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CUTTING TREES AND THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE: THE CASE OF THE IFUGAO *MUYONG* IN THE PHILIPPINE UPLANDS

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August 1999

Working Paper Series No. 294

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ISSN 0921-0210

CUTTING TREES AND THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE: THE CASE OF THE IFUGAO *MUYONG* IN THE PHILIPPINE UPLANDS[1]

ABSTRACT

In recent years, state policy makers have increasingly promoted indigenous practices on the use of forest resources, incorporating them in the government sustainable forest management program in the uplands. In the Philippines, one such policy pertains to the Ifugao *muyong* system, assumed to be a model in sustainable forest use and management. This article argues that such a view is ahistorical and divorced from actual processes of economic and socio-cultural transformations occurring in the uplands which have profoundly affected the system. Greater economic integration of the village society in post-War decades has led to the commoditization of timber and intensification of tree cutting to meet the demands of export-oriented woodcarving and, later, the shift to modern, lowland-style of houses as local income earnings improved due to commercialization of farming. In a situation where political incorporation of an upland village with the modern state has comparatively lagged behind, a high degree of degree of social autonomy in land and forest resource use and control has conditioned the active participation of local people in the market-dominated economy. This article argues for a grounded understanding of historical circumstances of people's indigenous practices related to forest and timber use, management and exchange at the village level and, on this basis, for setting coherence in various discordant state policies concerning local livelihoods, agriculture, and the environment.

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[1] This article is based on the author's fifteen months of PhD fieldwork in 1996-97 in the villageof Duit, in the municipality of Kiangan, in the province of Ifugao, Philippines.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social scientists and foresters have noted the importance of the Ifugao[2] woodlots or private forest[3] (*muyong/pinugo*) in people's livelihoods. They have cited it as a valuable source of timber, fuel, green manure for the pondfields and medicinal herbs (Conklin, 1980; Eder, 1982). Coffee, an important livelihood crop in many areas, is grown in the *muyong* whose trees provide it important shade (Kayashata, 1995). But aside from its contribution to a household's livelihood, the Ifugao *muyong* has been more widely known in literature for its critical role in maintaining the ecological balance in local agroforestry. Conklin (1980) saw that Ifugao private forests protected low-lying farms from runoffs and erosion and maintained the supply of surface and irrigation water. Eder (1982) noted that excessive tree-cutting in the *muyong* in the vicinity of Banaue, Ifugao accelerated runoffs and evapotranspiration, lengthening Ifugao's water shortage during the dry season. Serrano (1990) enumerated the environmental aspects of the *muyong* system in Lamut: reduction of runoff and air temperature; stabilization of relative humidity; and improvement of the soil's nutrients and its physical and chemical properties. Other papers have argued the centrality of the *muyong* in the Ifugao agrosystems, providing a `beneficial mothering effect' crucial for the sustainability of both pondfield and swidden farming subsystems for centuries (Serrano, 1994; Dacawi, 1982).

In recent years, the Ifugao *muyong* system has also been incorporated in government policy discourse on forestry. The official Philippine master plan for forest rehabilitation has recognized that portions of the public forests are occupied by indigenous cultural communities which have traditionally practised production technologies compatible with the environment (DENR, 1990: 109). The *muyong* system is one such technology which theDENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) re

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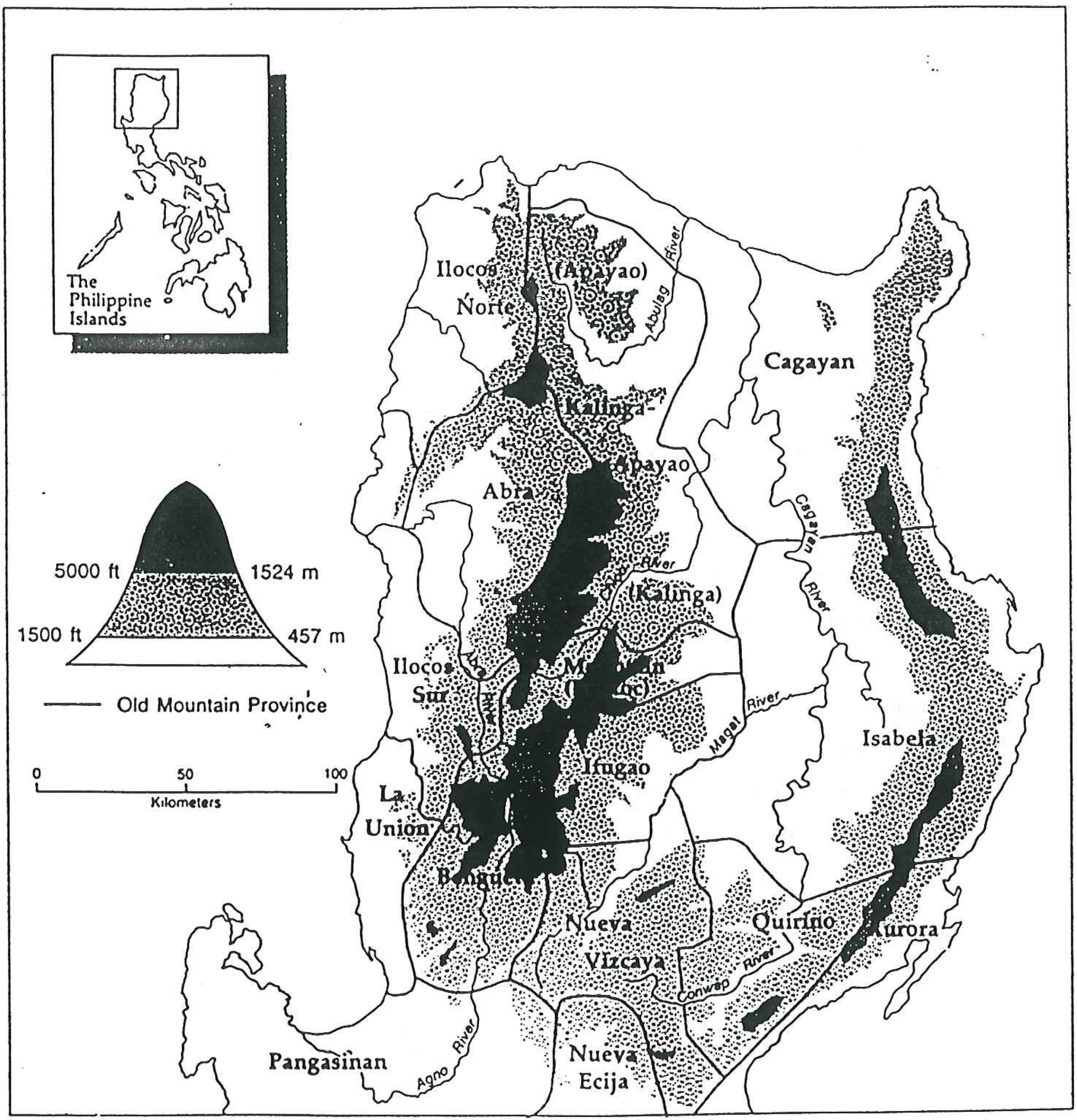
[2] Ifugao is an upland province located in the eastern mid-section of the Cordillera region in the northern part of the island of Luzon, Philippines. This landlocked province has a total land area of 251, 778 hectares, 89.9 percent of which is classified by the government as inalienable forest lands. The province has a population of 149,598 (1995), mostly Ifugaos, one of the seven major indigenous ethnolinguistic groups, who are known by their popular generic name, *Igorots*. (See Map of Northern Luzon.)

[3] Woodlots (*muyong, pinugo*) are privately-owned parcels of secondary forests in the Ifugao traditional agro-forestry system. In earlier times, they were often carved out of open-access forest, usually after initial swidden use. They are managed as combination of tree farms and slope gardens. A range of protected, planted or cultivated floral types may be found in the woodlots ranging from hard- and softwood timber for house beams to fruit trees to medicinal herbs. Boundaries between parcels are not fenced, walled, ditched but are frequently cleaned and locally marked paths or alignments of particular trees. Within a village a person may own a umber of woodlots. As real property, woodlots are second only to ricefields in importance. (Conklin, 1980: 31)

Map of Northern Luzon: Topography and Provincial Boundaries


The Philippine Islands
5000 ft
1524 m
1500 ft
457 m
Old Mountain Province
0
50
100
Kilometers
Ilocos Norte
(Apayao)
Abulag River
Cagayan
Kalinga-Apayao
Abra
River
(Kalinga)
Cagayan River
Ilocos Sur
Magat River
Isabela
Ifugao
La Union
Benguet
Nueva Vizcaya
Quirino
Aurora
Conwap River
Pangasinan
Agno River
Nueva Ecija

(Source: Lewis, 1992)

gards as an indigenous modelfor biodiversity conservation and as buffer zones against destructive human intrusions in the uplands (DENR, 1996). As a trade-off for the co-operation of indigenous cultural communities in the uplands on sustainable forestry management, the government is seeking to grant them an upland tenure security scheme. This recognition and package comes at a time when Philippine forests have been experiencing massive deforestation in recent decades, generally acknowledged to be one of the highest in the world.

Notwithstanding the benefits of the Ifugao *muyong* system in livelihoods and in sound forestry management argued in several studies, not much has been written about the processes that have eroded or considerably changed this indigenous system. The government forestry program seems to erroneously assume that the system has remained by and large pristine to date except in areas where they have been disturbed by `development activities' such as commercial logging. A few studies though have cited apparent changes in the *muyong* system, particularly excessive timber cutting by owners, resulting from local communities' integration with the broader economic and political order (Eder, 1982; Maher, 1985; Kayashata, 1995). However, most of these studies have treated the subject of pressures and changes in the Ifugao *muyong* system as incidental.

In this paper, I will focus on the micro processes of societal change and its implication on the Ifugao *muyong* system. I will present a case study at the village level to closely examine an important heretofore overlooked aspect of the dynamic relationship between economic integration[4] and commoditization on the one hand, and local timber cutting practice and associated socio-cultural factors on the other. I wish to depart from commonly held views that threat from the *muyong* usually comes from external forest intruders, such as the big commercial loggers. I will also challenge government's implicit assumption that the system has remained impervious to changes resulting from other forces in the broader socio-economic and political landscape, in the absence of dramatic physical dislocations coming from outside. My selected focus by no means denies that the *muyong* system has been destroyed or has come under threat through direct and violent actions that separate the timber user from his/her forests such as what has occurred in instances of landgrabbing or forcible logging activities by powerful outsiders. My main concern rather is problematizing what happens to the *muyong* system as local communities become integrated into wider socio-economic and cultural currents. I have chosen the economic integration and commoditization processes as my focus in this particular discussion of the woodlots for the following reasons: they are the processes wherein Ifugao communities have been most intensely subjected to since after the World War II; they have directly and profoundly affected timber cutting activities of people in the locality which I studied; and they constitute one field of inquiry that state policy planners on upland forestry development have up to now overlooked.

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[4] Economic integration is defined here as the 'transformation of subsistence-oriented, non-commoditized forms fo household production and exchange, leading to a more commoditized pattern based upon a cycle of reproduction dependent on the functioning of the market and on processes of capital accumulation' (Long, 1986 in Wiber, 1993: 14).

