families en het bereiken van vooruitgang hing voor hen af van het werk dat zij in het heden verrichtten.

In de 'echte wereld' van het beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen vallen deze verschillende tijdsperspectieven inclusief de 'lokale visies' van tijdscontexten, en de visies van de toekomst van het milieu, samen op een dynamische maar chaotische manier. Geplaatst in de context van een concreet natuurbeschermingsproject zoals het stroomgebied van de Sebangau Rivier, is het duidelijk dat economen, natuurbeschermers, vertegenwoordigers van de lokale bevolking, donoren en bureaucratieën vanuit sterk verschillende tijdsperspectieven opereren. Projecten zijn gericht op de toekomst en bedoeld om toekomstige belangen te incorporeren. Verschillende tijdsperspectieven hebben een impact op projecten gedurende de implementatiefase en in de gang van zaken in het dagelijkse leven, hoewel vaak op een verborgen manier. De uitkomst van dit interactieproces is dikwijls aanleiding tot verschillende interpretaties. Deze interpretaties zijn deel van de huidige werkelijkheid, die op zichzelf een combinatie is van geplande en onbedoelde uitkomsten van acties in het verleden evenals het resultaat van activiteiten die bedoeld zijn om een ander werkelijkheid te creëren.

### **Vergelijking tussen de case studies**

Hoofdstuk zes richt zich op interacties tussen milieubeschermers in hun pogingen om inheemse volken and andere lokale mensen in te schakelen voor de 'groene zaak', uitgaande van de gedachte dat inheemse culturen streven naar een ecologische harmonie of dat lokale mensen over een grote kennis beschikken, en dat hun medewerking noodzakelijk is voor het succes van een milieuproject. Het is interessant op te merken dat zelfs de projecten binnen de scope van deze studie die trachten zeer participatief te zijn en positief staan tegenover de rechten van inheemse volken, uiteindelijk aan lopen tegen een verschil tussen de afgesproken en opgeschreven overeenkomsten, en de acties van de mensen. Waarom is dit zo?

In beide case studies, werkten natuurbeschermers aan het veranderen van het gedrag en de houding van de mensen waarvan zij dachten dat het belanghebbenden waren in de beschermde gebieden. Het wordt in het algemeen verondersteld binnen kringen van natuurbeschermers dat het scheppen een goede context, inclusief geplande ontmoetingen die mensen op een plaats en tijd samenbrengen zoals bedacht door één van de betrokken sleutelactoren, helpt bij het bereiken van milieudoelstellingen, of er nader over te onderhandelen.

Met deze twee case studies in Zuidoost Azië, heb ik aangetoond dat deze participatieve contexten, met hun specifieke opzet en duidelijke begin- en eindpunten, een situatie scheppen voor uiterlijk milieugedrag en een soort milieu-etiquette cultiveren. De etiquette van milieugedrag veronderstelt de formatie en het handhaven van vriendschappelijke relaties tussen de permanente gastheren van de milieuprojecten (lokale gemeenschappen) en de gasten die de projecten in die context binnen brengen (de natuurbeschermers). Echter, de etiquette dient ook om een afstand te handhaven tussen deze twee groepen actoren: het voorkomen van het verdiepen van relaties en het voorkomen van betekenisvolle overeenstemming over gecompliceerde, lastige en zelfs gevaarlijke onderwerpen. Het is dus een ernstige fout voor natuurbeschermers om lokale participatie met instemming te verwarren, en te verwachten dat deze zich zal vertalen in ecologisch duurzame acties die men hoopt te bevorderen.

Hoofdstuk zeven richt zich op de verspreiding van ideeën en vooral de stijlen van beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen en de discussies over de rechten van inheemse volken tussen de Filippijnen en Indonesië. De voortgaande implementatie van de 'Indigenous Peoples'

Rights Act in de Filippijnen dient als een bron voor Indonesiërs die de positie van inheemse volken in hun land willen versterken. In de kern van hun werk ligt de toegang tot en controle over natuurlijke hulpbronnen binnen het territorium van de inheemse volken. Het wordt dikwijls aangenomen, of sterk beargumenteerd, dat het betrekken van inheemse volken bij het beheer van het milieu de natuurbescherming zal verzekeren binnen de grenzen van hun voorouderlijke domeinen. Het ontstaan van internationaal beleid op dit gebied heeft tot voordeel gewerkt voor de inheemse groepen, ondanks het feit dat dit label binnen andere sociale contexten met argwaan wordt beschouwd.

Als deel van de transnationale stroom van ideeën en discussies over rechten van inheemse volken tussen de Filippijnen en Indonesië, wijst dit hoofdstuk op een aantal aandachtspunten zowel op nationaal niveau als op lokaal niveau die van belang zou kunnen zijn bij de mogelijke opstelling van een wet over de rechten van inheemse volken in Indonesië. Op het nationale niveau, is het de vraag, zoals vele Indonesische activisten zich al gerealiseerd hebben, of de inheemse volken daadwerkelijk wel zo'n wet willen, en of zij zich volledig bewust zijn van de mogelijke repercussies van zo'n wet. Op het lokale niveau, zijn er minstens drie aandachtspunten voor Indonesië gebaseerd op de resultaten van de implementatie van IPRA in een Cordillera dorp in de Filippijnen. Ten eerste is er de vraag wie er zal profiteren van het institutionaliseren en legitimeren van praktijken van inheemse leiders en inheemse groepen, en wie er in dit proces zal worden buiten gesloten. Ten tweede zal er een verspreiding ontstaan van overlappende claims op land. En tenslotte zal er bij de koppeling van erkenning van rechten van inheemse volken aan natuurbescherming, altijd een neiging zijn dat milieu overwegingen ondergeschikt worden gemaakt aan de strijd om het dagelijkse bestaan.