The general approach used in this article is that of political ecology whcih started to take shape by the end of the 1970s as a response to the theoretical need to integrate issues of local land use practice and resource management and local-global political economy and as a reaction to the growing politicalization of the environment (Grossman 1984; Watts, 1983). Its main themes are market integration, commercialization, state incorporation and the dislocations of customary forms of resource management arising from these processes rather than adaptation and homeostasis of communities to their habitat which were themes characteristic of earlier cultural or human ecology (Peet and Watts, 1996: 5) The approach stresses discussion of resource users and their linkages to the broader processes that structure the social and physical environments within which they respond (Blaikie, 1985; Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987). Peluso (1992: 51) points to two distinguishing marks of political ecology: its emphasis on the social relations within which actors are embedded and which affect the ways they use the environment; and, its assumption that larger social structures and political-economic processes affect the actions of local resource users.

Notwithstanding its major contribution to date in advancing the study of society-environment relations, political ecology has come under closer scrutiny and rethinking in recent years. Certain weaknesses of the school have been pointed out, particularly those set of ideas articulated by Blaikie and Brookfield (1987). Two such issues relevant in my discussions on the change processes involved in the institution of the Ifugao *muyong* pertain to poverty and politics in the discussion of resource users' actions and environmental changes. One of the limitations of political ecology coming to fore in recent debates is its undue emphasis on poverty and poor peasants, privileging impoverishment as having the power of causality of environmental deterioration. It has been argued that poverty, at best, can only be a *proximate* cause of deterioration, a condition which itself has to be explained by a complex set of interrelating variables (Peet and Watts, 1996). Further, as this case would show, such deterioration as the excessive timber cutting in the woodlots may not be an offshoot of the poverty of resource users. Rather, excessive timber cutting in woodlots may occur under conditions of lesser poverty and increasing cash surplus.

The other criticism levelled at Blaikie's and Brookfield's framework of political ecology is its lack of a serious attempt to problematize politics -- 'at treating the means by which control and access of resources or property rights are defined, negotiated, and contested within the political arenas of the household, the workplace and the state' (Ibid: 9). This point is particularly relevant in analyzing the deterioration processes of the *muyong* in which relatively autonomous control and access of local households of these private lots have enabled them to utilize timber freely for major improvements in local housing structures. Politics, in the sense of power relationships, also runs through the tensions involved in reinterpreting and manipulating local culture to claim free use or monetary sale of timber among kin and neighbors in the local community.

A theoretical concept of central relevance to this study therefore is commoditization. I have utilized two non-exclusionary ways of looking at commoditization which I find useful in analyzing processes of village society integration with the national and regional socio-economic order as well as in understanding how timber becomes transformed from a useful freely accessed thing and given, to a restricted good saleable in money and the consequent tension in the cultural framework or regimes of value[5] pertaining to the commodity.

One useful way of analysing commoditization is from the Marxist production-dominated viewpoint. In this viewpoint, commoditization is defined as a process of deepening commodity relations within the cycle of reproduction[6]. This occurs with the destruction of the natural economy, where production of use-values dominate in given social formations in a particular historical context. This may take various forms, one of which is when in the reproduction process, monetization of some of its elements occur, creating a rupture from the earlier state of reproduction. Transformation of the reproduction cycle might also be affected by substitution, in the sphere of necessary consumption, of commodities for use-values previously produced locally or acquired through simple exchange. Thus, reproduction might come to include the consumption of commodities and new needs develop (Bernstein, 1979: 161).

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[5] A cultural framework or regimes of value pertain to the host of conventions pertaining to exchange that are complied with by both the buyers and the sellers; they are sets of shared standards of value in an exchange situation that enable discrepancies in the points of view of individuals to be brushed aside and for exchange to take place. (See Appadurai, 1995: 14-15)

[6] Reproduction refers 'to the renewal from one round of production to another of the social and technical elements of production and of the relations among them (Friedman, 1980 : 162)'. Its most basic component is the production of the producers and the unit of production [descriptively, the household] (Bernstein, 1979: 163). This includes therefore basic necessities of subsistence such as food, housing and clothing.

The requirements of reproduction may be satisfied, partially, through commodity relations: 'on one side, the production of commodities as means of exchange to acquire elements of necessary consumption (C-M-C); on the other side the incorporation of commodities in the cycle of reproduction as items of productive consumption (e.g. tools, seeds, fertilizers) and individual consumption (e.g. food, clothing, building materials, kerosene, domestic utensils)' (Ibid: 163). This theory is particularly useful in the case to be presented. One side of the theory may be used to explain the phenomenon in the 1960s and 1970s when *muyong* owners were selling timber to craftsmen and agents of the woodcarving industry in order to acquire elements of necessary consumption (most especially food). On the other hand, the other side of the theory can illumine a more recent commoditization process since the 1980s where commercialization of local agriculture and consequent increase in cash surplus in the community have developed new needs for new housing structures whose materials rely partially on the market and whose log requirements place greater pressure on local private woodlots.. In this later case, commoditization in agriculture therefore has also covered commoditization in housing resulting to a more serious environmental consequence.

The Marxian concept of commoditization is production-dominated, where labor inputs in the production process plays the determinant role in the exchangeability and the terms of exchange between products. According to this concept, products become commoditized in a given historical epoch of society's development when their value becomes expressed in labor spent in their production. Appadurai (1996), however, proposes a significant break from this perspective, by focusing on the total trajectory of the commodity from production, through exchange/distribution, and to consumption. This perspective picks up the potentiality of things as commodities from the moment that they have been produced through labor and studies the life or biography of things as commodities in the sphere of exchange as a source of economic value. According to Appadurai, a thing in its trajectory exhibit a commodity situation, defined as 'the situation in which its exchangeability (past, present, or future) for some other thing is its socially relevant future' (1996:13). He further disaggregates this commodity situation of a thing into its commodity phase (the temporal dimension); the commodity candidacy (the symbolic state); and the commodity context (the social arenas where particular forms of exchange become possible). Thus, commoditization lies and ought to be explored at the complex intersection of temporal, cultural and social factors (Ibid: 15).

What is most important from this perspective of exchange is that the transformation of things as commodities is given a processual model, 'in which object may be moved both into and out of the commodity state' (Ibid: 17). Further, this perspective departs from employing an exclusively `objectivist' treatment of the commoditization of things. Instead, it also problematizes as well the cultural side of commoditization:

> the production of commodities is also a cultural and cognitive process -- commodities must be not only produced materially marked as being a certain kind of thing. Out of the total range of things available in a society, only some of them are considered appropriate for marking as commodities. (Kopytoff, 1996: 64)

This cultural perspective of commoditization fits well with the Marxian view that the process in any society is not a uniform one; neither does it unfold through a sequence of necessary stages nor is it complete (Bernstein, 1979: 162).

Appadurai's and Kopytoff's processual model of the commoditization of things which highlights the socio-cultural dimension of the process is particularly relevant in understanding the post-war phenomenon in this case study that witnessed the metamorphosis of timber in private forests, from things without commodity status in a prior period, to acquiring the status of saleability for money in subsequent historical junctures and social contexts. Such a model can shed light on the phenomenon of incomplete monetization of timber in private woodlots, a development involving tensions in the cultural definition of access and use of timber resources in the Ifugao village. This should complement the Marxian perspective of commoditization which can better explain the process of the penetration of the woodcarving industry which led to the initial commoditization of local timber, and later process of transformation of agricultural production in the village resulting into the commoditization in house construction (the substitution of materials drawn from the market for locally gathered ones).

In sum, I will use a modified political ecology to account for the responses of the local timber users to broad structural changes and for the consequent changes in the state of timber resources in the village. This analytical approach will try to link the micro village society and its social actors to macro level interventions of the state and market. Further, I will combine the Marxian production-dominated theory of commoditization and the exchange-centered, culture-oriented perspective of commoditization to study the dynamic of changes in specific local patterns of production, consumption and exchange that directly and profoundly affect the utilization and valuation of timber in the community's private forests.

2. THE VILLAGE AND IFUGAO WOODCARVING INDUSTRY

The village setting

The primary location of my study of ongoing changes in the *muyong* in the last several decades is Barangay[7] Duit, a village in the municipality of Kiangan in the upland province of Ifugao, northern Philippines. Duit has 248 households and a total population of 1,427 people (MPDO, 1995). Majority of the present population are Tuwali-speaking Ifugaos who have long settled in the place even prior to the American colonial administration at the turn of the century. About ten percent of households belong to the Kalanguya ethno-linguistic group, mostly from the adjacent municipality of Asipulo. They started to settle and farm in the village since the early 1980s, attracted by the livelihood opportunities offered by the growth of commercial vegetable gardening in the area. Virtually all households in Duit draw their livelihoods from farming. Modern rice varieties are cultivated in terraced pondfields once or twice a year. Rice is cultivated for a household's food supply.

Aside from rice farming, majority of households are engaged in commercial gardening of snap beans, the main cash source in the village. Smaller quantities of other vegetables and fruits from dooryards, pondfields, and private forests are marketed every week in the poblacion of Kiangan, and in the neighboring municipalities Lamut and Lagawe. These constitute significant supplementary cash income for a number of households. Other sources of cash income for some households are cash remittances of family members working as domestic helpers overseas or as employees in the urban centers. Before World War II, men from Duit used to seasonally migrate out every year to work as road laborers or farmhands in the neighboring provinces of Isabela and Nueva Viscaya. Between the 1960s and 1970s about 40% of local households resettled in the frontier lands of these provinces. However, since the spread of commercial vegetable gardening in the early 1980s in a number of villages in Kiangan, including Barangay Duit, local farmers have more or less stopped migrating out.

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[7] In the Philippines, barangay is the basic unit of political administration; it is usually based on a village community.

Most of the Ifugao original families of Duit own small ricefields (*payo*), the most valuable land property in the village. Households which do not own any ricefields are mostly Kalanguya who are usually sharecroppers and/or lease garden fields from the local Tuwali-speakers. Most households operate small rice farms and one or two vegetable garden plots. The latter are actually abandoned or idle ricefields or sweet potato fields (*habal*). Sweet potato fields (*habal*), which competed in significance to ricefields in local land use from the 1900 up to the 1970s, have been virtually wiped out today, converted into commercial vegetable plots in recent decades. There used to be open-access *cogonal* lands and forests in Duit during the American colonial period. But when coffee and banana cultivation were promoted aggressively in Kiangan and other towns of Ifugao by the government education bureau in the mid-1950s (Uyan, 1958: 84), the local people staked off lots in the open-access forest for planting the fruit trees. Years after, the last open-access forest of the village was exhausted and converted into private woodlots also planted with coffee and banana.

Based on my survey in the village in 1996, about 40% of the households in Duit own woodlots. These are owned by the original residents of the place. Some of them have already resettled in the poblacion or other urban centers, but have retained their private forest property in the village. None of the Kalanguya own *muyong*. Today, this type of land in Duit has retained its traditional function as the source of timber for houses and fuel for cooking. However, with the improvement of farm-to-market roads and other trading infrastructures in the last three decades, private woodlots have also become fruit-tree orchards where owners harvest various fruits for weekly sales in the poblacion.