### Conclusies

De erkenning van rechten op zelfbeschikking en de controle over het grondgebied van de voorouders rechtvaardigen in zichzelf niet het opleggen van beperkingen aan de ontwikkeling en de lasten van natuurbescherming aan inheemse volken. Wetenschappers en advocaten hebben erop gewezen dat de koppeling van rechten van inheemse volken aan de milieudoelstellingen er toe kan leiden dat de eerste zullen ondersneeuwen of ondergeschikt worden gemaakt aan de natuurbeschermingsagenda's. We zijn al getuige geweest van de nadelen en de conflicten die deze ongemakkelijke alliantie heeft voortgebracht.

Zouden Baun Bango en het Nationale Park Sebangau, en Tawangan en het Mount Pulag National Park kunnen worden beschouwd als voorbeelden van de natuur-cultuur verbeelding? In beide gevallen is er sprake van het samenkomen van lokale behoeften en visies met de missie van internationaal gefinancierde natuurbescherming. Inheemse gewoonten werden beschouwd als nauw verbonden en geïntegreerd met natuurbescherming. Daarom zorgen de natuurbeschermers ervoor de rechten van de inheemse groepen te respecteren en het te betrekken in het beheer van de beschermde gebieden. Echter, de natuur-cultuur verbeelding is een visie van een ideale bestaanswijze binnen een gedefinieerde, ideale context. Hoewel, dit samengestelde concept een context is waarbinnen rechtvaardigheid, cultuur en natuur met elkaar verbonden zijn, is het beeld dat uit deze studie naar voren is gekomen er niet een van een harmonieuze co-existentie van inheemse volken, natuurbeschermers en de directe omgeving. In deze studie heb ik me bezig gehouden integraal met het vertrekpunt van het ideaal, en de raakvlakken waarbinnen sociale activiteiten en 'groene dromen' met elkaar in tegenspraak waren.

In deze studie valt de natuur-cultuur verbeelding uiteen op een viertal punten. Ten eerste en het meest fundamenteel is het gedachte van het bestaan van 'edele groene wilden'. Ten tweede, het vestigen van beschermde gebieden evenals het erkennen van inheemse rechten heeft geleid tot een proliferatie van grenzen. Ten derde, de koppeling in de tijd van interacties op milieugebied was zodanig dat ze slechts een fractie vormden van het leven van de inheemse gemeenschappen en hun omgeving. Dit brengt me op het vierde punt waarop de natuur-cultuur verbeelding geen stand houdt: de onbalans van macht in het vormgeven van de toekomst en het reguleren van het heden waarop die gebaseerd is. Natuurbeschermers lijken een onderscheid te maken tussen inheemse volken waarvan gedacht werd dat ze een duurzame levensstijl hadden, die ze verondersteld werden voort te zetten, en de rest van de wereld die vrijelijk kan doorgaan op het pad consumeren en industrialiseren. Dit onderscheid is diep geworteld in de dynamiek van natuurbescherming in de context van inheemse volken. Op basis van deze vier punten die uit deze vergelijkende etnografie naar voren zijn gekomen, is het duidelijk dat het koppelen van rechten van inheemse volken aan doelen van natuurbescherming door sleutelactoren op de grond een soort obstakel vormt zowel voor milieudoelstellingen als inheemse aspiraties.

Deze studie heeft het beeld van het harmonisch samengaan van de doelen van de natuurbeschermers met die van de lokale gemeenschappen, en van de inheemse groepen met hun omgeving op losse schroeven gezet. Aan de ene kant zou, gegeven de onvoorspelbaarheid en de mondiale verspreiding van de huidige milieurampen, de verantwoordelijkheid voor het milieu en het ontwikkelen van groene posities verplicht moeten zijn voor alle samenlevingen, ongeacht of zij inheems zijn of niet. En aan de andere kant, als rechten van inheemse volken geclaimd en/of erkend blijven worden op basis van duurzame inheemse levensstijlen, dan is het tijd dat de betrokken actoren verkennen hoe nieuwe toekomstige mogelijkheden kunnen worden geschapen die zowel groene visies als inheemse aspiraties kunnen verwezenlijken.



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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Padmapani L. Perez was born on June 16, 1974, in Baguio City, the Philippines. She completed her secondary education in the University of the Philippines Baguio High School from June 1987 to April 1991. She went on to acquire a Bachelor's degree in the Social Sciences from the University of the Philippines – Baguio, majoring in Anthropology and Psychology from June 1992 to October 1998. From there she pursued further studies in Environmental Anthropology in Kent University, in Canterbury, the United Kingdom from October 1999 to September 2000. Her MA thesis was entitled, *Contested Domains: Philippine National Law, Indigenous Peoples, and the Environment*. In this study she analyzed the ways in which 'indigenous peoples' and the 'environment' are conceptualized within Philippine national law, and how these concepts shape relationships between indigenous peoples, customary law, the state, and the environment. After acquiring her MA, she worked temporarily as a writer and researcher for development-focused non-government organizations in the Philippines, and taught part-time at the Ateneo de Manila University. From September 2002 to January 2007 she was assigned as DGIS junior expert in anthropology at Leiden University, with a research focus on indigenous peoples and natural resource management in the Philippines and Indonesia. The present PhD dissertation is a result of the research she did in that capacity.