Barangay Duit occupies a total land area of 2,493 hectares of public land classified as forest since the first American colonial land classification in the early 1900s. But this formal category of their land under Philippine government statutes has only been remotely experienced by local people in the form of non-property land tax registration paper that they have to file once every three years. The local people have used, possessed, or exchanged land and forest resources in Duit according to actually existing patterns of ownership and control, legitimized by local norms which are sustained and reproduced by or, at times, altered through social negotiations and interactions. The legal ownership status of these resources as defined in government statutes is quite alien to their everyday practice of resource use and transfers, except when a non-property land tax registration paper has to be used as an instrument in buying, selling, and mortgaging transactions between persons.

Local changes in Barangay Duit and in Kiangan municipality have to be understood in the context of long, ongoing processes of political incorporation and market integration in the Cordillera region that have rendered communities in this mountain region as more heterogeneous in their practices and norms pertaining to the use and access of local resources. Important customs and practices on property and resources have been reworked as rural communities interact with one another and with urban and lowland cultures and populations. Several recent studies have highlighted these changes in village societies in the Cordillera as they come under the intervention of the modernizing state and the influence of the national and global market (Cf. Wiber, 1993; Voss, 1983; Lewis, 1992; Russel and Cunningham 1989; Rood, 1995).

The 1950s to 1970s: local farming deterioration and woodcarving boom

Post-war developments in the Cordillera have built on important colonial projects initiated by the Americans in the early 1900s up to the War. These projects had a profound and continuing impact on the economic livelihood of the people in many communities, including Kiangan and the village of Duit. The most significant of these were the integration of hitherto unpacified and independent upland village societies through an effective peace and order campaign and the establishment of the local governments; the breakthroughs in road building in the entire Cordillera, especially in the province of Ifugao; the institution of compulsory education; and, the promotion of trade and marketing between far-flung villages and the poblacion (Cf. Keesing and Keesing, 1934; Wilson, 1953; Fry, 1983) The outcome of the American colonial period in the Cordillera was to bring together heretofore relatively self-sufficient village-society economies into a broader grid of trade, labor and consumer market in the region. Further, colonialism integrated previously warring and independent upland villages in the Cordillera into the state polity. In varying degrees, however, colonialism left village political mechanisms unaltered, including those pertaining to property and resources, in interior areas where its administrative and infrastructural capability was severely limited and where generally private business investments in industries were considered lacking in potential.

By the end of the American colonial period in 1946, trade and marketing infrastructures, literacy, peace and order, and inter-community interactions had become basically developed in many parts of the Cordillera to an extent conducive to the movements of goods and people within the mountain region and to the lowland areas. These conditions, which were further improved by the government after World War II, allowed for certain indigenous crafts to be linked to the urban and export markets. One such craft that dominated trade in Ifugao province was wood carving. The development of this industry would have tremendous impacts on livelihoods, resource access and the environment in Ifugao villages, including Duit.

Woodcarving has been an integral part of traditional Ifugao culture. Ifugaos have been known to carve wooden artifactual emblems essential to many of their rituals such as the wooden rice god (*bulul*) and the sacred box (*punamahan*) related to their observance of traditional religion since prior to the time of Spanish contacts. Generations ago, the craft was practised by a few specialists in each district[8]. Their products however were not considered as commodities for sale nor did their production grow on any commercial scale. Commercial Ifugao woodcarving is clearly a post-World War II phenomenon. When broader commercial opportunities developed, private foreign and Filipino businessmen in Baguio City harnessed the indigenous skill[9]. Some men from a district in Banaue municipality[10] in the province of Ifugao were tapped to carve for the tourist market in the city (Maher, 1985: 5). Motifs in woodcarved articles also changed to suit the commercial market. This transformation into wide-scale commodity production of a hitherto non-commercial craft associated with indigenous rites became possible only after the war with the road and trading infrastructure between Baguio City[11] and Ifugao already well developed.

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[8] A district comprises several adjacent barrios/villages within a municipality.

[9] According to Dulawan (1974), on a limited scale, commercial Ifugao wood carving started right after theWar in Barangay Hapao in the municipality of Banaue, Ifugao. Sometime in 1947, some wood carvers from this barrio were brought to Camp John Hay in Baguio City and employed in a pioneering woodcarving shop started by an ex-American seviceman.

[10] Banaue is a northern municipality of Ifugao Province, about 1 1/2 hours away by motor vehicle travel from the municipality of Kiangan in the south of the province.

By the 1950s, a number of woodcarving shops operated in Baguio City. The industry was given its first important boost in 1956, when its products successfully penetrated the American market (Dulawan, 1974). Gradually, the popularity of Ifugao woodcarved articles, mostly human and animal figures as well as curio articles such as big spoons and forks, grew. Increasing demand for such articles came from the US and the tourists in Baguio City and Manila. Soon the craft was to become no longer a turf of a few male specialists in the district of Hapao (Maher, 1985: 5). Merchants linked these village carvers to the shops in the urban centers. They purchased their rough cuts and transported them to Baguio City where a number of small shops specialized in sand-paper polishing and varnishing the figures for final shipment to various domestic and foreign outlets.

This regional development in the woodcarving industry, however, was to benefit immensely from certain shifts in macro economic policies by the Philippine government in the late 1960s and early 1970s as well as from the world commodity price boom in the early 1970s. Industrial promotion policies in the 1950s and the 1960s of the Philippine state which emphasized, among others, import-substitution and large-scale manufacturing were largely blamed in the late 1960s for the sluggish economic growth of the country during the period. Thus the late 1960s ushered in major changes in industrial promotion policies -- towards export-orientation and emphasis on the regional dispersal of industry through medium- and small- scale enterprises. Included in the new policy regime were specific programs which the budding Ifugao wood carving industry would directly benefit from, viz., a new emphasis on non-traditional exports such as wood products, packages of export incentives (e.g. exemptions from export taxes and granting of tax credits on export sales under the Export Incentive Act enacted in 1970) and various loans and other forms of state assistance to promote small scale industries such as the handicraft cottage industries. But what really boosted the export sector was the Philippine government's decision to float the peso vis-à-vis the US dollar in 1970, a defacto devaluation of the local currency. Export production reacted positively and quickly to the increase in export demands due to the cheapening of Philippine products at a time of a world commodity price boom. (Bautista and Power, 1979: 17-25). Combined with the devaluation, increased global prices pushed up export receipts which helped to cushion the initial recessionary effect of devaluation (Vos and Yap, 1996: 148). Hence in 1973, export performance of the country became exceptionally strong, among which non-traditional manufacture product was robust (Bautista and Power, 1979: 25). It is also important to note that despite devaluation, local demand did not go down.

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[11] Baguio City is the regional center of the Cordillera. It is located in Benguet, the neighboring province of Ifugao in the south. Baguio City is about an eight-hour distance from Kiangan by motor vehicle travel.

Enjoying full promotional intervention by the Philippine state, the cottage industry sector in which Ifugao woodcarving was an important component, posted an average sales of volume of one million pesos (US$30,000 at current exchange rate) annually from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. By 1973, the sector accounted for more than 200 million pesos (US$6.06 million at current exchange rate) in foreign exchange (Dulawan, 1974). During this period, finishing shops for Ifugao wood carvings mushroomed in the vicinity of Baguio City. On the other hand, in the municipality of Banaue, the craft spread among various members of village households. Men still cut the trees in the forest. But the task of making rough cuts have included women and children as well. Acquiring a reasonable competence and willingness to work for long hours could earn a person in the village three times the salary of the local school teacher. Middlemen sold these carvings three to four times the amount they paid to the village carvers. By 1973, large trucks fully loaded with carvings were leaving Banaue daily. Soon the big demand for Ifugao carvings strained the timber resources in the general vicinity of Banaue. The explosion of local woodcarving and growing scarcity in timber resources prompted local government officials to set up a monopolistic co-operative. Membership to this organization is required for a person to be able to secure permit to cut timber in the forests of Banaue. In addition, the co-operative bought the products of the carvers; but these were procured at ten to twenty percent lower than the prevailing price. Thus members lost enthusiasm and many decided not to join and instead moved out of Banaue to other places with good timber sources in order to continue their work (Maher, 1985: 5-6). Thus the Banaue woodcarvers, who were originally rice terracing farmers in their place, became increasingly nomadic, scouring various parts of Ifugao for abundant and cheap wood supply. Wherever they found one, they would set up temporary work camps to cut trees and make rough cuts (Dulawan, 1974). From these work camps, their products were transported by merchants to Baguio City or Manila.

The first woodcarvers from Banaue who arrived in Duit in 1962 was the Kayong family. This family previously worked in Gohang village in Banawe but had to search for wood in other places due to dwindling timber. The mother of the female spouse in the Kayong family was from Duit, so these pioneers had the support local kin in settling down and looking for timber to buy. Upon finding the abundant wood resources, the Kayongs decided to resettle there[12]. Three years later, encouraged by the experience of the Kayong family, ten more families from followed.

Banaue woodcarvers' entry into Duit was a long drawn-out process lasting for nearly twenty years. Some of the pioneers came to stay, buying and carving wood in the village for about two to three years then left. Some, however, intermarried and were able to buy ricefields (*payo*). Usually they sold their *payo* in Banaue and bought ricefields in Duit which at that time, due to the decline of local farming prior to the spread of vegetable gardening in 1980, were then comparatively cheap. But others came seasonally to work their craft in Duit . They came in the months of December to July when there was a strong demand coinciding with the peak months of tourism in Baguio City and left in the months of July to November, when sale was weaker because the monsoon season reduced the tourist consumer market in Baguio City.

Village informants recall that timber buying by the immigrant wood carvers was most brisk from the late 1960s up to 1981. At the height of timber buying, three tractors of rough woodcarved articles or raw wood cuts would leave Duit three times a week. The woodcarvers preferred a tree specie locally known as *mosantol*, a type of wood also popular for local house construction. This was the first type of tree that was exhausted in the area. Another preferred specie was the *acacia*, which were bought for P10 to P15 per stand whose trunk diameter varied between one to two feet. All local *muyong* owners sold trees to the Banaue wood carvers.

The response of the *muyong* owners to sell trees to the migrant wood carvers can only be understood in the context of serious deterioration of the local economy during the period when the woodcarvers came. This major decline was a result of combined demographic and ecological factors. Local population, which was reduced by about 35 percent during the War due to massive starvation, dysentery and malaria epidemic, had grown by the 1960s. This put serious pressure on the number of ricefields in the village, which during the previous colonial period was partly solved by annual seasonal outmigrations of the men during off-farm months in the neighboring provinces of Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya which at that time absorbed a lot of Ifugao labor in road construction and expansion of rice paddies in the lowlands. Simultaneously, local people recall that the 1960s was also the time of massive worm and rat infestation in the village. This pest infestation was also reported in many parts of Kiangan and other nearby municipalities of Lagawe, Mayaoyao, Banaue and Hungduan, causing famines in many villages (BMC, 1965a; 1965b; 1967).

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[12] Personal interview with Balugan Kayong.

Based on my survey, during the 1960s up to the 1970s, four out of ten households in the village of Duit migrated out to frontier areas of the neighboring provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela and in the lower slopes of Ifugao province, to open new lands. These migrants expected these new lands to be more productive and less labor intensive in the long run than those they had in Duit. This massive outmigration of local people due to extreme hardships worsened local farming conditions. Many ricefields and swidden farms were abandoned due to labor scarcity, contributing further to the decline in local livelihoods. Thus, when the woodcarvers came, offering to buy timber from peoples' woodlots, almost everyone saw an opportunity to earn desperately needed income. A few well-to-do households also sold for the reason of eliminating certain tree species whose leaves caused the overshading of the coffee trees[13] that they had just planted in their *muyong*.

The linking of *muyong* owners to the migrant craftsmen and external agents of the woodcarving industry created a new commodity context or a particular social arena where local timber, for the first time, became saleable for money. Prior to this, timber was used and accessed between neighbors and kin freely. Elders recall that during the American colonial period, local people utilized local lumber for house construction which were either taken from a household's own woodlots, or acquired freely from another person's woodlots or from the open-access forest. Those who were making houses and needed extra timber would usually ask woodlot owners. These requests, even if coming from someone who was not a member of a close kin group, would normally be granted. Just before the World War II, the village of Duit had only about

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[13] Coffee growing was introduced to the village in the late 1950s by a person from the local government agricultural office. Those who planted coffee grew it on the *muyong*.

160 households, and timber stands apparently sufficed for the local house building needs. Timber were not an object of contesting claims and nor a site of tension, compared with rice harvests and distribution at that time. Village informants neither recall of any earlier time prior to the penetration of Ifugao commercial woodcarving when local timber was sold at all. The transactions with outsiders who purchased wood as raw material for woodcarvings provided a peculiar and sole social arena where local timber became a commodity. Such dealings were regarded as outside of the dominant local normative order that considered timber as something that could be easily requested for and freely given among kith and kin.

Local informants are unanimous in saying that from the mid-1960 to 1981, cutting timber to sell to woodcarvers had downplayed the significance of cutting trees for local house construction. Up to that time selling timber to woodcarvers had the greatest impact on the state of local timber resources. Balugan Kayong, a pioneer woodcarver from Banaue who migrated to the village in 1962 said that his household, for instance, would consume an average of about three *acacia* trees per year as raw material to sustain their craft. The woodcarvers bought the big trees first, then later as these became exhausted, they bought smaller ones. People were nevertheless already planting trees in their *muyong.* And although the new market demand encouraged many more households to cultivate trees in their woodlots, this could not keep in pace with the brisk timber-cutting in the locality triggered by the Ifugao woodcarving industry.

Although the commodity context of local timber at this time was just confined specifically to dealings with agents of the woodcarving industry (i.e. the new inmigrants who carved within the village or visiting merchants who just purchased wood to be worked by carvers elsewhere), it did not mean, however, that the new commodity context, once it had arisen, did not have any impact on the traditional mode of access to timber in the interhousehold social arena within the village. With timber's growing scarcity, access to them became more restrictive. The pre-existing symbolic state of timber as a free good between neighbors and kin was dented. Informants recall that after the woodcarvers came and residents sold their timber for cash, increasingly, local people became embarrassed to ask for free timber from a neighbor or from their distant kin for house construction. This hesitation stemmed from the obvious fact that the timber were now convertible to cash, if the owner so decides to peddle the item to the woodcarvers. The constraint to ask for free timber came from the common knowledge that such requests would likely be politely turned down anyway, since most potential donors had been selling their timber stock to the woodcarvers or their agents for a price.

Decline of woodcarving industry and local tree cutting in the early 1980s

By the 1980s, the selling of timber by *muyong* owners to woodcarvers declined enormously. This reduction in local timber cutting was an outcome of a conjuncture of external and local developments, whose combination resulted in the decline in the local selling of wood to the carvers. These were the major recession of the Philippine economy in the first half of the 1980s resulting in a major downturn of the wood carving industry, the turnaround of the village economy with the introduction and spread of commercial vegetable farming, and a consequent major change in local attitude on extractive logging as a livelihood source.

In contrast to the decade of the 1970s of rapid growth, the first half of 1980s, would be marked by recession, revealing inherent structural limitations and weaknesses of the Philippine economy as it faced the 1979-80 oil price shock, accompanied by the tightening of international credit and high interests, and global recession of the developed world (Lamberte, Lim, et al, 1992: 318). Growth rates fell to less than 5 percent in 1980, to less than 3.5 percent in 1981, and finally to only slightly above 1 percent in 1982 and 1983. The dollar value of exports started to fall in the same period and continued up to 1985 (Ibid: 316). Exports dramatically fell through the combined impact of high domestic interest rates, imposition of export taxes by the bankrupt government desperate to shore up revenues, and the general weak demand from the western countries which were experiencing the worst economic slump since the depression of 1929. Faced with economic hardships, most classes became politically disenchanted with the Marcos administration. Together with the economic slowdown, business confidence began to erode in general. The sector worst affected by the crisis in business confidence and by recession were the small households and unincorporated businesses, the large aggregate of formal and informal enterprises where handicraft manufactures and retails, such as woodcarving. Savings of households and unincorporated fell from a high of 10 percent of the GNP in the late 1970s to 6 percent in 1980, 3 percent in 1982 and 1 percent in 1983 (Ibid: 317).

The unprecedented business crisis in the country of the first half of 1980s affected Ifugao woodcarving industry. Export and domestic sales declined, pulling down production. This crisis had repercussions at the village level. In Duit, former woodcarvers who permanently resettled in the village recall experiencing hardships due to the impact of a series of devaluation-led inflation in 1981-85. Some orders were still coming for woodcarvings but much smaller in volume. Aside from this, nobody wanted to produce these anymore at the former price because the costs of living and production had gone up dramatically. Coinciding however with the downturn in the woodcarving industry was the major improvement of livelihood opportunities in Duit due to the inroads of commercial vegetable gardening in 1979-1981. To recall, local timber-selling to the woodcarvers started and gained momentum during the post-war deterioration of farming in the village lasting up to the mid-1970s. By the 1980s, this situation in farming started to turn around. Local informants said that as soon as the viability and potential of commercial vegetable gardening became clear, settler woodcarvers shifted to farming and local households stopped selling their remaining timber in the *muyong*, as they reaped incomes from by the new cash crop. Excessive timber cutting momentarily stopped, giving the local forests some respite. But this would not be for long, since the commercialization of agriculture and general improvement of livelihood opportunities in the village would later set into motion a new round of tree-cutting in less than ten years.

3. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE LOCAL LIVELIHOODS AND TREE-CUTTING

Commercial vegetable farming and livelihood recovery since the 1980s

In the upland province of Ifugao, the Philippine state performed an intrusive role in deepening commodity relations by launching massive roadbuilding programs and actively promoting cash crops through various projects of production and marketing assistance from 1970 up to the mid 1980s. For instance, between 1980 to 1987, the local government of Kiangan embarked on an aggressive program for promoting commercial vegetable gardening to local farmers. The municipal agriculture office (MAO) distributed seed packages of beans, cabbage, radish, potatoes, celery and pechay with brochures to the local farmers and encouraged them to cultivate them on a trial basis. Seminars and field demonstrations were also organized, also demonstrating the proper application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. At the expense of the local government of Kiangan municipality, a number of local farmers were also brought to La Trinidad, Benguet for them to personally see state-of-the-art commercial vegetable gardening there. Even municipal councilors were included in these visits to convince them of the wisdom of the policy of promoting vegetable cultivation in Kiangan in order for them to appropriate municipal council funds to bankroll related projects[14].

In 1983, the municipal government was able to access PANAMIN (Presidential Assistance for National Minorities) funds for its development thrust. A P60,000 aid grant was used to purchase snap beans seed, chemical fertilizers and pesticides which were freely distributed to farmers. Local farmers in Duit recall that many households in the village acquired these free 'PANAMIN' seeds and inputs which enabled more local farmers to start cultivating the new cash crops. A two-and-a-half-hectare experimental farm was also launched in the poblacion for cultivating cabbage, potatoes and radish, wherein PANAMIN provided all the inputs[15]. In addition, part of the funds went to the fuel expenses of the freight truck which the local government borrowed from the PANAMIN office for six months to haul, local farmers' products to marketing outlets in Manila, free of charge. The local government through the KKK[16] fund also provided seed money for the organization of a Kiangan-wide vegetable farmers' co-operative (KAISA) which was to perform an important role for three years in spreading the use of farm inputs for farmers and assuring them constant supply until private traders and local stores in the poblacion took over the business of retailing agri-inputs[17].

Barangay Duit as well as Barangay Baguinge and Barangay Tuplac, according to local government informants, were the most responsive villages to this municipal program on commercial vegetable gardening. After witnessing the experiment of a pioneer farmer and with government initial promotional activities coming in, by 1981, according to Duit informants, local farmers were converting idle ricefields (those which could not be cultivated due to water or labor problems) into beans and cabbage plots. Two years later, Duit farmers were already clearing long abandoned swiddens in the worse slopes to convert into vegetable gardens. Informants roughly estimate that since

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[14] Personal communication with Ex-Mayor Jose Guyguyon

[15] Personal communication with Ms. Josephine Tam, daughter of the owner of the farmland.

[16] A premium livelihood program of the national government whose thrust was to boost Green Revolution production during the Martial Law regime.

[17] Personal communication with Ex-Mayor Jose Guyguyon

1983, about one third of local farm lands which previously remained idle, have now undergone cultivation.

Another important development in local farming in Duit was the spread of the modern rice varieties, popularly known as *irik*, among local farmers. Although one or two Duit farmers had experimented on these lowland modern rice varieties in their fields as early as the late 1950s and early 1960s, *irik* under a two-crop system did not become popular among local farmers until the mid-1980s. Side by side with the promotion of commercial vegetable gardening for idle ricefields, the local government was also promoting the KKK and Masagana 99[18] program for ricefields under operation. According to the ex-mayor of Kiangan, the municipal government set up various pilot farms for the modern varieties in 1979, and by the early 1980s, farmers from various villages of town were beginning a two-cropping system using the modern variety, which had a maturation period of only 127 days.

The means of income and livelihood evidently improved in villages where commercial vegetable gardening and two-cropping modern rice variety had begun. Between the two enterprises, commercial vegetable gardening stands out as the more important factor in improving the means of livelihood. In Duit, it allowed farmers to expand production in idle fields. The usual practice today is for farmers to designate a second and/or third field as his/her vegetable plots. Usually these are the fields which cannot be irrigated and therefore unfit for rice cultivation. The farmer would farm the first-crop *irik* in the first field in the months of December to March, then would cultivate the second-crop between September to November. Between planting and harvesting periods, the farmer would engage in snap bean cultivation in one or two other fields. The crop's cycle last for only about 45 to 60 days and could be planted anytime of the year. Snap bean cultivation has given farmers a good source of cash income once or twice a year from one to three farms of one- or two-ganta plots each.[19] On the other hand, the shift to two-crop rice cultivation of many households has provided additional rice staple.

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[18] Masagana 99 was the Green Revolution rice farm production program of the Martial Law government. It is known to be widely promoted in the Philippine lowlands, especially in the traditional rice granaries of the country such as the Central Luzon provinces. However, as the case indicates here the program was also deliberately implemented and had an impact in certain areas in the highlands, though very selectively and on a much lesser scale.

Informants in the village are unanimous that the community has improved in their living standard with the spread of commercial vegetable gardening. Based on my local wealth ranking interviews, households who before belonged to the lower-income group have moved up to the middle-income bracket, which has grown in size compared to pre-1980 period. On the other hand, the number of households regarded as belonging to the local upper-income bracket has remained more or less consistent. Also, more young people in the village today have been pursuing secondary education in Kiangan poblacion and tertiary education in the urban centers. Many of them have been supported by the vegetable gardening activities of their parents. Further, the importance commercial vegetable gardening to livelihood is reflected in the changing notion of a local *kadangyan* (i.e., the traditional Ifugao economic elite of the village). In Duit, many regard the size and number of commercial vegetable plots and the prices of one's past harvests as important indices in judging present-day *kadangyan*, a departure from an evaluative notion in the past that placed premium on the size of ricefields and rice harvest of a person.

Significant demographic changes in particular barangays of Kiangan municipality where commercial vegetable gardening have made a strong headway in the 1980s and continue to be the dominant farming activity of the local people today, reveal a trend of improving livelihood opportunity in these villages. Kiangan, up to the last half of the 1970s, had registered high outmigration rates characteristic of the whole province of Ifugao[20]. However from 1980 to 1995, Duit and two other villages of Kiangan where commercial vegetable gardening spread registered the high average annual population growth rate (cf. MPDO, 1995: 11), strongly suggesting that these places had become points of in-migration due to major improvements in local livelihood resulting from commercial vegetable farming.

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[19] Net earnings in vegetable gardening vary greatly, largely depending on fluctuating farmgate price of snap beans per kilo at the time of a farmer's harvest. Based on my surveys and interviews in Duit, a one-ganta bean plot (a plot planted with one ganta of bean seeds) should in a normal harvest yield about 500 kilos. Farm inputs and labor costs for a one-ganta field cost about P3000. Thus, it is a commonly held opinion among local farmers that if the price of beans is below P6 per kilo, the farmer loses and if it's above this price, the farmer gains. Bad price may mean that a kilo of bean harvest may sink to as low as P2. Good price would hover between P9 to P16. A `jackpot price' may mean P30+ per kilo. Thus in a bad price a farmer may lose P2000 pesos; but on a good price, he/she may have a net gain of P1200 to P5000 on a one-ganta field. Farmers' commonly cultivate one or two one-ganta/two-ganta fields twice a year. Thus this may mean P4,800 to P20,000 a year on the high-side estimate. Certainly, farmers win sometimes, and lose on other times. But production is sustained by the merchant-suppliers for losing farmers by continuously funding his/her enterprise on the condition that all the harvests are sold to the merchant-supplier at P1 to P2 per kilo less than the prevailing market price. This serves as an apparently exorbitant interest rate. However, transactions with merchant-supplier act as a sort of price risk insurance mechanism for poor farmers to carry on production despite price or crop failures.

Modern lowland-style houses and tree-cutting

It should be recalled that local *muyong* owners cut timber to sell to woodcarving craftsmen and agents during a period of worsening poverty and decline of the village economy in 1960s and 1970s. The economic turnaround of the 1980s due to the development of commercial vegetable gardening was one major cause why owners temporarily suspended cutting trees to sell to woodcarvers. But later, under a new condition of improving cash incomes, new lifestyles have emerged, including among others, new preferences in housing style and structure which required more lumber than the traditional Ifugao house. Hence, by 1990s a new round of more brisk timber cutting for local house construction began in the village private forests. This trend, unlike that of the past, was not conditioned nor propelled by a worsening poverty situation. Rather, it occurred under conditions of improvement of cash surplus of many households and is being sustained by it.

The Marxian theory of commoditization can shed light on how commoditization in such a case deepens in the household and in the community. Housing, a basic element in the reproduction of the producers or the unit, the household, comprises a basket of building materials. Once, as in the case in Duit, this set of materials increasingly includes purchased items (e.g., cement, nails, GI-sheets, iron rods, etc.,) as against those derived from the natural surrounding (e.g. grass for roofing, rattan vine for fastening, etc.,) then commoditization can be said in one respect to be deepening in the reproduction process of the community. While Marxian theory of commoditization is important in grasping the process once it has began and the transformation in reproduction of subsistence-based to market-based elements, this analytical pers-pective falls short of answering a no less important question: *why*, in the first place, have the people in Duit been breaking away from reproducing the Ifugao traditional house (*bale*[21]) which is wholly subsistence in the nature of production and which requires less timber? And why have more and more local people now begun building bigger, multiple-room, and two-storey houses in the style of lowland houses? Which are commoditized in the nature of production and which require more timber?

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[20] Official provincial statistics estimated that for every one thousand population of the province in 1975, 99 persons migrated out, giving the province a 0.87/1000 population net migration rate (PPDO, 1987: 13-14)

To answer these questions, we have to delve deeper into the nature of people's consumption which a Marxian perspective does not say much about. Contrary to what neo-classical economics claim, consumption is not something that springs from some abstract, unfathomable, selfish desires of individuals which the utility inherent in goods satisfy. 'Utility is in the eye of the beholder, and it is perceived only in relation to a particular social system and 'socially organized forms of satisfaction' (Hefner, 1990: 159). Thus, it is something drawn from culture, particularly, from anintercultural landscape in changing and interacting communities. Further, 'social referencing', a concept in social psychology pertaining to the anchoring of one's sense of self through identification with other groups and ideals, influence individual calculation in consumption and preference (Ibid: 236). Preference for certain styles and goods are constructed by individuals with reference to a particular social order and group to which these styles and goods are identified[22]. So while there is an instrumental, practical dimension to a certain preference (like the practical convenience of the wide floor space of a bigger house), people invest and express social meanings in consumption. A big house built from purchased expensive hardware for instance, would be associated with the social valuation of the owner -- a clear definition of his/her upper level position in the social ladder of a community. On the other hand, living in a shanty places in no uncertain terms the occupant at the lower rung of the social hierarchy both in the eyes of the community as well as in the mind of the occupant. (However, in this case, unlike the former one, living in a shanty is often not a matter of the occupant's individual preference).

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[21] The Ifugao traditional house (*bale*) is a small granary-shaped, one-room house made of heavy hand-hewn lumber with reed and grass roofing. The architecture is compact and simple. Scott (1962: 188-189) gives an accurate description of this traditional house: " Square in floor plan, it is elevated to about shoulder height by four posts (*tukud*), around which are fitted cylindrical wooden rat-guards (*halipan*), carrying two tansverse girders (*kuling*) which support three floor joists into which the floor-boards (*do-tal*) are fitted and wallboards (*gaob*) and *pamandingan*) and studs (*bagad*) are mortised. . . The four studs, placed at the corners of the house, are mortised at their upper end into four tie-beams or purlins (*wanan*) which form a square to carry much of the weight of the roof as well as a central cross-beam (*pumpitolan*) on which stand two queenports (*taknang*). These queenposts terminate in a small square (*bughol*), the roof being a true pyramid in form with four triangular sides and thus rising to an apex without any ridgepole. The wall-boards are rabbeted into a transverse beam (*huklub*) at waist- or chest-height, at which point a shelf (*patie*) is fitted between them and the roof, whose eaves descend as low as the level of the floor. Above the tie-beams a reed floor or platform is often fitted to make an attic-like storage space (*palan*) for unthreshed rice. Wooden panels close doorways on two opposite sides of the house, and entrance is gained by means of a ladder which is removed at night." (See Figure 1.)

The traditional Ifugao house does not use nails nor hardware in its construction, which is accomplished by precise mortising. Thus the complete house could be knocked down, moved, and raised again in any new site, sort of similar to a children's LEGO. During my fieldwork in Duit, I personally observed elder carpenters construct a *bale* for two weeks, as the barangay's entry in a cultural exhibit in the town fiesta of Kiangan in 1996. When the *bale* was finally finished, the whole thing was knocked down within an hour and transported by a jeep to Kiangan poblacion. There, the elder carpenters followed and reassembled the house in the town's athletic field where the exhibit was to be held. The barangay's entry won a prize for creating an exact *bale*, true-to-life in size and form.

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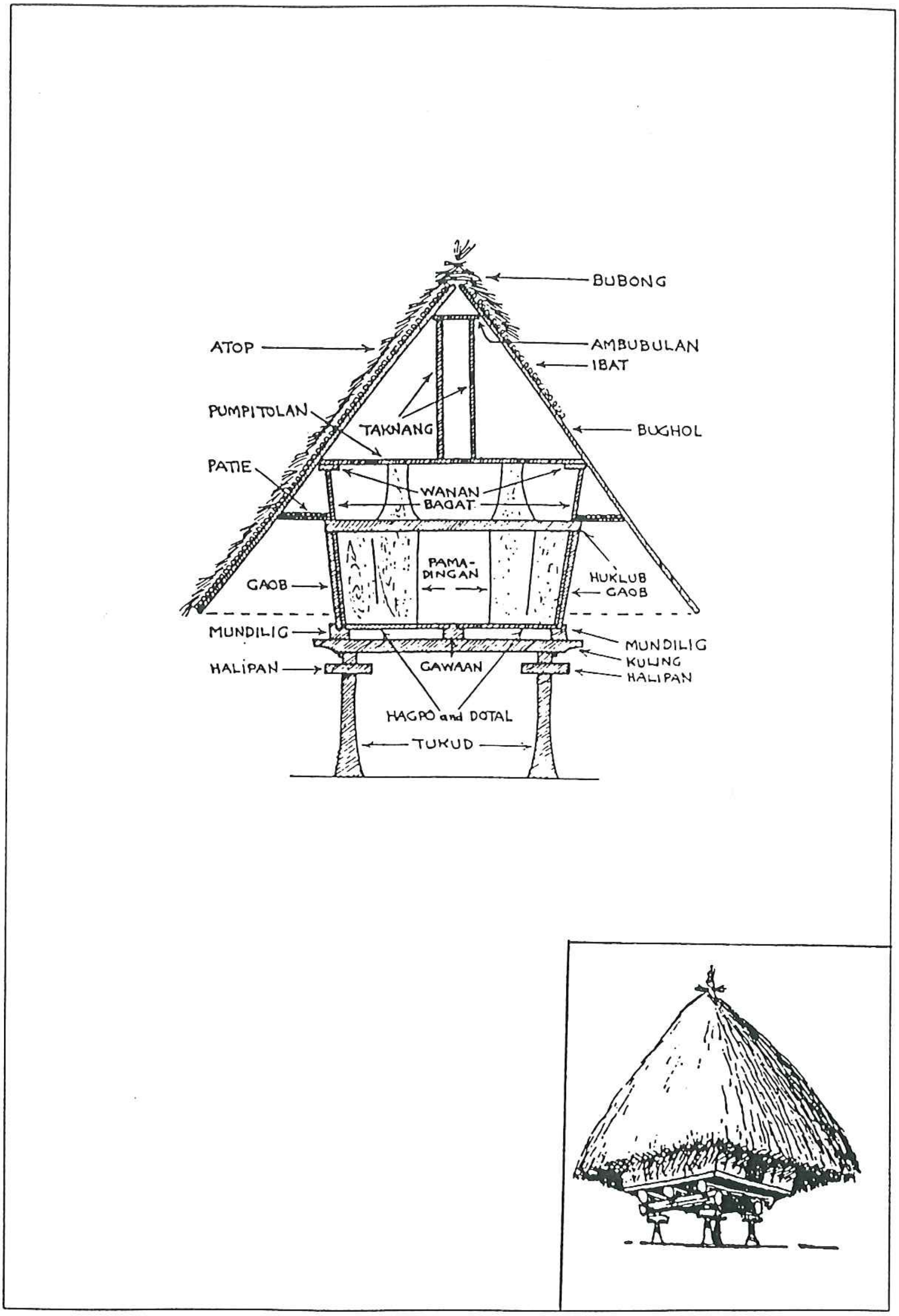
[22] Although the degree of self-awareness in the social referencing process in the making of a preference of course varies widely among individuals and social situations.

Fig.1 Structure of Traditional Ifugao House (*Bale*)


BUBONG
ATOP
AMBUBULAN
IBAT
PUMPITOLAN
TAKNANG
BUGHOL
PATIE
WANAN
BAGAT
PAMA-DINGAN
GAOB
HUKLUB
GAOB
MUNDILIG
MUNDILIG
KULING
HALIPAN
GAWAAN
HALIPAN
HAGPO and DOTAL
TUKUD

source: William Scott, "Cordillera Architecture of Northern Luzon"
Folklore Studies. Vol. XXI. 1962 pp 213-14

Hefner also advances a useful perspective in understanding changing consumption patterns in upland communities. As the barriers of these communities are lifted, external goods and meanings flow in (1990: 191). Local people may pin their self-identification and their reference point not on their own community's social order but on those of communities outside, very often, on societies in the urban lowlands and their images and symbols of progress and upward social mobility. Thus, local people would tend to have a preference for goods and lifestyles coming from the more market-oriented lowlands, substituting these things for other old items in their original basket of consumption goods. Sometimes the practical superiority to these items is the stronger driving motivation for the altering one's preference; but sometimes the social signal that possession of these items convey may be the more compelling element to acquire them.

In the case of Duit, instrumentalist and practical aspects are woven together with the meanings and social expression that articles of possession convey. For instance, possession of plastic jugs for water storage and liquefied petroleum gas stoves are more coveted for their practical convenience compared with earthen jars and firewood stoves. However, in my wealth ranking interviews with local people, such items of convenience have also been unanimously cited as markers indicating the specific position of a household in the social hierarchy. This observation is even more valid and strong on the issue of housing. The structure, size and materials of the house matter not only for the utility these elements provide for the dwellers, but more so for the social status and meaning they transmit to the public about the occupants. Thus those original Ifugao residents living in small traditionally styled houses in the remote hamlet of Ducap are considered poor and backward. So too, are the migrant Kalanguya who are either living in old dilapidated houses long abandoned by well-to-do residents or who stay in new, but crudely built shacks made of plastic sheets, recycled old GI-sheets, and grass reeds. These better-off in the village, also the owners of *muyong*, are clearly identified by their new two-storey, two- to three-room houses, built with hallow blocks, cement, GI-sheets and plenty of board-feet of hardwood. These are usually situated by the roadside, the hub of trading in snap beans and fruits in the village.

Change in house styles of many families in Duit did not happen overnight. Rather, it was an accumulation of individual innovations and new preference over time. The *bale* was gradually altered by a few households after the War in favor of certain innovations, most likely for reasons of practical convenience. Using GI sheets as roofing was the first innovation, to avoid periodic reroofing with reed and grass. It has also eliminated the eye-smarting smokiness which results inside a chimneyless small *bale* whose owner always faced the dilemma of having its roof thatched tightly enough to keep out the rain but loose enough to let smoke escape during cooking (Scott,1962: 189). Later, some owners innovated with `big' houses at the end of the 1940s. These `big' houses, according to elder informants, were actually no more than three by four meters in floor space where both cooking and sleeping still occur. But being a little bigger, they had additional space compared to the very limited floor space of the common granary-type of house at that time.

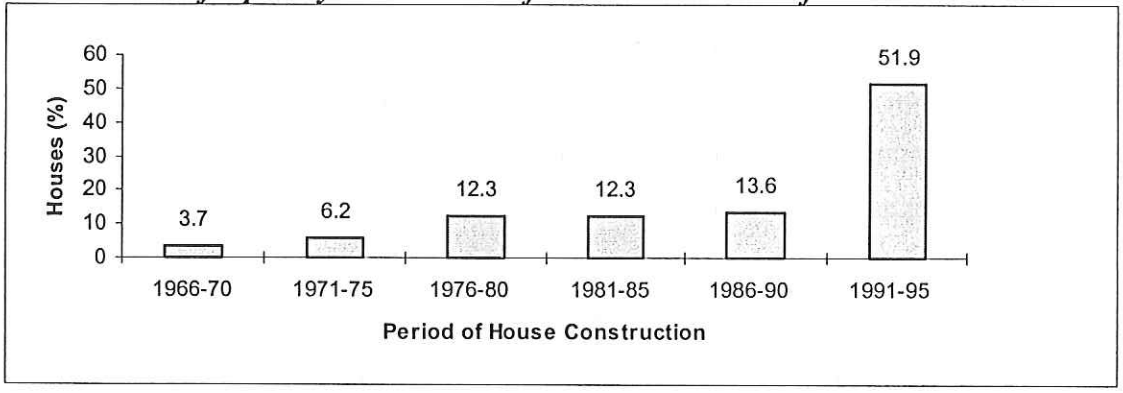
The present-day typical houses in Duit, whose architecture and materials are similar to rural lowland houses near urban centers, and therefore totally different from the traditional *bale* became common in the village in the 1980s. This occurrence ran parallel to the development of commercial vegetable gardening, intensification of farming, and improvements in cash incomes. Informants recall that when local people started to earn more in commercial farming sometime in the mid-1980s, one resident bought a motorized chainsaw. Soon *muyong* owners hired the service of this person in order to cut trees and make lumber for building new and large houses. This also ushered in the buying and selling of timber within the village, between neighbors and distant kin. By 1988, a local person was paying a sum of P500 to an *muyong* owner for a *narra* tree. By the 1990s, a great demand for timber for local house construction was already in place. At this time, *muyong* owners no longer sold timber to the few woodcarving agents who still occasionally visited.

Official government records on the change in the number of households in the barangay reveal the extent of house construction boom in the last 15 years. In 1975, a period of livelihood decline there were 130 household in 1975 (NCSO, 1975: 2). In 1996, there were 249 households, or an increase of about 92 percent in about 21 years. Based on my own observation, recently constructed houses during the period are of a lowland style and materials. Only ten houses now in Duit remain to be of the style of the Ifugao traditional *bale.* The number of houses has greatly increased due to the natural growth of the original population and due to Kalanguya immigration beginning in the early 1980s. Another indicator of housing boom construction and changes can be seen in the local barangay records of 1995. It listed a total of 209 housing units, among which are 200 with galvanized iron roofs; 167 are single-level and 42 are two-storey, both of which are the larger, rural lowland type of houses. Only nine houses were reported as having *cogonal* roofing, which is only suited for the size and structure of the granary-type traditional Ifugao house.

A random survey by the author of 81 local house owners points to the trend that house construction has risen in the last twenty five years since 1970. However, majority of houses (51.85%) owned by the respondents have actually been built in the last five years, from 1991-95 (See Figure 2 below). This suggests that after about five to ten years of being engaged in commercial vegetable gardening and two-cropping system in rice farming, many households have actually accumulated enough cash surplus to invest in building new lowland-style houses and have also stocked enough lumber for the project.

Figure 2

Relative frequency distribution of house construction from 1966 to 1995



N = 81 houses

In the above graph on the incidence of house construction over a thirty-year period starting in 1966-70, one should not infer the possibility that local houses might only have a short life span of about ten years, thus the natural cycle itself of houses may explain the fact why more than half have been constructed in the last five years. In Duit, I have found houses built in the late 1940s and the 1950s still standing side by side with houses built in the 1990s. All of these houses are currently in use. However, likely occupants of the old ones are the poor immigrants. In the village, it is the original families who own woodlots and farm lands who have been constructing new lowland-style houses lately. They have been abandoning their old houses which, in turn, are being occupied gratis by the poor immigrants who come from the more depressed villages of Kiangan to lease a plot for vegetable garden and become farm wage workers at the same time.

The current level of construction of new lowland style houses has created great pressure on the timber stand in the private forests. Village informants are unanimous that the amount of timber cutting related to house construction in the village in the last ten years, is greater than the amount of timber cut for selling to agents and craftsmen of the earlier woodcarving industry. While local *muyong* owners have, in recent years, become more conscious of planting trees to substitute for the loss in timber stand, growth of planted trees cannot keep in pace with the loss due to cutting for house construction[23]. There is strong consensus among local informants that the large-trunk trees in the *muyong* have disappeared and those left today are actually newly-planted or protected young trees.

Comparing the timber requirement of the traditional bale and the standard lowland style house can give a fairly good idea of the impact of current house construction boom on the state of the local forests. According to an elder skilled carpenter interviewed by the author, the *bale* which was popularly constructed during the pre-war up to the 1960s, only required five to six timber logs of fully grown trees of two-meter trunk diameter each. On the other hand, a standard one-storey lowland-style houses which he has built requires about ten timber logs of the same size. Two big storey lowland-style houses that he has also built in recent years have required 25 timber logs of the same size for one; 28, for the other[24]. Using this local carpenter's estimate of the timber requirements of the *bale*, one-storey modest size lowland-style house and a two-storey lowland-style house as markers, one can visualize the change in the intensity of tree-cutting that was required to build the present types houses in the village. Based on my random survey of 67 houses in the village, at least 50% of house owners recall that they have used ten or more full grown timber to cover the entire wood requirement in building their houses (See table below.). The fourth quartile in the survey sample with the largest houses in the village have used up a total of 20 to 48 logs, while the first quartile comprising the smallest dwelling units in the village have only used up 2 to 4 timber, mostly for rehabilitating and renovating old *bale* structures in the village to become liveable quarters.

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[23] No one in Duit, exports lumber or logs outside of the village. At times, one or two households have tried to transport lumber from the village for their children's house construction in the poblacion. But this are rare occassions. Nobody has ever attempted to transport logs or lumber for sale outside since people are somehow aware that there is an effective military checkpoint in all major highways in Ifugao that enforces effectively log ban policy of the government. Personnel in these checkpoints are known to outrightly confiscate the lumber and arrest owners and tranporters.

[24] In using this carpenter-farmer's comparative estimate of logs required in the *bale* and lowland-style houses, it should be noted that up to the 1950s, timber was cut by axe, and lumber was hand-hewn, a method resulting in low board-feet recovery. This method is much unlike today which uses a motorized chainsaw resulting in a much higher board-feet recovery from each log. Thus because of the difference in lumbering technology, a same-size log in the 1950s provided less board feet of lumber than it would today. This fact further underscores the point that common present-day houses in Duit comparatively utilizes a greater number of board feet of wood than the traditional *bale*.

Table of estimate of logs used in houses' construction

Quartiles	Range of number of logs used
1% - 25% of houses (1st quartile)	2 to 4 logs
26% - 50% of houses (2nd quartile)	5 to 9 logs
51% - 75% of houses (3rd quartile)	10 to 19 logs
76% - 100% of houses (4th quartile)	20 to 48 logs

N = 67 houses

There is today a growing scarcity of timber in the village, which is directly related of course to the ever growing trend in local house construction caused by changes in consumption, deepening the process of commoditization in reproduction. Interhousehold buying and selling of timber has become more frequent, even between kin. However, commoditization of timber itself is far from complete in the locality. Micro-level power relations and tensions in the local culture and normative order in the context of competition over timber in the *muyong*, determine the twists and turns in the local timber's biography as a commodity.

4. LOCAL-LEVEL POLITICS OF TIMBER COMMODITIZATION

As mentioned earlier, commoditization is a process of deepening commodity relations within the cycle of reproduction. It 'occurs to the extent that each household is severed from direct reciprocal ties, both horizontal and vertical, for the renewal of means of production and of subsistence, and comes to depend on commodity relations of reproduction' (Friedman, 1980: 162). However reproduction may also be characterized by resistance that constitute a counter cyclical movement against the deepening of reproduction:

> Whatever the level of specialization in production of commodities, if household reproduction is based on reciprocal ties, both horizontal and vertical, for renewal of means of production and subsistence, then reproduction resists commoditization. If access to land, labor, credit, and product markets is mediated through direct, non-monetary ties to other households or other classes, and if these ties are reproduced through institutionally stable reproductive mechanisms, then commodity relations are limited in their ability to penetrate the cycle of reproduction (Ibid: 163).

The process of deepening commodity relations constitutes a drive for more extensive commoditization, that is, that more and more things and products in a society are exchanged in a standardized monetized value. However, especially in noncapitalist, less complex, small communities there is always a strong counterdrive to this potential onrush of commoditization. Kopytoff (1996: 73) identifies this counterforce as culture, in the sense that 'commoditization homogenizes value, while the essence of culture is discrimination, excessive commoditization is anti-cultural -- as indeed so many have perceived it or sensed it to be.' Culture (for this particular discussion, I limit my reference to culture as the set of established rules, customs, and symbolic frameworks pertaining to access, exchange, transfer, and valuation of products and assets in general) however should not be seen as a clear-cut recipe nor an inviolable social code. Customary rules, preserved in group memory, are adopted by agents to endlessly changing situations (Bourdieu, 1977: 16). Customs and symbolic frameworks undeniably exist and affect the interactions of individuals in a society, but they have the characteristics of ambiguity and manipulability. Social actors thus interpret, manipulate, negotiate and change social relations and the normative frameworks that pertain to them (Moore, 1978; Berry, 1994; Beckman, F. and K. von, 1994;). Culture is therefore a contested and negotiated terrain.

Certain things may be protected against being exchanged as a commodity within and outside of a community. This protection, or what may be called 'enclaving' is usually in the interest of politically and economically powerful groups in any society, while the tearing down of barriers to commoditization, or the diversion of this set of things into commodities is frequently the recourse of the entrepreneurial individual (Appadurai, 1996: 25). Thus the tug-of-war between protecting things from the drive of commoditization on the one hand, and freeing them to become full-fledged commodities on the other hand, is basically political. This is a tension-laden relation of power and contest of authority between individuals or groups with competing interests in the status of a thing within the flow of goods, although this process presents itself as something cultural --- the affirmation and/or reworking of normative values of the community.

In the case of Duit, the first major breach in the local normative rule pertaining to access and value of timber happened when the Ifugao woodcarving industry penetrated the community. What was broken was the prevailing belief that timber is not saleable for money as well as the established convention that it can be requested and acquired without constraints from any household, when trees in one's own *muyong* or in open-access forest[25] did not fit one's house-building project. A specific commodity context for timber developed -- the social arena of transactions with outsider agents or migrant craftsmen where the thing acquired the symbolic state of a commodity. Although outside of this arena, timber was yet not bestowed a status of commodity, nonetheless a restrictive practice and notion on timber-giving began in the community, a clear upshot of trees attaining at this particular historical juncture a qualified commodity phase (Appadurai, 1996: 13).

The contradiction between emergent entrepreneurship and adherence to existing dominant norms did occur during this period. An elder informant narrated how one of his male cousins sold a lot of timber to woodcarving agents from their grandparents' *muyong*, which at that time had not yet been subdivided and bequeathed among the children (i.e., the informant's parent, aunts and uncles). The enterprising cousin did not make a request from his grandparents, since up to that time *prior* permission to cut timber especially in close kin' woodlots was not really required. Tension rose when other grandchildren complained to their grandparents that their own current and future house-building projects were being prejudiced by the monetary transactions of their cousin with the woodcarvers. The clan's elders had to impose an unconventional ban against this enterprising member from further sourcing timber from the woodlot.

Today, the boom in house construction driven by changing consumption and preference has created a situation characterized by a growing local timber scarcity and a rising demand due to increasing cash surpluses of a number of households. This has widened the commodity context of timber. This context now covers *intra*-village social transactions -- between neighbors, distant kin and even close kin (on certain occasions, between siblings). There is a momentum at present for price to be the allocating mechanism of timber -- for trees to finally become transformed as a factor of production in the neo-classical economic sense. However, there are countervailing mechanisms in the sphere of culture at work against this.

Among the Ifugaos of Duit, the normative framework of kin obligation to care and assist needy relatives has remained strong. This sense of obligation to help kin and the popular practice of caring for close relatives had been singled out by some scholars in the past as the functional underpinning of the Ifugaos' remarkable knowledge of their clan's lineage. (Cf., Barton, 1919: 39; Dumia, 1979: 10). Forms of kinship solidarity can still be observed to persist in Duit especially during life contingencies such as death and sickness. This norm extends somehow to more minor contingencies such as cash support for a child's education or lumber needs of close kin or a neighbor's housing project. However, such sense of solidarity should not be seen as universal in the village for as I mentioned earlier, siblings may buy or sell timber from each other. Nor does this normative framework functions automatically. Today, as in the past, free timber from close kin has to be requested by the needy party. In the context of growing local timber scarcity, negotiations seem to be the order of the day, but according to local informants, some households would still give free timber to a sibling, or, in fewer cases, to a first-degree cousin or an intimate neighbor.

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[25] Open-access forest in Duit was still significant during the American colonial period and up to the 1950s.

What is evident in the village today is that people who still ask for free timber from close relatives spread their potential sources and chances of acquiring free timber. No more than one timber is asked from a sibling or a cousin. In this way, the risk of embarrassment due to rejection of request is lessened. The timber loss by one donor too is mitigated while the recipient's interest to pool enough logs to build a new lowland style house is met by having more sources. However, informants say that the person building a house would normally still have to buy timber. Seldom have all wood requirements been met by timber gifts.

With the recent rise of individual enterpreneurship in timber, a number of parents have been deviating from the custom bequeathing their *muyong* together with a ricefield to an offspring upon marriage. Increasingly, parents have postponed transferring their private woodlot to their children while they still have other offspring who have not yet married. While this practice is related to other reasons (such as elder parents usually deriving income from selling marketable fruits from their *muyong* in their old age), it is undeniable that one compelling motivation for postponing transfer of *muyong* is for parents' to retain the power to allocate timber among all offspring and ensure each one a share for house construction whenever that need arises. Through this strategy, many parents who have small woodlots to prevent a situation where their younger children who do not inherit any *muyong* (according to Ifugao inheritance custom based on primogeniture) would have to beg for trees and risk being rejected even by their own elder siblings.

Despite the fact that parents prolong their possession of *muyong*, not all their children submit to their authority. Informants say that some strategizing and gain maximizing persons occasionally cut timber in their parent's *muyong* in order to sell to other people in defiance of the established norm that such access is allowed only for the offspring's own house construction. Parents learned of this eventually reprimanded the offender. Other siblings joined in to criticize their erring sibling. Hence, intra-family opprobrium is a way of castigating and deterring members of the family who wish to take advantage of timber sale and access for personal monetary gain.

Scarcity and the commercial potential of timber in the village have also spawned not only intra-family tensions but also feuds between neighboring woodlot owners. Just like in other parts of Ifugao, in Duit, boundary markers between woodlots are often trees which were planted after a settlement of disputes. Thus it is often the case that a number of trees are precisely located in boundary areas which are often subjects of past or ongoing disputes[26]. Now that timber has become a highly valuable object, ownership of these trees is also often contested by neighboring owners. Another common source of tension is when owners are notified by their friend or distant relative only after cutting had been done. Such *fait accompli*, has drawn warnings from owners who could not really accuse the person of abject misdemeanor, since they had been duly notified anyway.

Taboo on theft, including timber theft, however, still holds sway in the community. This normative order continues to constrain excessive entrepreneurial activity prejudicing other timber claimants as defined and legitimated by local custom. The effectivity of the cultural framework that is made to bear against the drive for complete commoditization of timber is sustained by the power of the elders who continue to dominate intra-family and inter-household decision-making on property and resources in the village. The elders' power has prevailed in mediating conflicts pertaining to boundaries of *muyong* as well as those pertaining to timber. They are still the recognized interpreters of cultural tradition to which younger and more enterpreneurial members of the family and the community are expected to respect. Tension nevertheless is constantly present between these stewards of tradition and agents of change as regards the contested status of timber in the locality.

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[26] Planting more trees actually in this contested square meters located between *muyong* can be a strategy resorted to by a household to firm up his/her claim in this border area and thus expand woodlot property vis-a-vis his/her neighbor's.

This does not mean that elders in the village have totally resisted the commoditization of timber nor have they always shunned from selling them. In various occasions, I have found elders themselves engaged in market transactions. This, notwithstanding, they are the social agents in the community trying to strike a balance between two pressing demands: on one hand, adhering to customary norm; and on the other, conceding to the relentless drive to commoditize timber, to do away with all existing normative constraints, and make price the allocative mechanism. In this sense, local elders' power, insofar as it is still holding to date, has continued to create a culture-mediated process of deepening market transactions on timber in the village.

5. STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS IN LOCAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND LIVELIHOODS

What has been happening in the village in the case of timber and *muyong* affirms the relative autonomy of social power in micro social spaces even as upland communities have been for generations subjected to processes of political incorporation[27]. It poses a challenge to certain notions that have bestowed too much sovereign power on the modern state, an omnipotence to colonize power relations and configurations at the micro level (Foucault, 1980). In the particular domain of livelihood, social autonomy, in the Scottian sense[28], is remarkable in this upland village. The Philippine modern state hardly plays a significant role in local level access to private forest, tree-cutting or timber transactions. Evidence of *muyong* ownership in transfers of ownership such as in sale or inheritance, uses government tax-declaration papers as validating instruments. However, every contested ownership claim is not brought before any government court but instead undergoes an indigenous settlement process. Boundaries in *muyong* are legitimated by traditional physical markers such as trees planted for the purpose; cases of boundary conflicts are also settled in mediation procedures between families. Conflicting claims on trees are also settled locally. In these indigenous settlement procedures, the power relations between the litigants, the role of elders as witnesses and mediators, and the manipulation of local social ties are the most critical elements employed at arriving at a negotiated compromise. While the barangay officials preside over such disputes, they merely perform ministerial and documentation jobs, or mere residual functions. Local barangay officials who are technically defined by law as having the 'official jurisdiction' in the resolution of these cases, risk strong social ostracism if they invoke state authority and force a resolution to these property disputes. They have to follow the tedious course of forming a consensus or mutual agreement between disputing parties which is largely shaped by the consensus of intervening elders. Thus modern state power in this sphere of adjudication is to a large extent plainly nominal.

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[27] Political incorporation is 'the process whereby the central government, through the exercise of its legal powers and mechanisms of bureaucratic coercion, incorporates peripheral communities' (Lopez-Gonzaga, 1983: 3)

[28] James Scott (1998; 1995) centrally problematizes the autonomy of societies and its implication to the modern state's development schemes to simplify the complexities inherent in societal processes. Owing a debt to anarchist tradition, he argues that 'M(m)ost states, to speak broadly, are 'younger' than the societies that they purport to administer. States therefore confront patterns of settlement, social relations, production, not to mention a natural environment, that have evolved largely independent of state plans'(1998: 183-184). Scott is particularly interested in that kind of social autonomy which referred to the degree of relative freedom from state control enjoyed by non-state social units such as the household, the kinship group, the village or settlement (as distinct from the individual freedom of the citizen) 'to determine their own residence, their community forms, their own forms of property and production as opposed to the imposition of state-mandated forms of residence, social organization, property, and production' (1995: 1-3).

The clearest evidence of this nominal role of the state in private forest access and timber cutting in the village and in adjacent areas of Ifugao is revealed in the lackluster response of Ifugao *muyong* owners to a recent DENR memorandum circular. The circular required a '*Muyong* Resources Permit' from those wanting to cut trees in their woodlots for raw material in their livelihood projects, such as carving, handicraft and manufacturing (DENR, 1996). To acquire such a permit, the owner has to file an application before the CENRO (Community Environment and Natural Resources Office) which then recommends the application to the approving body, the PENRO (Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office). The real purpose of this circular and elaborate procedure is to curtail excessive timber cutting on one hand, and yet to allow certain flexibility in cutting for the livelihood projects of owners. Such circular is premised on a key legal assumption based on the Revised Forestry Code that Ifugao *muyong* belongs to the public domain[29] and therefore the state has full authority to determine its use, especially in timber cutting. Based on an interview by this author with the head of the provincial environment and natural resources office (PENRO), only about thirty *muyong* owners in the entire Ifugao province had bothered to file twelve months after the memorandum was issued[30]. Ifugao *muyong* owners have apparently often ignored official state claims on its resources unless they are immediately threatened by other parties whose claims are premised outside the local communities' effective normative order.

State definitions of tenurial regime in the upland forest seem to have little to do with operative norms and actual practices governing private woodlots in villages such as Duit, where political incorporation has not basically altered the mode and processes of legitimation of local property, as much as economic integration has affected the way people have utilized and exchanged resources. On one hand, this situation can only be partly explained by the peculiarity of the path that the political incorporation process has taken in such interior communities of the Cordillera during the American colonial and post-colonial regimes. As mentioned earlier, certain aspects of village decision-making mechanisms have been basically left intact due to the weaknesses of administrative and infrastructural capability of the state in this non-priority remote area. On the other, part of the explanation has to be sought in the strength and autonomy of local social power in these communities that has reproduced itself over generations.

The role of the modern state in economic integration has always been important however in Ifugao and in most areas of the Cordillera. The state's continuing and aggressive intervention in the agricultural sphere building roads and market centers, promoting the cultivation of cash crops and various assistance in marketing have had more far-reaching practical implications than the constant reformulation of statutes to assert the state's legal possession and nominal authority over a large chunk of Cordillera lands. For instance, current development goals in crop production for the Ifugao province have emphasized the promotion of high-value crops such as cutflowers, potatoes and fruits as well as major increases in annual vegetable production for marketing. This is targeted to be achieved by the provincial government through improved extension services, input assistance, provision of irrigation and post-harvest facilities, opening and improvement of farm to market roads, and the provision of capital through soft loans and higher farm-gate prices (PPDO, 1995: 16). In Kiangan, the local government is currently building a multi-million peso marketing complex[31] designed to be a fruit and vegetable trading post with a government-organized farmers' co-operative around its operations to offer seed and fertilizer loans. According to the incumbent Vice-Mayor of the municipality, these infrastructures are meant to further boost commercial vegetable farming in Kiangan and to develop it as another `salad bowl' in the Cordillera[32]. Through these projects the local government hopes to further expand its current land size of 679 hectares planted to vegetables in the whole of the municipality (MPDO, 1995: 22).

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[29] The Revised Forestry Code otherwise known as Presidential Decree No. 705 contained such provisions inimical to upland dwellers as declaring that all lands with a slope of more than 18% ws considered part of the public domain and therefore nonalienable. This provision virtually knocked out the prior rights of indigenous communities recognized in an earlier Administrative Order No. 11 by a subordinate office of the executive branch, the Bureau of Forest Development in 1970 (Prill-Brett, 1994: 694).

[30] Out of the thirty applicants, only fiftheen were approved, according to my interview with the PENRO head officer last year.

However, when one examines these development programs and projects for agriculture and marketing being initiated by local government planning and decision-making bodies on the one hand, and compare them with the current master plan for forest rehabilitation and management designed by the national government's environment office (DENR, 1990) on the other, an incoherent and, at times, contradictory set of development policy thrusts emerge. The respective goals and programs of these different branches of the bureaucracy 'contradict the commonly-held view of a monolithic state whose various arms of government work in perfect accord towards a single purpose' (Ranggan, 1997: 78). While local government planning stresses commercial, modern vegetable industry in Ifugao, the environment line agencies stress sound forestry management and forest rehabilitation by harnessing indigenous forestry technology through co-operation and organization of their common management regimes. (DENR, 1990: 90). Implicit in this new DENR approach is the assumption fashionable today in global advocacy discourse that indigenous peoples, by their natural position and technology are *inherently* keepers of the forest. Such assumption ignores concrete forms of historical processes of market integration and political incorporation of village societies and the socio-cultural factors at work within a certain community.

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[31] Fund for this complex was accessed by the local government of Kiangan through a P3 million loan from the Technology, Livelihood and Resource Center in Manila in 1996.

[32] The allusion is the La Trinidad valley, the noted `salad bowl' of the country because of its highly developed commercial vegetable industry which started during the early American Period.

6. CONCLUSIONS

My starting point in this paper is to examine whether present-day major assumptions and policies of the Philippine government in incorporating indigenous communities' practices in sustainable forest management is indeed compatible with historical processes and social mechanisms at work, using the upland village of Duit as a case study. The case I have examined shows how economic integration processes of an upland village society have deepened commoditization of timber on two different historical periods. In both periods, intensive market penetration of the local economy and the commoditization of timber has led to more massive tree-cutting in private woodlots, considerably reducing the local timber stand. Moreover, such intensification of tree-cutting has occurred in both periods: the first, in a situation local livelihood deterioration; and, the second, in a situation of general improvement in the standard of living. This causal link between market integration processes and present-day indigenous forest management practices at the local level is a domain often ignored by government environment policy makers and planners.

In the village of Duit, greater economic integration resulting the booming export-oriented woodcarving industry triggered the first wave of massive tree-cutting and commoditization of timber in the 1960s up to the early 1980s. During this period, local woodlot owners seized on the strong demand for local timber to secure income by cutting trees and selling them trees to woodcarvers and merchants. Prior to this, timber had been a freely shared good in the village, based on a dominant indigenous normative order. Such development created a major strain on the local timber stand. This occurred at a time of general deterioration in farming conditions and local livelihoods, coinciding with distress outmigration by many local households. The second wave of tree-cutting and commoditization of timber began in the mid-1980s and continues up to the present. This wave has a comparatively far more profound and massive impact on the local timber exchange practice and related norms and on the state of the forest. A set of events related to the economic integration of local livelihoods has triggered this second wave. The adoption of modern rice double-cropping variety and commercial vegetable gardening since the 1980s, have led to a major rise in incomes and the standard of living in the community. This, in turn, has led to local people's shift to modern lifestyles and consumption patterns, foremost of which is the spread of modern-day, lowland-style houses that required more timber than the traditional Ifugao house (*bale*).

While the commoditization of timber continues to intensify as a result of rising local demands, social and cultural factors act as countervailing mechanisms for the complete transformation of timber as a commodity in local transactions. The continuing strength of local norms of obligation to care for and assist close kin in distress situations often extends to house construction. Moreover, local clan elders remain to be the strong agents reining in the full commoditization of timber. Their power is to a large part institutionalized in indigenous norms and mechanisms where ownership of and access to woodlots and their timber sources are also defined. Elders, as interpreters of tradition and younger, more entrepreneurial family members contest the definition of timber as a commodity. This underpins a strongly culturally-mediated process of commoditization of timber in the village, which shapes to a certain degree a more egalitarian distribution of timber for local housing but not necessarily a less intensive tree-cutting for the whole of the village.

The high degree of traditional social autonomy which local households, kinship groups, and the village continue to experience vis-à-vis state agencies in determining their own forms and definitions of property, including ownership and access to land, forest and resources is also an important context in understanding the particular commoditization process of timber in the locality. However, even as state-mandated processes and mechanisms remain largely ineffective at the local level, the effectiveness and local consequences of various state projects related to market integration have on the other hand, influenced the dynamics of livelihood change in the village. Thus, political integration with the modern state has lagged behind economic integration. Actually, even as the modern Philippine state has been effectively kept out of decision-making processes in resource use and control, it has actually influenced the course of the latter through the role that it has played to advance integration of the people's livelihoods into the broader market, including modern adoption of modern lifestyles, that tend to promote market-driven and moral economy-oriented local tree-cutting activities.

This particular experience highlights the need to challenge current state assumptions and policies on indigenous communities' practices in sustainable forest management on two grounds. First, indigenous communities forest management practices should not be assumed as being pristine, untouched and uneroded by outside market forces, by local commoditization processes, and the adoption of modern contemporary lifestyles. It would seem that the Philippine state's scheme to incorporate indigenous sustainable forest management such as the Ifugao *muyong* system is founded on a stereotyping of this indigenous institution. Second, particular state discourse and policies promoting indigenous sustainable forest management is discordant with other policies promoting commercialized farming in the uplands and greater market-integration of village economies as a strategy to improve people's livelihoods.

The uplands today have been in varying degrees integrated with the broader market-dominated economy even as they retain a relative social autonomy in property and resource control. In this context, the promotion of commercial farming as a livelihood strategy often leads to, as this case study shows, greater participation of indigenous peoples in market opportunities outside through a reorientation or intensification of their pre-existing farming and forest extractive activities; at the same time, they are autonomous in determining local resource ownership and control. This development, in turn, might have unforeseen negative consequences on the forest. A policy advocating indigenous technology such as the *muyong* system as a model for sound forest management should be premised, therefore, on a recognition that ongoing processes of economic integration and commoditization have long altered the traditional system and people's practices and attitudes related to forest conservation. Such a policy should not be based on a reification of the past, when Ifugao village societies had fewer households, had less market-orientation, and had simpler reproduction than today. Government policy makers and planners on the environment should realize that for a large part of Ifugao, this is no longer the case. What is needed therefore is a grounded understanding of historical circumstances of local communities and, on this basis, establishing coherence in policies addressing issues of livelihoods, empowerment, and the environment.

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